

SAA ELECTRONIC RECORDS SECTION NEWSLETTER

Summer 2002

THEME: RECENT E-RECORDS ACCESSIONS

This issue of the newsletter features three case studies of electronic records acquisition: NARA's Center for Electronic Records, the National Digital Archives of Datasets at the Public Record Office in the UK, and the University of California. The NARA and the UC articles are lists of accessions, with some description of format and media. The NDAD piece is a more detailed look at the tribulations arising from the transfer of one large and significant database from a defunct government agency.

If you would like to contribute to further dialogue on this topic, please submit a list or an article of your own to Jennifer Jacobs at jljacobs@uci.edu. It will be published in a future issue.

In this issue:

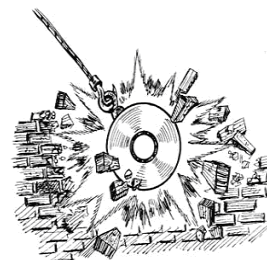
- [Accessions at NARA's Center for Electronic Records](#), from Greg LaMotta.
- [The UK's National Digital Archive of Datasets](#), by Kevin Ashley and Jeffrey Darlington.
- [E-Records on the Campuses of the University of California](#), from UC's Archivist Council members.
- [ECURE 2002 Announcement](#)

[Accessions at NARA's Center for Electronic Records](#)

*From Greg LaMotta
Archivist, Center for Electronic Records, NARA*

Following is a list of electronic records accessioned into the holdings of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), January through March 2002. Data is received on cartridge tape, CD-ROM, and diskette, as either relational databases or "stand alone" files. Almost all the records contain fielded statistical data.

[See whole story...](#)



[The UK's National Digital Archive of Datasets](#)

By Kevin Ashley, Head of Digital Archives, NDAD and Jeffrey Darlington, Digital Preservation Systems Manager, Public Records Office

The National Digital Archive of Datasets (NDAD) provides a service to the Public Record Office of England and Wales to acquire, preserve, catalogue and provide access to structured digital records from UK government - what most people would call 'databases'.

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[Electronic Records on the Campuses of the University of California](#)

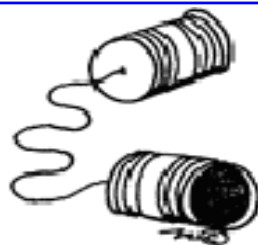
from Charlotte Brown (UCLA), Steven Coy (UC San Diego), Deborah Day (UCSD Scripps Institution of Oceanography), David Farrell (UC Berkeley), and Jennifer Jacobs (UC Irvine)

The UC Archivists' Council (UCAC), in the process of designing a survey to assess the status of electronic records on the UC campuses, compiled a sample of e-records recently accessioned into campus special collections departments (particularly the university archives, which is in each case a part of special collections.)



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Electronic Records Research Agenda

<http://www.mnhs.org/preserve/records/eragenda.html>

[See whole story...](#)

[ECURE 2002 Announcement: Balancing E-Commerce And E-Culture](#)

Can business continuity practices ensure long-term access to your vital information? Can institutions support initiatives like homeland defense while protecting the privacy of their patrons? What technologies, ethical standards, and laws affect our ability to retain and access the curricular and research materials of colleges and universities? You can ask the experts at ECURE 2002!

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Accessions at NARA's Center for Electronic Records

From Greg LaMotta, Archivist, Center for Electronic Records, NARA

Following is a list of electronic records accessioned into the holdings of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), January through March 2002. Data is received on cartridge tape, CD-ROM, and diskette, as either relational databases or "stand alone" files. Almost all the records contain fielded statistical data.

The number in parenthesis following each accession title is the number of data files in that accession. For more information, contact NARA's Center for Electronic Records at (301) 837-0470.

Record Group 29: Bureau of the Census Decennial Census of Population and Housing, 1990: Pacific Outlying Areas and Guam (2). Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 1987 and Waves 2 and 3 for 1989 (11). American Housing Survey, Metropolitan Statistical Area Files 1990, 1992, 1994 & 1996 (36).

Record Group 79: National Park Service Natural Landmark System, May 1996 (13).

RG 207 Department of Housing and Urban Development Homeless Assistance Management Information System (HAMIS), 1987-93 (16).

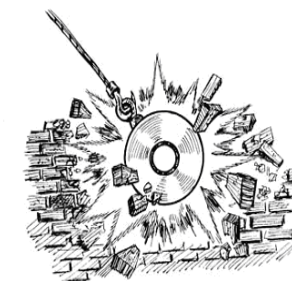
Record Group 266: Securities and Exchange Commission Ownership Reporting System (ORS), 1994-1998 (2).

Record Group 330: Office of the Secretary of Defense Military Assistance Program (MAP), FY1950-FY2000 (2).

Record Group 341: Headquarters U.S. Airforce Military Airlift Command Airlift Operations Report (MACAL), 1968-72 (46). Airlift Operations Report (ALOREP), 1966-72 (89).

Record Group 369: Employment and Training Administration Unemployment Insurance Required Reports, 1993 (44).

Record Group 398: Department of Transportation International Market Data- Data Bank 28IM with T-100 & T-100 (f) Segment Data, 1997 (1).



Record Group 414: Regional Committees and Commissions Appalachian Regional Commission Projects File, 1965-2001 (1).

Record Group 434: Department of Energy Statistics of Publicly Owned Electric Utilities, 1964-87 (26). Annual Report of Publicly Owned Electric Utilities, 1988 (2). Coal Production Data, 1979-88 (10). Coal Distribution Data, 1980 -88 (10). Quarterly Coal Report, 1980-85, 1988 (2). Statistics of Interstate Natural Gas Pipeline Companies, 1981-90 (4).

Record Group 441: Department of Education Census School District Special Tabulation, 1990 (153).

Record Group 442: Center for Disease Control and Prevention AIDS Public Information Data Set, 1993 (2)

Record Group 443: National Institutes of Health Social, Epidemiology Study of Black/White Survival, New Orleans Update, 1996 (1).

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The UK's National Digital Archive of Datasets

Kevin Ashley, Head of Digital Archives, NDAD and Jeffrey Darlington, Digital Preservation Systems Manager, Public Records Office

The National Digital Archive of Datasets (NDAD) provides a service to the Public Record Office of England and Wales to acquire, preserve, catalogue and provide access to structured digital records from UK government - what most people would call 'databases'. Amongst the accessions we've dealt with recently is SPRINT (Single Professional Register and Index of Training) from the UK Central Council for Nursing and Midwifery. Regulation of nursing and related professions has recently undergone major revision in the UK, with three separate statutory bodies being wound up on 31 March 2002 and replaced by a new single body (the NMC) on 1 April 2002. The UKCC was one of the bodies wound up and as is often the case, review of records whose life would be at an end following the merger was left to a late stage, even more so with the computer-based records. We only had a few days in between hearing about this database and arranging its capture for preservation.

SPRINT is an aging ADABAS database which has been replaced following the creation of the new regulatory body by a more modern system which covers a much wider set of functions, but not all of those which were covered by SPRINT. The changing regulations mean that some of the information SPRINT holds is no longer required. If the information unique to SPRINT was deemed worthy of preservation it thus had to be captured quickly. Since all IT provision was outsourced, there was little or no ability to capture data from the system once the outsourcing contract terminated.

Outsourcing is not uncommon with government IT and presents additional problems to those trying to preserve records that come under its remit. In this case, it meant an extra organisational layer between NDAD (trying to preserve the records and their metadata) and the records themselves. One of the results of this was that, despite the fact that ADABAS contained machine-readable metadata such as field names and data types which are essential to us, our contact at the outsourcing company had felt it necessary to transcribe all that information, by hand, into a Microsoft Word document which was all that they would supply us with in the way of metadata. The cost, to them and us, of this approach is considerably more than if we were able to access the records directly ourselves.

Nonetheless we're now confident we have enough to begin the task of preservation and description. The catalogues and dataset, which continues a series of paper professional registers stretching back many years, will become available on the NDAD website (ndad.ulcc.ac.uk).

As with all of NDAD's accessions, the finding aids and the records themselves are closely linked allowing one to move back and forth between the records (be they documents, database tables or images), their descriptions, and associated records. This is achieved via an integrated metadata management system which automatically generates finding aids for the most detailed units of description (with embedded links to the resources they describe) and also manages access to the records themselves.

Every silver cloud has a dark lining, however. Although the metadata database allows automated management of many aspects of the archive, from scheduling consistency checks through production of finding aids and automatic release of closed material, the capture of that metadata is itself anything but automatic. It is still a matter of some mild astonishment to us that, in many cases, the only metadata for a large and complex record collection exists as a poor fifth-generation paper copy of a printout, or worse only as a set of handwritten notes. The focus of past custodians was often on data preservation rather than record preservation. The result has sometimes been that we have all the numbers, but little indication of what those numbers are trying to tell us or why. For the bulk of NDAD's holdings, this is not the case; tracking down that metadata has not always been easy but we've managed - so far. °

JEFFREY DARLINGTON, PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, ADDS: These problems occur in spite of the advice that the Public Record Office provides to government departments on managing their information assets. Records management standards for electronic records often fall far short of those achieved for paper records, and IT outsourcing sometimes creates a barrier that prevents the advice from getting to where it is most needed. We are developing further guidance on how to ensure that the records management requirement is addressed in the design of new databases, and also how existing databases can be better managed. We hope that our educational activities will raise standards and lead to trouble-free accessions of electronic records in future. °

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Electronic Records on the Campuses of the University of California

from Charlotte Brown (UCLA), Steven Coy (UC San Diego), Deborah Day (UCSD Scripps Institution of Oceanography), David Farrell (UC Berkeley), and Jennifer Jacobs (UC Irvine)

The UC Archivists' Council (UCAC), in the process of designing a survey to assess the status of electronic records on the UC campuses, compiled a sample of e-records recently accessioned into campus special collections departments (particularly the university archives, which is in each case a part of special collections.)

Charlotte Brown, University Archivist at UCLA, reports that they have received a few scattered electronic records. The Library has asked that the Archives take snapshots of the Library web site, and a set of email documenting policy discussion. They have a set of PDF curricular guides from the Graduate School of Education, to which there is a finding aid in the Online Archive of California (www.oac.cdlib.org). And the Registrar regularly transfers PDFs of the schedule of classes—they have electronic versions dating back to 1996.

According to Steven Coy, Library Assistant and interim University Archivist at UC San Diego, the Mandeville Special Collections Library has recently acquired electronic records in their literary authors collection and their Melanesian anthropologist collection. They have word processing files on disks from author Arman Schwerner. They received both word processing files on CD and a print version of one Melanesian anthropologist's field notes. And they have several magnetic tapes from another Melanesian anthropologist, but no hardware with which to read them.

Deborah Day at UCSD's Scripps Institution of Oceanography reports that the Archives there holds snapshots of several web sites, including Staff Council's first, and sites of various scientific conferences. She also keeps data sets from researchers, which she receives on 8-track tapes, then takes to the data centers on campus where they are transferred onto CDs.

David Gartrell is University Archivist and Manuscripts Curator at UC Santa Barbara. He reports that UCSB's Department of Special Collections has acquired the records of the former Cult Awareness Network on 6 hard drives and 40 floppy disks. They have also digitized and made available on the web a set of wax cylinder recordings. The project is documented on the web at www.library.ucsb.edu/speccoll/pa/cylinders.html.

Jennifer Jacobs, University Archivist at UC Irvine, has been passively accumulating a small quantity of electronic records. UCI's Archives holds over 400 email publications and announcements. Additionally, staff makes copies of scans requested by patrons, a practice also followed at both UCLA and UC Santa Barbara. °

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ECURE 2002 ANNOUNCEMENT: BALANCING E-COMMERCE AND E-CULTURE

Can business continuity practices ensure long-term access to your vital information? Can institutions support initiatives like homeland defense while protecting the privacy of their patrons? What technologies, ethical standards, and laws affect our ability to retain and access the curricular and research materials of colleges and universities? You can ask the experts at ECURE 2002!

David Sobel, General Counsel of the Electronic Privacy Information Center, will kick off ECURE 2002 with an overview of the constantly changing landscape of privacy law and ethics. A panel of experts will discuss with the audience the ethics of information access and practical efforts to accommodate a range of opinions and interests.

Clifford Lynch, Executive Director of the Coalition for Networked Information, returns to ECURE with his unique insights into balancing access with privacy, commerce with culture, and technological capacity with creative freedom.

Other ECURE speakers will describe their successes in identifying, retaining, and maintaining valued electronic assets:

- Nancy McGovern of Cornell University will review the progress of Cornell's Prism project for preserving Web content.
- John Phillips of Information Technology Decisions will present strategies for evaluating the effectiveness of electronic records management programs.
- Taylor Surface, of the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) national library network, will describe the main points and response to the OCLC/Research Libraries Group (RLG) Attributes of a Digital Repository Report.

Standards for describing and storing electronic records are essential for data interchange and long-term preservation. An interdisciplinary panel of experts will discuss the prospects for developing, implementing, and maintaining standards-based solutions.

Join us for ECURE 2002 on 9-11 October 2002 in the Phoenix metropolitan area. Registration materials and program information are available at <http://www.asu.edu/ecure/>.

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Featured Website

New electronic records developments on-line

Electronic Records Research Agenda

<http://www.mnhs.org/preserve/records/eragenda.html>

This is a one-year project, funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) and coordinated by the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS). It has four goals:

- provide input into the NHPRC planning process,
- improve the electronic records grant program in order to improve electronic records management in the nation,
- enable archivists to use information technology in more sophisticated and effective ways, and
- promote more effective electronic records grants and projects.

As a starting point, the project will re-visit the NHPRC's 1991 Research Issues in Electronic Records report, assess the work done to date under its direction, analyze factors that will affect work in the future, and determine what revisions need to be made to the research agenda.

The project's web site, hosted by the MHS, is designed to offer information on the project's background, reports as they are completed, and links to related resources. It currently includes a project summary, links to the 1991 and 1996 NHPRC Reports on electronic records research issues, a report of the project's first advisory board meeting, and an online Electronic Records Research Agenda Survey. Given the importance of the NHPRC agenda to members of the Electronic Records Section, we would strongly encourage you to take the time to complete the online survey. Responses will serve as one of the primary sources of data for the project's final recommendations.

[Disclosure: Cal Lee, current Chair of the Electronic Records section, is serving as a consultant to the ERRA project.] °



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Notices:

- **The Electronic Records Section meeting in Birmingham is on Friday, August 23, from 8 am to 10 am.**
- **Do you have something to share with the membership of ERS? Contact Jennifer Jacobs at jljacobs@uci.edu to put it in the next newsletter, or Chris Frey at freyce@umich.edu to put it on the web site.**

SAA ELECTRONIC RECORDS SECTION 2001-2002 Leadership:

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