



Advisory Committee for Electronic Records Archives
Meeting No. 10
National Archives Building
Draft Minutes
Day 1 of 2, April 7, 2010

In accordance with the provisions of Public Law 92-463, the meeting was open to the public from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

The Meeting was called to order by Dr. Robert Martin.

Each of the Committee Members introduced themselves.

Present: Mr. David Ferriero; Dr. Robert Martin; Dr. Kelly Woestman; Jonathan Redgrave; Jerry Handfield; David Rencher; Sharon Dawes; Daniel Pitti; John T. Phillips; David Carmicheal; Andy Maltz; Dr. Richard Fennell; James Neighbors; Laura Campbell; Robert Horton; Dr. Christopher Greer; Dr. Ken Thibodeau; Martha Morphy; Lee Stang

Mr. David S. Ferriero, Archivist of the United States, introduced himself and made his opening remarks.

Comments from the Chair - Dr. Robert Martin

Dr. Martin began by expressing his delight to be able to work with Mr. Ferriero. Dr. Martin was also looking forward to hearing the reports from staff, and the presentation on the preservation module.

Adoption of Minutes (November 4-5, 2009)

A motion was made by Mr. Redgrave, seconded by Dr. Woestman to approve as amended the adoption of Minutes for November 4-5, 2009 with the condition that they be reviewed for typographical and grammatical errors prior to being posted. The motion was carried unanimously.

Review of Action Items

Action Item 1 will be completed during this meeting.

Action Item 2 is reported to be "In progress". The outstanding task is re-inform the committee about appropriate intersection with Core.gov.

Action Item 3 is to be concluded in fairly short order by gaining concurrence with OMB policy.

Action Item 4 is related to Item 3 (OMB Concurrence) - Martha Morphy would make sure the Committee would have something in writing.

Action Item 5 is a suggestion to try to get ERA presence at the SAA Educators Roundtable.



Action Item 6. It is reported that Microsoft agreed to host one to two days at their Conference Center Facility in Redmond, WA. Another day at the Washington State Digital Archives. There is interest in getting 25-30 engineers together to talk about security, hierarchy of storage, and other important programs. Library of Congress is also willing to support this. They are currently targeting either the week of June 14th or June 28th. It will be invitation only, and they want to set a date to get it on everyone's calendars. A suggestion was made to have the meeting at the end of the Annual Meeting in July.

[ERA Program Status - Lee Stang, ERA Program Director, with Dyung Le , Director of System Engineering](#)

Mr. Stang gave a report on the status of Increment 3 and discussed the direction of the remainder of the Lockheed Contract which has about 2 years remaining.

The Congressional instance is online at the Rocket Center in West Virginia, with Congressional records loaded in the system. For both Preservation Framework and Public Access, they have made significant progress in the last six months. Tomorrow there will be a prototype demonstration for the Preservation Framework.

Increment 3 is based on the system evolution briefing that Mr. Le gave to the Lifecycle Guidance Team in January 2009 with the thought of providing a better foundation for business flow in the system, allowing for better expansion to the agencies, flexible workflow, and to implement the original vision of an evolvable, scalable framework.

The Increment 3 Statement of Work includes software enhancements to provide for more functionality for the two pilot agencies coming on board, support for the EOP System at the Rocket Center, the Congressional records instance, online public access beta system, the preservation framework prototype, and the base architecture evolution.

The system is described as an XML repository that has both all the business objects, but also the first ever infrastructure of metadata for NARA.

A number of software enhancements have been completed prior to bringing on the Pilot 2 Agencies. These enhancements were deployed in March, and included expanded browser support.

The team has been working with the Executive Office of the President on the transport and ingest of emails related to the CREW settlement. Emails will be transferred to the site in West Virginia in the coming weeks. A January release also provided better search for library staff and searches the shared directories from the Bush Administration. Another release is scheduled in early summer to enhance the search capability. Since the system has been in operation there's been about 54,000 searches conducted by Presidential Library staff.

The implementation of The Congressional Records Instance is to provide for a simple yet expandable storage. This instance was ready in December 2009 and completed its first ingest



on March 11, 2010. At that time, they also demonstrated the verification and integrity of the process.

Congressional records are encrypted prior to transfer to the Rocket Center, and also when they are brought back to the site.

The team is working on a preservation framework prototype that would identify the formats of ingested electronic records and assess the ability to select tools for their perseverance and preservation planning.

All indications from the users have been very positive.

The functionality for the Base Architecture Evolution has taken more code development than was first estimated, broken into three areas: Xforms, ingest orchestration, and archive search capability. The team has planned the work into four functionally oriented builds, which allows the integration to be completed sequentially, based on the workflow of the system. This provides a stable test platform for each build as the project progresses. Each build has a major set of capabilities.

Mr. Stang concluded the presentation stating they have completed high and low level designs for builds 1 and 2. Software for build 1 is in the integration and testing phase.

The floor was opened for questions and comments from the advisory committee membership.

Discussion amongst the committee members included the Public Access software delivery that was received on March 31st, ingestion methods, federation scalability, broad public access, API access, and Increment 3.

[Break for Committee Picture](#)

[NCAST \(Center for Advanced Systems and Technologies\) Discussion, Dr. Ken Thibodeau](#)

Dr. Thibodeau provided background about how NCAST was created by NARA late last year. NCAST has two functions - IT research and knowledge management. It is a service organization, the purpose of which is to support NARA's missions. NARA is the primary customer of NCAST. In the area of Knowledge Management as it relates to ERA, knowledge managers realize that it's not enough to bring the best technology to NARA, we must also bring NARA to the point where the staff is ready and eager to utilize the technology. The objective is to gain an understanding of what kind of specific technical competencies are needed, and where they need to be applied across the lifecycle management of all records of the US Government. Once identified, NCAST determines the best sources to gain those competencies and approaches to deliver them where they are needed in NARA. NCAST also contributes to the development of competencies by NARA staff.

The role of NCAST is to Identify and evaluate technologies and methods that could be used to



improve lifecycle management, and explore possibilities for addressing lifecycle management requirements that are beyond state of the art.

Dr. Thibodeau discussed the main concepts of NCAST. These concepts include electronic Lifecycle Management of Records (eLMR), Competency, Technical Competency, Sources, and both Applied and Advanced Research.

NCAST represents these different topics:

- Manage a NARA wide project to identify technical knowledge and skills needed for eLMR
- Levels of Competency
- Advise NARA in identifying potential sources of needed competencies and in evaluating their strengths, weaknesses, and risks.
- Options for distribution of technical competencies among staff

NCAST can contribute to acquisition of critical competencies by staff and identify where these competencies can be obtained. NCAST is promoting communication about IT Research and Development through the website www.archives.gov/ncast/.

The NARA IT Research Board has been established to identify and evaluate promising technologies and methods through applied research, and explore requirements that are beyond "state of the art" through advanced research.

Dr. Thibodeau also discussed "Requirements that are Beyond State of the Art" – a program that has existed since 2008. They have achieved one of the major objectives of aligning the US Government's investments in research and technology, allowing NARA to conduct its research with other agencies such as the National Science Foundation, Army Research Lab, and the Naval Sea Systems Command. Dr. Thibodeau concluded by reviewing a list of areas they are currently involved in research.

The floor was then opened for Q&A.

The topics discussed included working with other institutions on their research, broader communications about their plans, webcasting of their briefings, the 1940 Census Workshop, and a corporate culture transformation that has been occurring at the National Archives.

[At 12:19 PM, Dr. Robert Martin recessed the group for lunch, to reconvene at 1:30 PM](#)

[Discussion: "Distributed/Decentralized Electronics Records Archives and the role of ERA"](#)

John T. Phillips gave a presentation on Distributed/Decentralized Electronic Records Archives and the Role of ERA. He began the presentation by summarizing the current state of cloud computing and distributed systems and how they create challenges for archivists and records



managers, who are concerned about preservation and retention. The presentation was intended to encourage a collaborative discussion on the topic.

Mr. Phillips described two basic models. A Centralized Model that means pulling information from many sources and storing a copy in a centralized repository, and a "Federated" Model, or "managing in place", that finds the information, tags it, and leaves it in the original repository. In the Central Repository model, it is easier to implement records management, and for that reason, this model is useful for the preservation of high value records. Among the disadvantages of the Centralized Model is the need to design specifications that allows access from a myriad of different users, and meet the needs of a wide array of users.

Advantages to the Federated ERM model are that you don't have to transfer the records, save on network bandwidth, and utilize native file viewers. Disadvantages are that it is dependent on vendors to provide and test integration tools, dependent on cooperation of many administrators, and lessened control over specific practices. Mr. Phillips provided examples of Federated Models in existence, such as Digital Libraries and the Digital Libraries Federation.

Cloud Computing refers to the technologies of placing your data in another location and outsourcing to other organizations. Cloud Computing, such as Google Apps, is becoming more accepted.

Managing in Place is a concept of leaving items in a central location and managing them with software that doesn't require that you move the object.

In summary, the presentation indicated that the virtual world of quickly evolving technology and cloud storage is here to stay. It also showed that there are values in both a centralized model and a federated model.

The floor was opened for discussion. Discussion topics included the following:

- Viewing NARA as the authority to establish order by setting ground rules to allow for a federated approach under NARA standards, then auditing the environment.
- Perhaps a whitepaper published by NARA suggesting best practices for records metadata. Just by nature of who NARA is would get the attention of the corporate world.
- Many spoke in favor of the need for NARA to own or influence a "Federal Cloud".
- The possibilities of changing the laws, particularly since both the Legislative and the Executive Branches appear to be receptive to reviewing federal records laws.

[The Committee then took a 35 minute break, to reconvene at 3:00 PM.](#)

[Conversation with the Archivist: Vision for the Advisory Committee](#)

Mr. Ferriero began by sharing his impressions of life at the Archives and what he has discovered in his first 5 months. He is incredibly pleased to have the opportunity to discover a layer of



talent that is creative, bright, and energetic. He looks forward to unleashing this creativity and innovation.

He has also been focusing on building bridges within the Federal Government. He has been reaching out to stakeholders including the Open Government teams, the genealogy community, historians, and others.

He wants to reestablish a leadership role, both NARA and Electronic Records. On the Technology Front his goal is for NARA to be a leader- testing new products, re-engineering processes, anticipating changes, being the advisor.

He acknowledged a communication challenge within ERA. He wants the advisory group and internal ERA staff to be kept in the loop on a regular basis – to be much more involved by hearing the high points and low points.

Today, he released his first blog post. It was launched today around the Open Government Initiative. The Open Government Initiative allows NARA to take a look at how they are communicating their business to others. The blog outlines a number of initiatives about how to communicate better and involving our stakeholders - to open NARA to the American public.

He expresses excitement around making content available because of the limitless ways it can be utilized. He recalled an example within the NY Public Library – a New York Restaurant menu collection where a marine biologist used the menus to track fish population. It is a terrific example of putting information out there for creative uses. He looks forward to building that culture of "sandbox" into the organization.

Mr. Ferriero then opened the floor to comments on how NARA can improve its relationship with the members of ACERA.

Suggestions included more frequent status updates from ERA to the Committee, a more defined mission statement of the committee, advising on future technologies, online chats and conference calls between meetings, subcommittee formations, committee members as public evangelists, and the demographics of the current committee membership.

Mentions were made that the meetings have been informal. The notes haven't captured the insights and subjects of the meetings. If each person could write a one page synopsis, it may be helpful to recognize the value of the meeting, and to query the individual members, taking it to another level of contribution.

Discussion, Round Robin, New Action Item Review Wrap-Up

Dr. Martin stated that with the SAA meeting this August, it might be an opportunity to publicize the status of ERA. Dr. Thibodeau replied that the proposal to present at SAA was rejected. Dr. Martin recommended a more assertive approach. Producing a brochure on ERA that could be



given out at the NARA booth was also suggested, as well as holding demonstrations at the demo center at the Archives.

Regarding the membership of the committee, Dr. Martin indicated that although he had nothing official, there is strong inference that the committee shall continue to serve NARA and the ERA.

The meeting was adjourned until 9:00 AM tomorrow