

ACERA Meeting Minutes, 04/30/08

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE ELECTRONIC RECORDS ARCHIVES
MEETING NO. 6
NATIONAL ARCHIVES BUILDING**

**MINUTES
DAY 1 OF 2
APRIL 30, 2008**

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

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>
Lewis Bellardo – Not Present	National Archives and Records Administration
Laura E. Campbell	Library of Congress
David Carmichael – Not Present	Georgia Archives
Sharon Dawes	Center for Technology in Government
Dr. Richard Fennell	Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts
Dr. Christopher Greer	National Science Foundation
Jerry Handfield	Washington State Archives
Robert Horton	Minnesota Historical Society
Dr. Robert E. Kahn	Corp. for National Research Initiatives
Andy Maltz	Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences
John T. Phillips	Information Technology Decisions
Daniel V. Pitti	University of Virginia
Dr. Dan Reed	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Adrienne Reagins	National Archives and Records Administration
Jonathan M. Redgrave	Redgrave Daley Ragan & Wagner LLP
David Rencher – Not Present	Federation of Genealogical Societies
James Neighbors	U.S. Air Force
Dr. Ken Thibodeau	National Archives and Records Administration
Allen Weinstein	National Archives and Records Administration
Dr. Kelly Woestman	Pittsburgh State University

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1. Adoption of minutes and review of agenda and action items

Dr. Kahn opened the meeting by asking the committee if there were any topics that they would like to see on the agenda, and if so, that they should bring them up now or otherwise contact Adrienne Reagins or Ken Thibodeau with those ideas. Dr. Thibodeau stated that the agenda for this session of ACERA was based on the topics NARA would like to have advice on, and that he would be handing out a white paper later in the meeting.

Dr. Kahn asked if the minutes were accepted. Some minor typos on Day #2 of the minutes were pointed out, but the minutes were accepted and will be published after those typos are corrected.

Action Item Review:

- *Action Item #1 - ACERA Members who are State Archivists will get involved with the User Adoption Group. State Archivists will decide if the rest of the Committee should get involved with respect to User Adoption.*

The ACERA Members involved found it difficult to follow through on this action item since they do not know what they are “selling,” and would like to make sure they know the ERA system works through a hands-on demonstration. Is there anything that could be made available to the state archives?

Dr. Thibodeau stated that he thought it would be premature to offer a copy of ERA before IOC. Dr. Kahn said that he thought this action item was focused on starting a dialogue and not demonstrating the ERA system.

There was discussion around Lockheed Martin plans to sell a system similar the ERA system to state archives once the ERA system is complete. Dr. Thibodeau said that he was aware of Lockheed Martin plans to do this, but that it is a completely separate arm from the group that is working on the ERA program. Dr. Kahn asked if it was possible for NARA to make a copy of ERA available to the state archives. Dr. Thibodeau stated that ERA has a lot of COTS elements and that if the state archivists want to use the same ERA system that NARA has, that they will need to buy copies and licenses for all of those COTS products.

Dr. Kahn thought it would be good to talk to the state archives and find out what they want/need from ERA. The discussion that followed focused on two (2) separate archival conferences; NAGARA held in late July in Atlanta, and SAA held in late August in San Francisco. Dr. Thibodeau said that ERA is already on the agenda at both conferences as well as having a booth at each. Dr. Thibodeau will attend SAA in August personally, but will not attend NAGARA in July and will instead send staff, as he will need to remain close to NARA as that is very soon after ERA IOC.

The committee agreed that since there would be more state archivists attending NAGARA, that outreach efforts should be focused there.

Dr. Kelly Woestman asked for clarification on what the Library of Congress may be doing with state archives.

Laura Campbell responded that there is model and test repository development, collection and retention of at risk state material. One of their objectives is to raise awareness of the need for funding. Each project has a scope and is available on the website. There is overlap between the needs of archivists and the state CIOs and each would be interested in ERA.

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New Action Item: Jerry Handfield and Robert Horton will work together with the goal of causing an additional session at NAGARA where state archivists could express their views on ERA, as well as to draft presentation slides in enough time for the ACERA committee to vet them.

Action Item #1 closed and replaced with the new action item.

- *Action Item #2 - Find out the possibilities of the committee participating with research using PERPOS.*
Dr. Thibodeau reported that this has been tied up by legal issues with the Army Research Lab (ARL). Dr. Thibodeau has sent the message that unless he hears from them he will assume it is alright to release the software, and he has not heard from them yet. Dr. Kahn told the committee members to contact Dr. Thibodeau if they are interested in the software.
Action Item #2 closed.
- *Action Item #3 - Provide Committee with information on what functionality will not be provided in Increment 1, Release 2 due to funding constraints.*
Dr. Thibodeau reported that he has a slide in his brief, to be presented at this meeting, about this topic.
Action Item #3 closed.
- *Action Item #4 - Post Human Factors Specification on Core.gov*
There has been no response regarding the proprietary information. There had been a very large FOIA request through a law firm, which could have originated from a Lockheed Martin competitor, and the same people who would provide the human factors specification are the ones working on this FOIA request. The information for the FOIA request was released last month. As soon as NARA gets the information from Lockheed Martin it will be posted on the core.gov site.
New Action Item: Dr. Thibodeau will find out from the Contracting Officer what the status of the human factors specification is.
- *Action Item #6 - Provide to the committee a white paper concerned with “Issues for the Future” and “Moderating Factors.”*
John Phillips will be providing a report on Federated Systems later during this meeting that satisfies this action item.
Action Item #6 closed.
- *Action Item #7 - Provide information from Air Force Scientific Advisory Board to serve as guideline for how ACERA may structure may be structured.*
This information will be provided by James Neighbors in a brief later during this meeting.
Action Item #7 closed
- *Action Item #8 - Provide ACERA members access to ERA system prior to next meeting.*
Adrienne Reagins arranged remote access.
Action Item #8 closed.
- *Action Item #9 - Provide members with information about the governance meeting on the Global Digital Format Registry.*

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Harvard's contractor has delayed delivery of the registry, but it will be complete this summer.

Action Item #9 closed.

- *Action Item #10 - At next meeting, schedule major discussion of models and possibilities for partnering and federation. Provide committee before the meeting with a summary of approaches we have taken or thought of or heard of.*

Michael Kurtz will be discussing this in his presentation later during this meeting.

2. Dr. Thibodeau's Presentation on the State of ERA

Dr. Thibodeau started the presentation, showed the base system statistics and told the committee that everything is back on track and that IOC will happen in June. Dr. Kahn asked the committee if they wanted to see the schedule. Dr. Thibodeau said that he had a summary of the critical path on a later slide. There has been much improvement. There used to be a more adversarial relationship between Lockheed Martin and NARA, where technical discussions were presumed tantamount to contract negotiations. This has been relaxed. It was difficult in the past to have NARA and LMC discuss changes without worrying about cost. The contract with Lockheed Martin had been managed as if the NARA program office were set up to serve the contract. The re-structure in the relationship put NARA's mission first.

Dr. Thibodeau explained that under the revised plan, LMC delivered the software required for initial operation in three pilot drops. NARA performed dry-run functional and security testing on the pilots. Dr. Kahn said that he would like to see benchmarks. Dr. Thibodeau said that there was a pertinent slide on that topic later in the presentation. Dr. Kahn asked what was the point of performance testing the pilot. Dr. Thibodeau said that it allowed the LMC team to fix the problems NARA found before the system became operational. Dr. Kahn asked if some problems were put off. Dr. Thibodeau said that most did not get put off but rather were repaired. The final software deliverable was handed off to NARA on April 11th, and formal testing has started. Dr. Kahn asked if it was expected for the pilot approach to continue in July. Dr. Thibodeau said yes and no. LMC will be deliver several pilot drops of the EOP system, but the development process will be much more interactive, with LMC and NARA staff meeting frequently about both the requirements and the solution. There was EOP testing on Monday and Tuesday and the feedback from staff was good. Primarily small changes are all that was needed.

During the explanation of IOC functionality, it was asked if this included any of the previous deferrals. Dr. Thibodeau said that this list is complete from the end of the design competition. Dr. Thibodeau explained the end to end workflow and there was a discussion of classified material and the likelihood of spillage, which in the initial system is minimal according to Dr. Thibodeau. Public access and true archival capabilities will be incorporated in the next release of ERA.

John Phillips said that he would like to see system functionality parsed out on a timeline. Dr. Kahn said that this should show major points of which functionality is associated with which increment delivery. Dr. Thibodeau said that some of this will always be in flux because of budget constraints. In that case, Dr. Kahn said he would like to know Dr. Thibodeau's best guess.

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New Action Item: Provide a flowchart of which functionality is associated with which delivery by the second day of the ACERA meeting. Assigned to Dr. Thibodeau.

There was a discussion of why Presidential records are different from other NARA records. There was also discussion of the differences between the base and EOP systems. The base system is flat storage while the EOP system is hierarchical, and the base system does not have content search while the EOP system does have content search. Lessons learned with the base system drove the improvements in the EOP system. There was also discussion of the Hitachi Content Archive Platform (HCAP), formerly Archivas, and how it came to be used in the EOP system. Jerry Handfield said that it seems like a lot has been deferred from base and that a lot more resources have been moved to EOP. Dr. Kahn asked why the base ERA system was not just delayed further so as to use the improvements in EOP as a base system. Dr. Thibodeau explained why base was not delayed further and then pointed out that Jay Wang, system engineer, is looking into the evolutionary integration of the base and EOP systems.

The next subject of discussion was the open severity 2 Program Trouble Reports. Mr. Handfield asked if there was a detailed list and if so, could the committee have it. Dr. Thibodeau said that there is one but that it is in HTML. Dr. Kahn said that he would like to know about the functional problems and what has been deferred.

The next major subject of discussion was security. There followed a discussion of what standards the ERA system will be held to. Dr. Thibodeau said that NARA has asked the Lockheed Martin team to adhere to DSCID even if that portion of the system is not classified. Dr. Kahn asked how important it is to track users within the system. Dr. Thibodeau said it is very important. All users must have identified roles so ERA can keep track of user access points and if or when records have been deleted or altered. When the system does go public, security will be heightened even though there will be anonymous access to public records. NARA can only require registration of public users for those functions that are fee for service. There was further discussion of security with regards to Presidential records, and Dr. Thibodeau said that there is a high risk of "spillage;" i.e. classified information showing up in unclassified records. That is one reason why the Presidential records will have a higher level of manual processing in the records release process. Dr. Kahn said the ACERA should probably refrain from putting energy into the security question without a direct request and specific guidance from NARA.

<Break 11:05>

<Return from Break 11:40>

After returning from the break, Dr. Thibodeau continued his presentation. There was a discussion of bandwidth and the capabilities of the physical components of the system (e.g., servers). There was also the question of where the physical instance of EOP would be stored. Dr. Thibodeau said that NARA is currently retrofitting the Allegheny Ballistics Lab (ABL) building on the first floor for EOP.

The next subject of discussion was the EOP system. As a result of the early problems with the base ERA system, there is a separate, dedicated EOP team at Lockheed Martin to ensure that these problems do not become issues again. There was discussion of how Presidential Libraries fit in with NARA, and how they are separate entities at the same time. The Presidential Libraries

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will be considered remote users. Dr. Thibodeau pointed out that Bush Library archivists have joined the Presidential Libraries Users Group (PLUG) to ensure that their concerns are taken into account. There was discussion of how and why EOP had come to be split off from the base ERA system and if the ACERA committee should have been consulted on this decision. Some of the committee members were concerned about the difficulties inherent in this kind of bifurcation. Dr. Thibodeau stated that the plan is to eventually merge base and EOP into one coherent system.

The presentation continued with a discussion of the EOP schedule. The EOP system will be installed at Lockheed Martin's Greenbelt facility for initial acceptance testing since ABL is still in the process of being retrofitted. Once the EOP system is moved to ABL it will be put through installation testing to ensure system integrity and quality. NARA should be sure that the government owns the Configuration Baseline to ensure that there are no legal difficulties in the future.

During the discussion of ERA Issues, Dr. Dan Reed pointed out that ERA development needs to be an evolutionary process and not an episodic process. Allen Weinstein agreed and raised the issue that the Archivist of the United States needs to adhere to a five (5) year term rather than an unlimited or a four (4) year term as it will help in maintaining continuity. The committee did express the concern that there will be a separate EOP instance for each President. Dr. Thibodeau said that by the time the next President leaves office that ERA will have reached FOC and all the Presidential records will just be uploaded into the main ERA system rather than into a separate system.

Dr. Thibodeau handed out the ERA functionality timeline handout. John Phillips pointed out that there is user resistance because of the fear of interface changes, and the solution to this could be to keep the external system interface constant while only the underlying code changes and enhances internal functionality. He asked if there was a virtual machine option, and Dr. Thibodeau said there could be but that there wasn't yet.

Dr. Kahn said that this was the first ACERA meeting where budget numbers had not been discussed, and he asked if they were available. Dr. Thibodeau said that FY08 funding is exactly as the President requested and that the FY09 funding request has been raised to \$66.5 million. Dr. Thibodeau said that he does not expect the FY2009 budget to be approved any time soon.

Dr. Thibodeau then asked the committee to weigh in on the issue of using outside technical support after FOC versus having technical support in house after FOC. The committee generally agreed that it is more advantageous to have the majority of technical support in house because of continuity, keeping an eye on emergent technologies and development, and keeping any outside technical support honest.

<Break for Lunch 12:55>

<Return from Lunch 1:45>

3. SAB Presentation by James Neighbors

James Neighbors made a presentation on the Air Force Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), a group organized and funded by the United States Air Force (USAF). The SAB is composed of industry experts that contribute on a part-time basis and Mr. Neighbors thought that this model might serve NARA well in ensuring that ERA develops to its fullest potential. Dr. Kahn noted

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that, based on the slides, this looks like a full time job for the board members. Mr. Neighbors said that it is a full time job for the secretariat (support staff) but not for the industry experts. Mr. Handfield asked what the time commitment per quarter was and Mr. Neighbors replied that it is one (1) to two (2) days quarterly with significant effort to keep it to one (1). There was discussion of how this advisory model compares to that of the National Science Foundation (NSF). Dr. Thibodeau said that ACERA performing studies would be attractive to NARA, but that NARA lacks the financial resources of the USAF to support such a group.

4. Building for a Digital Future Presentation by Michael Kurtz

Michael Kurtz made a presentation on wider NARA goals and the use of private industry in creating indexed databases of electronic records and digital images of current holdings. Mr. Handfield asked if the images industry is creating will be loaded into ERA and Mr. Kurtz said that this is the plan. Sharon Dawes asked where the funding for these projects is coming from. Mr. Kurtz said that the industry partners are paying for this effort, sometimes even paying for the conservation of older, physical records. Dr. Kahn asked if there would be one (1) or many metadata standard(s). Mr. Kurtz said that there would be just one, and that ERA would be the standard. There was additional discussion about metadata standards and schemas. Dr. Christopher Greer asked if there was a strategy for increasing affiliations/relationships/partnerships. Mr. Kurtz said there is and NARA is looking to what makes sense for long term strategies and what NARA's role should be. Mr. Phillips asked where the images/records reside. Mr. Kurtz said that they are currently with the partners but the goal is to move them to ERA. The current MOU allows the commercial partners to hold the records for five (5) years and generate revenue during that time, with custody reverting to the government after five (5) years. There was a discussion about how to maintain the balance of access and monetary value with commercial partnerships. Everything has to be vetted through OMB and other government officials. Any commercial partners have to adhere to NARA's capture standards. Mr. Handfield asked if NARA could have a relationship with the state archives and offer the images through this. Mr. Kurtz said that this could probably be negotiated, but that there have been no commitments yet. Mr. Phillips said that this is a good idea but that multiple funding sources can lead to mission confusion.

<Break 3:00>

<Return from Break 3:35>

5. Federated ERM Model White Paper presented by John Phillips

John Phillips spoke to the highlights of the history of the Federated model and the pros and cons of various ERM models. Mr. Phillips said this could change how NARA does business since the Federated model does not require all of the records to be in one (1) central repository. Dr. Thibodeau said that there is an Object Management Working Group that is looking into this matter, and are developing a process model. Dr. Kahn asked to what extent the federated approach applies to ERA, and if it does, how do you apply it. Dr. Thibodeau said that it is relevant in a variety of ways. ERA was originally envisioned as a federated system. There needs to be a way for NARA's system to interact with agency systems. There is, however, the issue that some of the agencies do not want to maintain custody of the records and would therefore not want to participate in this kind of federated architecture. There is the potential to partner with libraries to provide the federated architecture as well as better front end access. It was suggested to come back to this subject on Day 2 and Dr. Kahn agreed.

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6. Interagency Working Group on Digital Data Presentation by Dr. Christopher Greer

The discussion began with topic of information quantity versus available storage, what is counted and what is transient. The current estimate of available storage is based on hard drives sold and so is more a measure of human behavior than the potential for storage creation. Dr. Kahn noted that the cost of keeping basic information could become one of the basic needs of society. Dr. Greer said that information is becoming a currency and commodity. Andy Maltz noted that there is a new program in Japan, called "Eternal Memory," that is dealing with similar issues. Dr. Kahn asked if this report would go outside the government and Dr. Greer said that it could if the Council of Science agreed. Dr. Kahn thought it would be a good idea to offer the report for public comment. Mr. Phillips noted that one of the major impacts on storage is redundancy. Redundant copies of records are often kept in case of disaster and this has an exponential affect on the amount of storage space needed. There was discussion on whether or not the risk of using lower quality storage to offset cost would be acceptable from an archival perspective.

7. General Discussion

Dr. Thibodeau handed out a white paper on what type of help NARA would like to see from ACERA and a list of equipment currently at ABL. Dr. Kahn announced that Day 2 discussion would primarily focus on how much and what kind of advice ACERA can provide.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

Adrienne M. Reagins
Secretariat
Advisory Committee on the Electronic Records Archives

Robert Kahn, Ph.D.
Chairman
Advisory Committee on the Electronic Records Archives

These minutes will be formally considered by the Committee at its next meeting, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes of that meeting.