

*ACERA Meeting Minutes, 05/01/08*

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

**MINUTES  
DAY 2 OF 2  
MAY 1, 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 – <b>Not Present</b>	National Archives and Records Administration
Laura E. Campbell	Library of Congress
David Carmichael – <b>Not Present</b>	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 – <b>Not Present</b>	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Adrienne Reagins	National Archives and Records Administration
Jonathan M. Redgrave	Redgrave Daley Ragan & Wagner LLP
David Rencher – <b>Not Present</b>	Federation of Genealogical Societies
James Neighbors – <b>Not Present</b>	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. How can ACERA best benefit the ERA Program?**

Dr. Kahn opened the discussion about what NARA needs from ACERA and how best to go about providing it, as well as how to structure ACERA discussions in the future. Dr. Thibodeau said that the roundtable discussions have been very valuable since they present a broader view to NARA, but that he found papers like the one John Phillips produced to be very useful and that this could be a good model as well. He thought where ACERA could really help would be to look at things that have a longer horizon than six (6) months, e.g., public access. Mr. Weinstein said that every ACERA meeting so far has produced valuable discussion, especially for the longer horizon issues. He liked the idea of papers and presentations from ACERA members, but did not want to push committee members into more time commitment than they could offer.

Dr. Kahn said that he would like to know what happens to the advice that ACERA gives NARA. What difference has ACERA made? There was discussion for the potential of ACERA providing consensus based committee positions, as well as individual, possibly dissenting, positions. There was discussion about how, if at all, ACERA should provide direction to the contractor building ERA. It was concluded that ACERA should not provide such direction, but rather provide its advice directly to NARA.

Mr. Weinstein said that it would be useful to have a note taker dedicated to identifying points of concern for future ACERA meetings. Dr. Kahn said that this person would need to be able to synthesize multiple points of view without bias. Mr. Weinstein said that he has some appropriate candidates in mind.

The discussion then discussed what additional areas would be appropriate for ACERA to examine. Dr. Kahn felt that the role of unique identifiers would be a good idea to pursue, and Dr. Thibodeau felt that this was an area ripe for comment. Mr. Phillips thought that it would be useful for ACERA to pass recommendations to Lockheed Martin and see what could be integrated. ACERA would need to stay at an appropriately high level and get feedback from NARA and/or to Lockheed Martin before any lower level specifics are considered. Bob Horton expressed discomfort with evaluating decisions that had already been made and thought that policy aspects would make better discussions points than system aspects. Sharon Dawes thought that big picture organizational issues, including organizations and partnerships, would be good things to have on the agenda. She also suggested that individual members of the committee can serve as advisors to NARA outside of the purview of ACERA and indicated that she would be willing to fulfill such a role and invest additional time. Dr. Thibodeau said that, in his view, this is up to the committee to decide.

There was discussion over having both technical and non-technical matters on the agenda and that some of the more non-technical committee members have felt that they could not contribute as much given that recent agendas have been heavily technical. Mr. Weinstein suggested that individual committee members could come up with interesting topics from their own areas of expertise. There was further discussion of ACERA produced papers and the mechanics of getting them done. There is some concern that something the committee would draft might be in conflict with what has already been developed for the ERA. This could be averted through the use of widely internally circulated drafts. There was also discussion of looking back at previous committee topics that may have gotten lost in the process and revisiting them. Mr. Phillips

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suggested that the committee should develop a top 10 list of issues. Dr. Kahn said that he thought user and policy issues are much more actionable than architecture issues, but that it is very much subject to which issues NARA would like to have advice on. Dr. Kelly Woestman suggested that user expectations and improving the user experience, especially for users in smaller regional areas, would be a good topic for discussion. Jonathan Redgrave suggested that for each topic the committee could offer both short term guidance and long term guidance.

There was further discussion on whether NARA wants ACERA to have round table discussions or to produce reports. Dr. Thibodeau said that the activities do not need to be mutually exclusive. Dr. Kahn said that committee members would need staff support in order to provide reports of substance, and Prof. Weinstein said that support could be provided. Andy Maltz offered to prepare a paper on the effect of the budget process on system design. This could create some political leverage to help ERA funding. Mr. Maltz thought that the committee might want to weigh in on the issue of privatization. Dr. Kahn said that the biggest issue for him was how best to manage the evolution of the ERA system.

There was in depth discussion about what patents Lockheed Martin has filed on the developments they have made with ERA. Dr. Thibodeau said they have filed approximately 15 patent applications. There was further discussion over the concern that the company would try to take advantage of the government. Daniel Pitti asked how Lockheed Martin demonstrates that their metadata is truly independent of their software. Dr. Kahn expressed concern over the possibility of an expensive conversion problem. Mr. Phillips questioned having a commercial contractor “own” critical portions of an important government system.

<Break 10:45>

<Return from Break 11:10>

The discussion returned to the topic of what should ACERA be doing. Dr. Christopher Greer suggested that the committee could generate questions that would be submitted to NARA, who would then inform the committee of which questions would provide the most value. This would help to build a common intellectual framework. Dr. Kahn asked if this would translate into papers, and Dr. Greer said he thought it would. Ms. Dawes said that she thought there were two (2) perspectives here, the evolution of the system and the evolution of the program, and they don't have to be mutually exclusive. Dr. Kahn proposed mining minutes from previous meetings for potential discussion topics. Mr. Horton said that he thought the committee was better informed about the ERA program now and that a completely new list might be more practical and useful because of the new information. Mr. Weinstein said that he would like to see it all, papers, intellectual framework, and roundtable discussion.

Laura Campbell said that she sees Lessons Learned to be used for the next iteration of the ERA system as the most important thing ACERA could do. Dr. Kahn asked Ms. Campbell to take a first pass at a list of Lessons Learned. Discussing some of the budget issues would not be politically useful in this context. There was further discussion about how to apply Lessons Learned. Ms. Campbell felt the Lessons Learned should focus more on ERA 2.0 at the macro level. Mr. Weinstein said that he would like to see this paper. Dr. Thibodeau reminded the committee that Mr. Weinstein really needs to hear honest opinions, and that there is plenty of

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room to comment as it is virtually impossible to get a system as large and complex as ERA right the first time. He also said that NARA is expecting exponential growth and revisiting the architecture is not only a good thing, it is expected because the requirements will be revisited. Dr. Kahn suggested the need to continue discussions and that reports would be nice but should not be required. He suggested that crafting a document on ERA 2.0 that would be treated as a living document, and might never be published, would be a good thing. Ms Campbell will begin the document by laying out two (2) to three (3) pages what the ecology of the report should be and other committee members will contribute as they can. Dr. Kahn said that this should be treated as an informal background activity for now. There was discussion on how to use core.gov to assist in this activity.

Mr. Handfield suggested that a key role for ACERA would be to manage the expectations of the individual user before the ERA system became available to the public. Dr. Kahn said that this was an interesting question, but how does the discussion begin. Dr. Thibodeau said that NARA launched a program to look at user expectations about access just last month, and is looking to make improvements. There was discussion about what kind of additional information (e.g., systems phases and functionality, vision statement, etc.) the committee needs to fulfill this role. Dr. Kahn said he thought ACERA could be responsible for outlining how to manage user expectations, but that NARA would be responsible for implementation. Mr. Handfield noted that individual committee members could perform small scale user expectation management within their own communities. Dr. Greer noted that he thought ACERA's true role in this would be to direct users to Dr. Thibodeau. Dr. Kahn said that he did not think it was ACERA's responsibility to talk about ERA to the public, but rather to advise NARA. Individual members, however, may wish to do so on their own but should keep NARA apprised of any such activities. Mr. Phillips said that he agrees in principle, but in reality all committee members need to be able to speak about ERA comfortably. Mr. Maltz noted that he has given out information about ERA as well, but that he always checks to make sure that that information is already public. Dr. Thibodeau said that there is a group of six (6) ERA staff members that regularly give presentations about ERA. He also understands that committee members may need to speak to ERA and that ERA staff are ready to provide support for these talks.

<Break for Lunch 12:25>

<Return from Lunch 1:30>

### **2. ERA Pilot Presentation by Rick Rogers**

Rick Rogers, from Lockheed Martin, began by showing the ERA functional flow to give the committee some contextual grounding. He said that his presentation would show the submission process with a brief discussion about validation. Questions during the presentation were as follows:

Dr. Kahn – Does this template have a unique identifier?

Mr. Rogers – Yes.

Mr. Phillips – Are the records deleted from the source drive?

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Mr. Rogers – No, once the transfer has been successful the agency will receive a notice from NARA that it was accurately received, and then it is up to the agency whether or not to delete the records.

Dr. Kahn – What about duplicate transfers?

Mr. Rogers – It will be the same file, but since it was transferred at two (2) separate times each transfer is considered a different record.

Mr. Pitti – What prevents an agency from changing the record after it has been transferred?

Mr. Rogers – There is nothing NARA can do about this since the record resides on the agency's system. It becomes a different record. You can have multiple instances of the same object that have different metadata.

Mr. Handfield – How does ERA know the transfer is coming from a trusted source?

Mr. Rogers – To be able to transfer you must be logged on as a named user. You must have permissions for the transfer function and all transfers made will be associated with the logged on named user. From a technical aspect it is possible to upload records from any computer, however, at this time there are IP restrictions on where transfers can originate from. This solution may change, and may wind up tailgating on Homeland Security Presidential Directive-12 (HSPD-12) eventually.

Mr. Rogers said that he would like to come to the next ACERA meeting and give presentations on ingest, virus scan, and quarantine. There was discussion about the inadvertent transfer of viruses. In the current process, NARA has three (3) options to deal with infected files. NARA can tell the agency to resend a clean file, clean the file themselves if it is not possible to get a hold of the record originator (as with temporary Congressional committees), or delete the infected record entirely. There was discussion of security levels and how they are handled.

Mr. Rogers began the third part of his presentation on browsing the asset catalogue. In the base ERA system, browse is the only search function. This is due to a budget constraint since search engines are so expensive. The plan is to have true search capabilities next year. There was discussion about search modalities. There was discussion about spinning disk space for searching and indexing. Increment 1 of ERA, as well as EOP, all involve spinning disks. There followed a discussion of database access. Preservation is for the data, not the database system. Dr. Kahn suggested that ERA should be managing and maintaining data structures rather than the legacy systems that contain (or contained) them. Mr. Rogers said that it is not feasible to keep legacy applications running, or even emulate them over the long run. There followed some discussion about standardization. Dr. Thibodeau said that Mr. Rogers' presentation, as well as ERA training tutorials, would be posted on core.gov for committee convenience. There was a subsequent discussion about copyright and access issues.

### **3. Next ACERA Meeting**

The next ACERA meeting will be in the November timeframe, with specific dates to be announced. Committee members should let Adrienne Reagins know of any conflicts for that month.

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### **8. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 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.