

# NAGARA

National Association of Government  
Archives and Records Administrators

## Crossroads Developments in electronic records management and information technology

### USGS EROS Data Center Releases Digital Storage Technology Study

#### Web Sites:

USGS Offline Media Trade  
Study

[http://edc.usgs.gov/archive/  
nslrda/](http://edc.usgs.gov/archive/nslrda/)

[USGSOfflineMediaTradeStudy  
.pdf](http://edc.usgs.gov/archive/USGSOfflineMediaTradeStudy.pdf)

USGS EROS Data Center

<http://edc.usgs.gov/>

EarthExplorer

[http://edcsns17.cr.usgs.gov/  
EarthExplorer/](http://edcsns17.cr.usgs.gov/EarthExplorer/)

The information age has generated a deluge of documentation on an endless list of subjects, from government and business activities to Hollywood gossip. But perhaps this period's most thoroughly documented (and well-archived) entity has been the surface of the earth, as viewed from space.

Obtained by remote-sensing satellites, this data is archived and distributed by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Earth Resources Observation System (EROS) Data Center, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The permanent archive spans forty years, and includes over 630,000 gigabytes of data from the six LANDSAT satellite missions and 880,000 declassified intelligence satellite photographs.

Much of the collection is accessible online, through the *EarthExplorer* web site. The data is comprehensive, capturing any given point on the earth multiple times a year. It is a fundamental resource for the study of scientific and cultural phenomena, including urbanization, agricultural practices, deforestation, weather patterns, and global climate change.

In March 2003, the USGS EROS Data Center released the *Offline Archive Media Trade Study*, a document examining data migration and new digital storage technologies. The study is available online, and is a useful model for any electronic archives needing to select new storage technologies for data migration. In the battle against media deterioration and the continual obsolescence of old storage technologies, data migration is an electronic archives' most essential weapon.

The *Offline Archive Media Trade Study* compares several new high-capacity digital storage products and assesses their suitability as the Data Center's next generation of storage media. Each product is evaluated by a number of criteria, including: reliability, transfer rate, capacity, drive compatibility, cost, and vendor support. The study focuses on the high-capacity drives Storage Tek 9940B, LTO2 (Linear Tape Open), and Super DLT 320, and also provides useful analysis of other storage technologies, including LaserTAPE, and IBM 3590H.

## Minnesota Completes Two NHPRC Projects

### Web Sites:

NHPRC Electronic Records  
Agenda

[http://www.mnhs.org/  
preserve/records/eragenda.  
html](http://www.mnhs.org/preserve/records/eragenda.html)

Educating Archivists and  
their Constituencies

[http://www.mnhs.org/  
preserve/records/  
workshops/  
edarchivists.html](http://www.mnhs.org/preserve/records/workshops/edarchivists.html)

The State Archives Department of the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) recently completed two NHPRC-funded projects: an analysis and revision of the NHPRC's 1991 electronic records research agenda and a two-year effort to develop educational offerings on metadata and eXtensible Markup Language (XML).

The new proposed electronic records agenda is the result of a one-year project intended to review past work in the subject area and suggest possible directions to follow in the future. The project built upon the original 1991 NHPRC study and the follow-up 1996 Conference on Electronic Records Research and Development, held in Ann Arbor, Michigan. During the course of the project, input was solicited from a variety of stakeholders through numerous meetings and an online survey.

Among the conclusions of the proposed revised agenda is that the "NHPRC should encourage multiple, practical and collaborative engagements among the various communities and constituencies interested in electronic records and digital information resources, so that they can work together and share what they learn. . . . The new emphasis should be on implementation and analysis, with particular encouragement of communication and education, so that all projects have an impact on the archival community."

All products from the project, including the report itself, several supporting appendices, the results of the online survey, and an extensive bibliography are available online in draft form pending acceptance by the NHPRC.

"Educating Archivists and their Constituencies" is the second project recently completed by the MHS. This two-year effort was designed to "address a critical responsibility that archives have discovered in their work with electronic records: the persistent need to educate a variety of constituencies about the principles, products, and resources necessary to implement archival considerations in the application of information technology to governmental functions." The result is full-day workshops and two-hour briefings on the topics of metadata and XML.

The goal of the sessions is to "impart a general, high-level, non-technical knowledge of the subject to participants so that they will have the confidence and resources to learn more on their own. The materials are aimed specifically towards archivists, librarians, and records managers, as well as members of information technology-related fields."

The project web site offers instructor's manuals, course books, and other materials intended to help archivists deliver the sessions in their own settings. All project products were field extensively field-tested by the MHS team in cooperation with a number of partners: the Delaware Public Archives, the Indiana University Archives, the Ohio Historical Society, the

San Diego Supercomputer Center, the Smithsonian Institution Archives, and the State of Kentucky. Comments, suggestions, and questions are welcomed.

## MetaMap Offers Guide to Metadata Initiatives

### Web Sites:

MetaMap  
<http://mapageweb.umontreal.ca/turner/meta/english/metamap.html>

MetaMap is a unique graphical representation, in the form of a subway map, of over 180 varied metadata initiatives from around the world. The map is a metaphor for assisting users in navigating “‘metaspace,’ the environment of metadata.”

The different subway “lines” represent themes, such as Creation, Organisation, Dissemination, Preservation, Archives, Moving Images, and Text. Visitors to the site can position their mouse over “stops” on any given line to see what the corresponding acronym stands for. Clicking on a stop takes one to a brief definition of the initiative and links to related sites. Visitors can also view the map with an index (a little confusing until you click on a letter). A print option allows those interested to access the MetaMap in GIF, JPEG, and PDF formats, although all descriptive functionality is lost, making the feature of dubious value.

While the MetaMap is a convenient collection of concise information on metadata initiatives, visitors should be prepared for one immediate annoyance — the site utilizes Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG), which not all browsers can handle. A plug-in from Adobe is available, but users may be prompted at every new screen to accept the license agreement.

The project is funded by coRIMedia, a “research consortium focussed on the management of multimedia objects and on applications which use them.” Maintenance of the site is carried out by staff from the University of Montreal’s School of Library and Information Sciences.

## OCLC and RLG Form PREMIS Working Group

### Web Sites:

PREMIS  
<http://www.oclc.org/research/pmwg/>

OCLC and RLG announce the formation of PREMIS (PREservation Metadata: Implementation Strategies), a working group that will address practical aspects of implementing preservation metadata in digital preservation systems.

Preservation metadata is the information necessary to carry out, document, and evaluate the processes that support the long-term retention and accessibility of digital materials. It is an essential component of most digital archiving strategies. This is the second OCLC/RLG working group focused on issues related to preservation metadata.

OCLC Digital and  
Preservation Dispatch  
Subscription:  
[http://digitalcooperative.  
oclc.org/about/lists.html](http://digitalcooperative.oclc.org/about/lists.html)

Issue Archive:  
[http://digitalcooperative.  
oclc.org/dispatch/default.htm](http://digitalcooperative.oclc.org/dispatch/default.htm)

Over the next year, the twenty-member working group will develop a broadly applicable and implementable set of "core" preservation metadata elements, and a data dictionary to support them. It also will evaluate strategies for managing preservation metadata within a digital preservation system, and for the exchange of preservation metadata between systems; establish pilot programs for testing the group's recommendations and best practices in a variety of systems settings; and explore opportunities for the cooperative creation and sharing of preservation metadata. The results of the group's activities will be made available online for public review and comment.

This new effort on implementation strategies is a follow-on to an earlier 2001-2002 working group, which focused on producing a preservation metadata framework "describing the information necessary to carry out, document, and evaluate digital preservation processes." The working group was comprised of individuals representing a variety of institutions and projects world-wide, including the British Library, the National Archives of Australia, Harvard University and the Library of Congress. Its findings were published in a final report titled, "Preservation Metadata and the OAIS Information Model: A Metadata Framework to Support the Preservation of Digital Objects." All documents from the first working group are available through the PREMIS web site.

This article was adapted with permission from the OCLC's *Digital and Preservation Dispatch*, a weekly electronic newsletter offering recent news, information, and announcements relating to digitization and both traditional and digital preservation. Subscription information as well as past issues dating back to September 2002 are available online.

## Crossroads

### Web Site:

NAGARA  
[http://www.nagara.org/  
crossroads/ch.html](http://www.nagara.org/crossroads/ch.html)

### Contact:

Shawn Rounds  
Minnesota Historical Society  
345 Kellogg Boulevard West  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102  
[shawn.rounds@mnhs.org](mailto:shawn.rounds@mnhs.org)

The NAGARA Committee on Electronic Records and Information Systems (CERIS) sponsors *Crossroads*. CERIS Committee members include Charles Arp, Ohio Historical Society; Cindy Bendroth (Vice-Chair), Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission; Mark Conrad, National Historical Publications and Records Commission; Scott Leonard, Kansas State Historical Society; Richard Pearce-Moses, Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records; Shawn Rounds, Minnesota Historical Society; Kate Theimer, National Archives and Records Administration; Caryn Wojcik (Chair, 2002-2004), State Archives of Michigan; and Jeanne Young, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

*Crossroads* is edited by Shawn Rounds, of the Minnesota Historical Society.