Record DNA

Reconceptualising the life of digital records as the future evidence base

An international multidisciplinary research network

Prof Julie McLeod & Dr Elizabeth Lomas

#RecordDNA @RecordDNA

https://RecordDNA.wordpress.com
Aim

Bring together practitioners and academics from multiple disciplines to:

1. problematise the current concept of the digital record and work towards a reconceptualisation that more adequately facilitates its management

2. identify what research is needed to ensure the future digital evidence base is usable to best effect through time
Objectives

1. To explore how the digital has put the traditional concept of the record at risk
2. To identify the different stakeholder perspectives on what constitutes a record, concerns about and needs for the evidence base
3. To critically explore the DNA of a digital record and the implications of the digital era for the usability and functionality of the future evidence base
4. To identify the key issues and challenges and propose a research agenda, informed by practice and multiple stakeholder perspectives, to address them
Activities

- **Workshop 1:** identifying key issues & perspectives about the future usability of the digital evidence base
- **Crowdsourcing:** wiki surveys about risks to the digital evidence base & components of a digital evidential record
- **Workshop 2:** dissected the digital record DNA, articulated a vision of the ‘ideal useable digital evidence base’ & identified research & practice needed to deliver the vision
- **Crowdsourcing:** survey about research & practice/development agenda
- **Final event:** sharing findings and finalising a research agenda
Record Risks

Wiki Survey: 8299 votes on 57 ideas

1. The exponential growth of digital records; particularly as there confusion as to what to keep and what to dispose of

2. Loss of intelligence around where important information is stored

3. How to mitigate the risk that corrupt or missing technical metadata could render digital content meaningless however 'perfectly' preserved

4. Lost data connections - a digital record is composed of linked components that may break down through time

5. Adapting to changing technology over time. It may get done once, but repeatedly updated to new technology, maybe not
RecordDNA Components

7745 votes on 89 ideas
Traditional Evidential Record …to the email

Email from Lomas, Elizabeth:

Subject: What is Digital – ID1041

Date: Today, 21:04

To: Julie McLeod <julie.mcleod@northumbria.ac.uk>

This message was sent with high importance.

Dear Professor McLeod,

Digital is the same as paper there is no difference!

Kind regards

Elizabeth

Dr Elizabeth Lomas
Senior Lecturer in Information Governance

G30, Foster Court
Department of Information Studies
University College London
Gower Street
London WC1E 6BT

Ownership

Date

Recipient

Content

Authorship
Aimed at academics, students & professionals the different visions and perspectives on the nature of a record are intended to spark debate, discussion, research and processes for the maintenance of the digital evidence base through time.
Infographics

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What research & practice is needed?
Workshop 2: 95 questions/topics

- Exploring mutual relationships that support trustworthiness among archival institutions, creators and users. Creators, curators & consumers!

- What are the ethical implications of the archives as an access mediator (graded access) in a digital world?

- How do we present ‘technical proofs’ to humans to get humans to trust machine/AI? Which attributes do people trust and how does this vary with beliefs/culture?

- Scale: the problem of managing, preserving and using data and records in quantities beyond human capabilities

- To look at LIS information literacy frameworks for Archives
What research & practice is needed?
Workshop 2: 95 questions/topics

- Exploring mutual relationships that support trustworthiness among archival institutions, creators and users. Creators, curators & consumers!

- What are the ethical implications of the archives as an access mediator (graded access) in a digital world?

- How might psychological/behavioural characteristics of the different roles in the management of digital records affect achieving the ideal digital evidence base?

- To access information through time [in an affordable manner]

- To look at LIS information literacy frameworks for Archives
Prioritising the research agenda

Survey: Priority of research themes (Weighted average)

- **Personal data management and privacy**: 4.38
- **Legislative domains**: 4.06
- **Ownership**: 3.89
- **Trust and attacks**: 3.83
- **Appraisal and scale**: 3.81
- **Interfaces**: 3.74
- **Linked data**: 3.72
- **Usability and societal needs**: 3.7
- **Openness**: 3.68
- **Digital skill sets**: 3.62
- **Standards**: 3.62
- **Management over time**: 3.56
- **Balance scenarios**: 3.54
- **Hidden domains**: 3.49
- **AI, trust and automation**: 3.45
- **Multimedia**: 3.34
- **Metadata**: 3.34
- **Algorithms**: 3.32
- **Custodians**: 3.27
- **Emulation**: 3.16
- **Horizon scanning**: 3.15
- **Interactions**: 3.15
- **Paper paradigm**: 3.15
- **Archival considerations**: 2.79
- **Shifting values**: 2.74
- **Research needs**: 2.72
- **Encoding and abstraction**: 2.72
- **Content**: 2.72
- **Virtual reality**: 2.72
- **Gender**: 2.79

5=An international research priority
4=A high priority with relevance across disciplines and/or domains of practice
3=A high priority with relevance to a particular discipline or domain of practice
2=An interesting area of research for the longer term
1=Not a priority
Nature of the research & practice agenda

Philosophy of evidence in digital records

- **blue sky**
  - fundamental, no assumptions

- **strategic**
  - potential practical use

- **applied**
  - knowledge > product, process, technology

How do we implement appropriate data protection policies & practices into digital RM?

How might psychological/behavioural characteristics of different roles affect achieving the ideal digital evidence base?
Infographics

Research themes

- People issues
- Technology
- Policy and processes
- Ethics, rights & legal issues

DEVELOPING AN R&D AGENDA TO SUSTAIN THE DIGITAL EVIDENCE BASE THROUGH TIME
Infographics

Collaborators

- Stakeholders
- Citizens
- Academics
- Professional practitioners
Infographics

Aimed at information creators to help them understand the choices and actions that need to be made to control, sustain and understand their digital footprint through time.
Infographics

Aimed at academics, students & professionals, the different visions and perspectives on the nature of a record are intended to spark debate, discussion, research and processes for the maintenance of the digital evidence base through time.
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