

MANAGING ELECTRONIC RECORDS PARTNERING OF ARCHIVISTS AND IT PROFESSIONALS

As the activities of colleges and universities move increasingly from paper to electronic formats, archivists, records managers, risk managers, auditors, legal counsels and information technologists face a daunting problem. How can all of us manage this explosion of electronic records both traditional structured data as well as unstructured information like e-mail, WWW documents, and so forth? How can we make sure that the information we need exists, is retrievable and useful in 10, 20 or 100 years?

This briefing session will provide an opportunity to hear about two collaborative projects of archivists and information systems personnel designed to address these issues. The speakers hope that this session will also provide an opportunity to learn of similar efforts at other institutions.

In preparation, think about the following questions:

How can institutions ensure that electronic records can provide adequate evidence of business processes over time? How is your institution facing this issue?

How can we educate our institutions that this involves far more than simple physical preservation of data, or the enactment of yet another policy statement. Where is your institution on this most important learning curve?

How can institutions work together in this area to share discussion, research, and problem solving. How can you and your institution get involved? What would you like the fruits of this collaboration to be?

How can archivists and IT professionals work together within an institution to address these issues?

How can professionals in these two fields work together across institutions to address these issues?

What other professions with different skills should participate in these collaborations?

For an introduction, and a short, but compelling, argument that serious attention be paid to this topic, take a look at:

<http://web.mit.edu/techreview/www/articles/dec94/cook.html>

For additional background, see:

1. Indiana University's collaborative effort to address these problems:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~libarche/index.html>

2. University of Pittsburgh's project to establish functional requirements, production rules and metadata specifications for long-term (or archival) retention of electronic records.

<http://www.lis.pitt.edu/~nhprc/>

Jeannie Kellam, Indiana University
Helen Samuels, MIT