



NDSR Project Title Improving Digital Stewardship in the U. S. Senate

Project Summary

The Senate Historical Office seeks a National Digital Stewardship Resident to study and assess current Senate workflows in appraisal, management, ingest, description and transfer of Senate committee digital assets into the Congressional Records Instance of the National Archives' Electronic Records Archive, and Senators' digital assets into academic and institutional repositories, benchmarking current policies against best practices. Working with the Senate Historical Office Archivists, Senate Committee Archivists, and Senators' Archivists, the Resident will review and test potential digital curation applications including the BitCurator digital forensic environment and produce a white paper that summarizes current processes and proposes avenues for the next phase of development. For Senate Committee records, the NDSR fellow will identify requirements for a Senate-wide Archives server and propose sustainable workflows that are in line with current digital curation standards.

Specific Goals / Objectives

- Conduct a limited peer survey on best practices for born digital acquisitions, accessioning, and ingestion procedures.
- Meet with archivists and systems administrators to document existing practices, policies, and mechanisms for capturing digital records within Senate committees and in Senators' offices.
- Review current metadata collection and input workflows for preservation metadata requirements.
- Evaluate data curation tools and environments (BagIt, Bit Curator and more) for potential implementation within the Senate collection and accessioning process.
- Research and report on current tools for archival management of PII information.
- Evaluate current workflow and recommend changes to maintain integrity and authenticity of digital records over time and to streamline acquisition and transfer of Senate committee records to the National Archives.
- Evaluate current policies and workflow in senator's offices and recommend best practices for data curation prior to transfer of a member's digital assets to an archival repository.
- Recommend sustainable workflows, assess feasibility of creating a Senate-wide Archives server, and advise on best practices for Senate's archiving program.
- Write Senate specific recommendations for accessioning born digital material in Senate committees and in Senators' offices based on study of current practices and evaluation of potential digital curation tools and environments.
- While addressing these goals the resident will participate on archivist-IT staff teams as they are formed around new and on-going projects.

Timeframe & Deliverables

June-Aug 2015 Education/immersion/learn, practice and gain understanding of current electronic records accessioning environment; begin research of data curation tools.

Sept-Oct Information gathering for a written Description of Senate Committee capture and description processes and for a written description of Senators' office maintenance and capture processes



Nov-Dec 2015 Research and write report on current tools for management of PII information

Nov-Feb 2016 Evaluate selected data forensic tools and environments for possible use in Senate processes. Previous deliverable on PII information tools may become a subset of this activity.

Project Deliverable

Mar-May 2016 Write a report recommending improvements to workflows for digital acquisitions, accessioning, and ingestion procedures for Senate committee records.

Mar-May 2016 Write a report recommending best practices for preserving digital assets for Member's offices prior to their deposit in a research institution.

*Resources
Required*

The Senate Historical Office will provide workspace and a computer with access to Senate network, and a laptop with BitCurator and other software to be determined during the course of the fellowship such as BagIt, file fixity tools, and other data curation tools or environments identified by Resident and team of archivists.

Context

The three archivists on the staff of the Historical Office, eight archivists on Senate committees, and four archivists in member's offices comprise the team of which the Resident will be a member. This team will be supplemented by select systems administrators. The team will document the process currently in place for accessioning Senate electronic records into the National Archives ERA and for maintaining electronic records in members' offices. The mentors, resident and other team members will research and evaluate tools for improving handling and authenticity of Senate electronic committee records and records created and maintained in senators' offices with particular attention to issues of appraisal, frequency of collection, method of collection, processing, addition of preservation metadata, privacy issues, ingest issues, and description of Senate digital assets into the Congressional Records Instance of the National Archives' Electronic Records Archive. Using data from accessioned records since 2009, the year the Congressional Instance of the ERA began, the Resident will measure and describe accrued digital assets to produce a metric for predicting ongoing digital curation needs and to use as a baseline to review options for long-term digital preservation. Based on an evaluation of current workflow, the team will recommend changes to enhance and streamline the acquisition and transfer of Senate committee records to the National Archives and the storage and transfer of Senate member office records to institutional repositories. This might include creation of a Senate Archives server for committee electronic records. Working closely with the Senate Archivists and with Senate Committee Archivists, the Resident will produce a white paper that summarizes current processes and proposes avenues for the next phase of development.

*Required
Knowledge and
Skills of Residents*

- Master's degree in archives management with considerable coursework and/or graduate certification in digital curation
- Familiarity with digital curation tools and digital forensics software

*Preferred
Knowledge or
Experience of
Residents*

Background in information technology, information systems, and computer engineering desirable
Understanding of PREMIS data dictionary and conformance requirements
