INF STD 240, Spring 2015 edition: Paperwork Informatics*
Draft — March 2015

Course information:
Number: INF STD 240
Official Title: Management of Digital Records
ID: 628-241-200
Quarter: Spring 2015
Location: room 121, GSE&IS Bldg.
Time: Mondays, 9am-12h30pm
Web site: https://ccle.ucla.edu/course/view/15S-INFSTD240-1

Instructor information:
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UCLA catalog description:
Lecture, three hours. Introduction to long-term management of digital administrative, information, communications, imaging, or research systems and records. Topics include electronic recordkeeping, enterprise and risk management, systems analysis and design, metadata development, data preservation, and technological standards and policy development. Letter grading.

1. Course description

Behind the dull face of ‘records’ and ‘recordkeeping’ lays one of the most profound transformations induced by computerization: the shift from paper to electronic documents in both personal and institutional life. This course draws from multiple strands of scholarship and professional practice to examine this shift: paperwork studies, documentation, media archeology, records management, computer-human interaction. While we draw from the records management literature, this course is not primarily designed to provide training in records management, but rather to provide familiarity with the multiple ways in which the switch to electronic documents changes the evidentiary landscape.

* This syllabus has greatly benefited from discussions with and from syllabi created by Professors Anne Gilliland and Michele Caswell, UCLA, Cal Lee, UNC Chapel-Hill, and David Wallace, U Michigan.
The enshrinement of the terms “hanging chads” and “birthers” into popular culture testifies to the traumatic character of our current transition from paper to electronic records. In both cases, the legitimacy of the most powerful office on Earth has been threatened by doubts over the authenticity of records supposed to testify truthfully, to a birth, to a voter’s intent. The remedies deployed to correct these technological failures — electronic voting machines, an Internet scan of Obama’s short-form certificate — have only signaled even more powerfully the loss of the ways by which documents convey their authority and authenticity, formally and informally.

This loss is a direct consequence of the current society-wide shift in the ways documents are created, communicated, classified, and preserved. Today, almost all documents are computerized at some point of their life cycle, and the integration of computing, imaging and printing technologies makes it easier than ever to scan, copy, alter, distribute, print and store high quality documents. If the moral authority of paper records has correspondingly diminished, the electronic documents replacing them appear to us even more malleable.

This has far-reaching consequences: paper (and paperwork) is essential to the day-to-day operation of the Nation State — from the constitution itself, to all manners of paperwork — but also to the operation of daily life — from birth certificates to purchase receipts. Furthermore, new genres of communication and documentary practices — emails, text messages, social media — with shifting contours and a fast mutating metabolism are already called to serve as historical and legal evidence.

If this wasn’t enough, access to electronic records is necessarily mediated by computing software and hardware and the preservation of their evidential characteristics presents significant challenges. For certain types of digital objects, there does not exist theoretical, technical, and/or practical consensus on the most appropriate (or even basic) records preservation strategy. Even when such strategies exist, the required behavioral, organizational, institutional and professional underpinnings are generally not yet in place for such strategies and technological solutions. Given this, electronic records management issues go beyond mere technological evolution of banal bureaucratic instruments. Their digitization inevitably entails the renegotiation of their power to testify truthfully, to apportion liability, to enforce accountability, to constitute individual and collective memory. As such, this process raises both profound theoretical and practical challenges, offering abundant professional and research opportunities.

In this course, we will familiarize ourselves with these challenges and opportunities, survey preliminary solutions, research, and initiatives. We will focus on four emergent issues — new genres, identity, preservation, and forgetting — and in the process, build up a set of concepts, tools and strategies information professionals can use to help shape valuable and sustainable recordkeeping systems. We will however keep these ambitions in check by taking stock of the reality of our current electronic recordkeeping environment. We will focus on guerilla recordkeeping, in the context of institutions or individuals with limited means, budgets, resources, and expertise. As such, the
course will focus on grasping the essentials of a rapidly moving field and prepare students to become effective in a broad range of recordkeeping contexts.

2. Goals and objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to identify the various types and functions of electronic systems created and maintained by organizations and individuals in the conduct of their activities; to discuss the roles of various stakeholders in the management of the electronic materials created by those systems; to frame and articulate to archivists and non-archivists the technical, theoretical, legal, and historical issues associated with the long-term administration of electronic records; and to demonstrate the relationship of archival science to other professions in this context. More specifically, students should be able to:

- discuss differences between records and other forms of digital materials;
- define the following terms or concepts: “electronic records,” “evidence,” “reliability,” “authenticity,” and “recordkeeping metadata;”
- identify sources of warrant for electronic recordkeeping;
- establish and present a business case for recordkeeping;
- undertake a business process analysis and recommend records retention schedules for records of common or specific administrative functions;
- identify and discuss a range of organizational variables as they might affect an institution’s programmatic strategies with regards to electronic records.

3. Course expectations

- While these courses are not formally required, I will assume that the fundamentals of records, recordkeeping, and digital preservation have been reviewed in IS 431 “American Archives and Manuscripts,” IS 233 “Records and Information Resources Management,” and IS 289, “Digital Preservation,” and focus on the aspects of these issues most germane to electronic records.
- Come to class prepared to discuss the readings. See “How to Read a Book,” (http://pne.people.si.umich.edu/PDF/howtoread.pdf).
- Forfeit the use of your laptop and other electronic devices during class time, except for group work.
- Participate in discussions. In particular, speak up when you disagree. A classroom is a space for discussion, not just a lecture. This course will explore new and rapidly evolving issues. Often, little consensus has emerged as to the best course of action. You are thus particularly encouraged to question the assumptions of the readings, the instructor, and your fellow students, as long as you do so respectfully. In doing so, you will sharpen your ability for critical thinking, innovation, debate, and public speaking, skills fundamental to your future professional life.
Written work should be of high quality. If you have concerns about writing, address them early. A useful resource is UCLA’s Graduate Writing Center (http://gsrc.ucla.edu/gwc/).

Assignments must be turned in according to the scheduled due dates. In particular, no incompletes will be given.

If you feel that you may need an accommodation for a disability or have any other special needs, make an appointment to discuss this with the instructor. I will best be able to address special circumstances if I know about them early in the term. The website for the UCLA Office for Students with Disabilities (www.osd.ucla.edu) contains a wealth of useful of information as well as official policies about this issue.

4. Course assignments

Grades will be assigned based upon the level of critical and original thinking, depth of analysis of real-life situations, professional presentation of assignments, and class participation (40%).

1. Self-inventories (20%)
These are done individually. They are meant to be short — 2-3 pages single-spaced. The main objective is to get you to examine your current electronic recordkeeping environment and evaluate its implications both in terms of liability and affectivity.

a. Draw up an inventory of your personal records and assets. Which ones do you hold on paper? Electronically? What are the categories of records? What are retention periods for each category? What are the implications (liability, affective) of losing access to these records? What is your current electronic records preservation strategy? (Due Week 3, 10%)

b. Draw up an inventory of the records of your digital self (traces you’ve left in systems that you do not control). What policies govern the retention and disposition of these records (read the terms of service)? How can you preserve or dispose of them? Begin with a simple Google search, but don’t forget images and videos, and also try other search engines and aggregators, e.g. claimid.com or spokeo.com. (Due Week 5, 10%)

2. Recordkeeping strategies (40%)
This is a more substantial endeavor, by yourself or in teams of two. Loosely following the DIRKS business process analysis framework, teams will gather information and analyze the existing recordkeeping situation, present findings, and propose recommendations. You will have the whole term to work on the issues, with the report due June 1st.

a. Around the world, the development of the scientific “cyber-infrastructure” is leading funding agencies to request that researchers provide “data management plans” that include provisions for public sharing of data.

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Interview researchers in GSE&IS and find out how they intend to meet this requirement. What kinds of data do they collect? What other documents should be preserved along with data? Prepare a report to the IS Faculty on this issue.

b. Since 2010, GSE&IS has shifted to web-based course evaluations. Who has institutional authority over them? What is the status of these documents under California public records law? What about the quantitative section (see http://courseevals.uoregon.edu)? What about statistics taken of these evaluations, e.g., mood (see http://myedu.com)? Or the possibility of extracting measurements from the written comments (see http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-02738-8_14). Prepare a report to the IS Faculty on this issue.

c. The UCLA “Faculty Guide to Public Records Responses” suggest that faculty have a “retention and disposal practice that makes good business, education and research sense.” Furthermore, Chancellor Block reminded faculty in 2007 (“Important Information Regarding Public Records Obligations”) that “Email communications that relate to University business are records that may be subject to disclosure under the CPRA. Emails may not simply “disappear” by a press of the “delete” button. Thus, I urge all University employees to carefully consider the tone and content of what they commit to Email or other tangible forms of communication.” What constitutes then an appropriate “disposal practice” for faculty? Write a report to the IS faculty.

d. In their teaching and research activities, faculty generate and handle many different kinds of records, related to editorial activities, evaluation of student performances, peer-review, research data, and their own creative output. Draw up a records inventory for a faculty of the Department. Provide them with (a) a preservation strategy that meets both legal obligations and patrimonial needs and (b) an action plan to implement this strategy.

e. Draw up a personal records inventory for a friend or family member. Provide them with (a) a preservation strategy that meets both legal obligations and patrimonial needs and (b) an action plan to implement this strategy.

f. The Data.ca.gov aims to increase the transparency of California governmental institutions, as well as to encourage reuse of their data for potential innovation by third-parties. Identify the sources of data generated by the IS department that might increase its transparency. How would these dataset be described and presented to the general public? What particular sets might foster innovation? What kind of privacy challenges and trade-offs might this pose? Prepare a report to the IS faculty on this issue.

\[\text{2 See also http://www.ucsusa.org/center-science-and-democracy/protecting-scientists-harassment/freedom-bully-how-laws#}\]
g. One of your friend is the victim of ‘revenge porn.’ Research and write an action plan that provides them with a comparative cost/benefit analysis of different possible strategies.

h. UCLA recently signed a contract with Google as a provider for campus-wide mail services. Given the public record characters of UCLA employees professional emails, the potential confidential character of faculty-student communication, the widespread use of professional email account for both professional and personal communications, write a report to the UCLA senate that outlines the significance and implications of this shift for faculty’s professional practice.3

i. Cloud-based storage has become widely used in recent years, as a mode of sharing documents, synchronize folders across devices, and backup. Such practices expose UCLA faculty and researchers to numerous risks and may run afoul of regulations that provides for the security and confidentiality of certain classes of documents. UCLA has signed a contract with Box to provide cloud storage services to the UCLA community: write a report to Jim Davis, Chief Academic Technology Officer, that advises the Office of Information Technology on a strategy to ensure that staff and faculty are aware of the advantages of these new institutional arrangements.4

The assignment will consist of 4 distinct elements:
1. A cover letter/executive summary that articulates both the rationale and the main recommendations for the report;
2. An introduction that situates the recordkeeping issues into its broader context (e.g., social, cultural, technological);
3. The report itself;
4. An oral presentation that recapitulates 2 and 3.

3. Records in culture (extra credit, 10%)

The collection of short stories Fictions by Jorge Luis Borges is widely acknowledged and cited as articulating in a literary fashion the social role and cultural imaginary of libraries. The following works perform similar work in the context of records and bureaucracy. Choosing one, write a 1000-words essay that articulates its significance and implications for the professional practice of records management, due June 1st.

José Saramago, All the Names, Mariner 2001.

3 https://www.it.ucla.edu/accounts/get-account/bruin-online.

5. **Course schedule**

**Week 1 (March 30): Introduction, overview, definitions**

**Week 2 (April 6): Email**

**Guest speaker:** Claire Kennedy, Archivist and Librarian at John Baldessari Art Enterprise, Venice, MLIS 2011.

**Readings**


**Supplemental**


**Week 3 (April 13): Files, Storage, Preservation, Formats**

**Readings:**


**Browse:**
- [https://www.arkovi.com/](https://www.arkovi.com/)

**Due:** self-inventory #1

### Week 4 (April 20): Social Media

**Guest speaker:** Mary Behshid, Records Manager at JPL, MLIS 2009.

**Readings:**

### Week 5 (April 27): Process and Strategies

**Readings**
- DIRKS Manual (Part I, browse Part II & 3)
- Cook, Terry: Byte-ing Off What You Can Chew: Electronic Records Strategies for Small Archival Institutions:

**Supplemental**


**Discussion/due:** self-inventory #2

**Week 6 (May 4): On the Record, All the Time**

**Guest speaker:** Snowden Becker, Program Manager, Department of Information Studies, MLIS 2001.


**Week 7 (May 11th): Data as Records/Transparency**

**Readings:**


Supplemental


Discussion: final reports

Week 8 (May 18th): The Space of Non-Records: Forgetting and Oblivion

Guest speaker: Kelly Minta, Records and Information Management Analyst, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, MLIS 2013.

Readings:


Supplemental


Week 9 (May 25th): Memorial Day Holiday
Week 10 (June 1st): Class Presentations