Web 2.0 and Access to Digital Archives

Peter van Garderen; University of Amsterdam. Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Abstract

This is a brief abstract of the 'Web 2.0 and Access to Digital Archives' presentation at the IS&T Archiving 2006 conference. A webcast of the full presentation is available online at: http://archivemati.ca/papers-presentations.

Much of the activity in the digital archiving community over the past decade has been focused on critical (and necessary) preservation issues like file formats, preservation metadata and repository architectures. However, the purpose of establishing digital archives is to ensure the ongoing accessibility and usability of the digital information that they preserve.

One of the key concept in the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) reference model is that of the 'Designated Community' and the archives' responsibility to make preserved information available and understandable to this community. So how do we make digital information more accessible, usable and understable to designated communities?

This presentation reviews the technical and functional architectures of digital archives access systems and speculates whether and how Web 2.0 technologies might be used to improve the quality and effectiveness of these systems.

Web 2.0 is mostly a marketing buzz-word that is currently being used to refer to a number of next-generation web trends and technologies. These are characterized by open system architectures, integrated web services, rich client interfaces, syndication, personalization, and location-specific services.

However, Web 2.0 trends are much more than a new set of tools and technologies. Web 2.0 is most recognizable by a shift towards de-centralized management of information (e.g. folksonomy tagging, Wikipedia, etc.) which includes an explicit trust in the end-user and systems that get better as more people use them. It is these emerging practices that offer the most promise to improving the accessibility of information that is preserved in digital archives.

Author Biography

Peter van Garderen is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Archives and Information Studies at the University of Amsterdam. This presentation is based on early findings from his PhD research (see http://archivemati.ca/about/). Since 2001, Peter has been providing consulting services through his Vancouver-based company Artefactual Systems to organizations that are designing and implementing electronic records programs, digital preservation initiatives and archives management software. Peter is the former project coordinator for the InterPARES research project and a graduate of the University of British Columbia's Master of Archival Studies and Software Engineering programs.