



a place of mind

InterPARES Trust

Virtual Authenticity in Practice

Research Day 2015: Foundations & Innovations

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Session 5

Corinne Rogers

University of British Columbia



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

ADMISSION OF FORGED DOCUMENT MID-TRIAL IN BILLION DOLLAR SUIT

- “When your \$1.4 billion case rests on six documents, it is essential that they are all, well, *real*.” (aceds.org, March 15, 2015)

**Perry Mason Moment
Halts Moncrief \$1.37
Billion Gazprom Suit**

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-02-02/>

*In the shadow of Jenkinson...**

- Authenticity of records is fundamental to archival theory and practice
- Reified in laws, standards, codes of practice, research recommendations
- And yet, in the digital environment it is still discussed as an urgent problem – *why?*

**...apologies to Bruno Latour*

record
important
professionals
metadata
respondents
archives
evidence
importance
management
required
validation
creation
preservation
law
technology
business
extremely
social
Archives
many
evidence
Problems
importance

authenticity records

survey
electronic
information
digital
used
research
measures
indicators
techniques
access
time
technical
security
particular
practice
managing
specifically
populations
degree
defined
process
professional
governing
traditional
professional
America
software
industry
methods
members
define
value
ensure
human
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Authenticity
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Research questions

- how do records professionals approach the concept of authenticity in the digital environment?
 - What indicators do they apply to ensure authenticity?
 - What indicators do they rely on when required to make an assessment of authenticity?

Focus of inquiry

- Work practice** : what indicators are used most, least
- Experience** : who has been required to authenticate records; does their work practice differ
- Beliefs** : is there a difference in perceived value of indicators from work practice; is there a difference based on experience

Variables

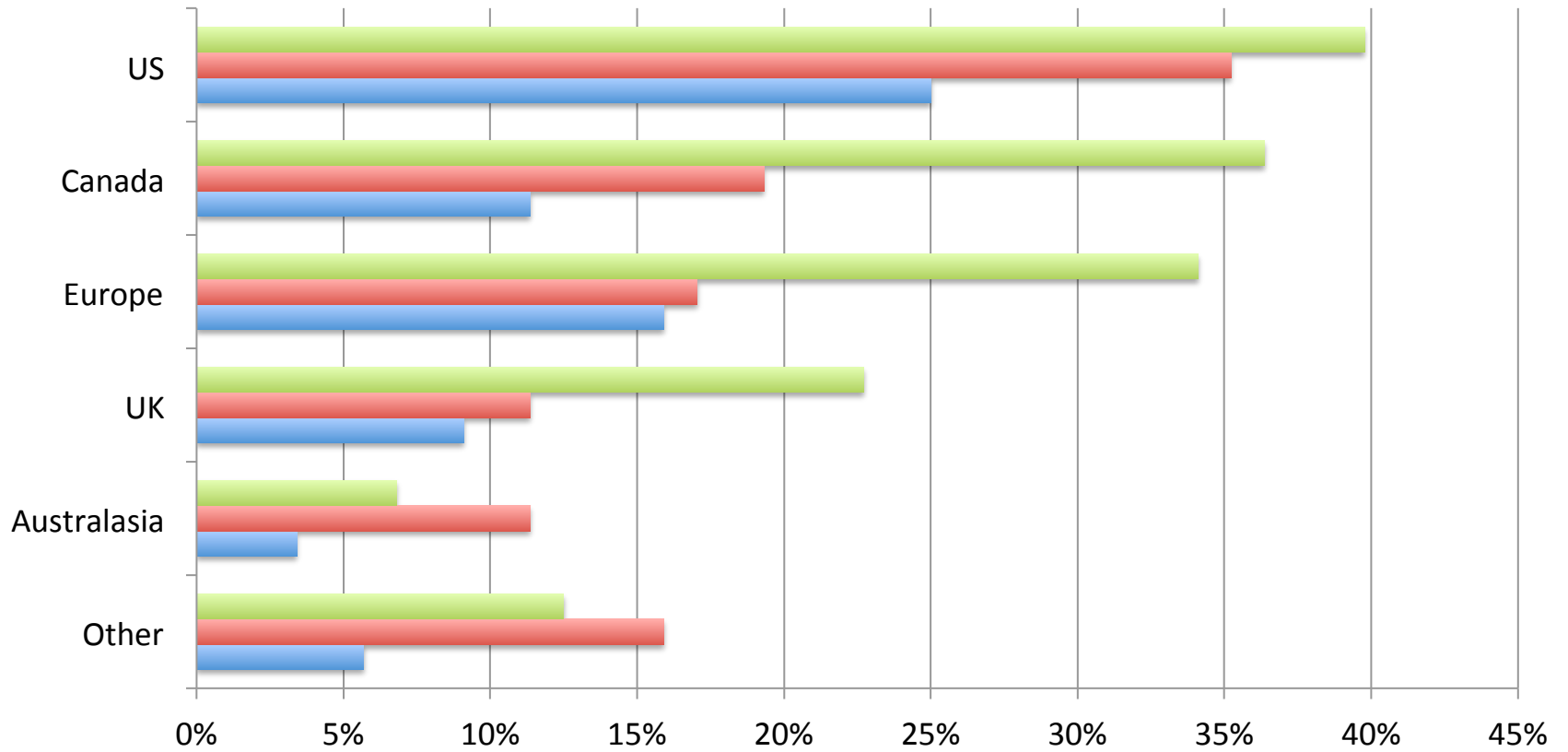
- Independent
 - Profession
 - Sector
 - Legal framework
 - Experience
- Dependent
 - Indicators of authenticity

Indicators of authenticity

S/T	Indicator
S	Archival description
S	Classification scheme or file plan
S	Documentation about the system (design, operation, management, etc.)
S	Retention and disposition schedules
S	Written policies and procedures governing digital records
S	Written policies and procedures governing the records system
T	Access controls/security measures
T	Audit logs
T	Cryptographic validation techniques
T	Documentation about the software used to create and manage digital records
T	Information about changes to the digital records over time
T	Information about preservation actions taken on the records
T	Standardized metadata

Questionnaire

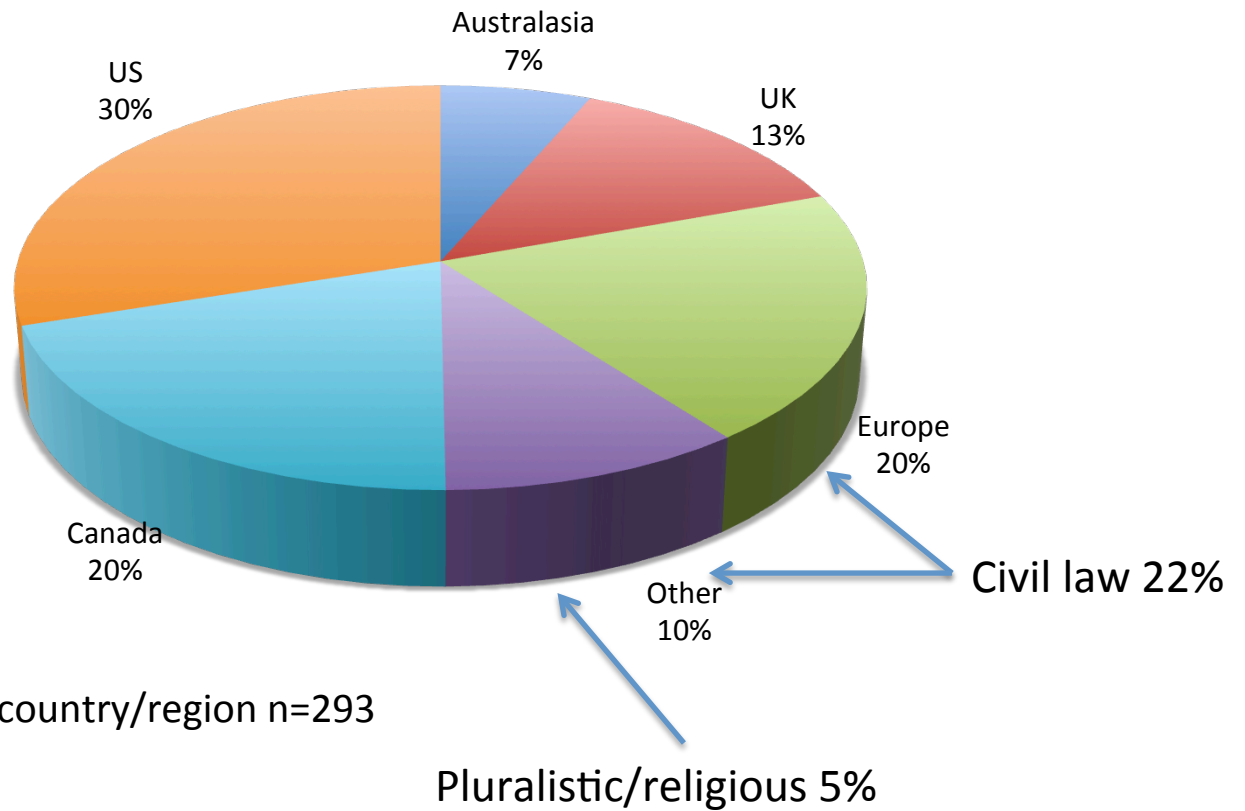
Archivist RM Other



N=293

Questionnaire

Common law 73%



Work practice

WORK PRACTICE - ALL RESPONDENTS			
Rank	Indicators	Frequency	S/T
1	Classification scheme or file plan	61%	S
2	Written policies - records system	60%	S
3	Written policies - digital records	55%	S
4	Standardized metadata	54%	T
5	Access controls/security measures	53%	T
6	Retention and disposition schedules	51%	S
7	Documentation about the system	51%	S
8	Archival description	49%	S
9	Documentation about the software	41%	T
10	Information about changes over time	40%	T
11	Preservation actions taken	40%	T
12	Audit logs	30%	T
13	Cryptographic validation techniques	21%	T

Belief

BELIEF - ALL RESPONDENTS			
Rank	Indicators	Frequency	S/T
1	Information about changes over time	94%	T
2	Access controls/security measures	88%	T
3	Preservation actions taken	87%	T
4	Documentation about the system	85%	S
5	Written policies - digital records	84%	S
6	Documentation about the software	80%	T
7	Written policies - records system	78%	S
8	Audit logs	76%	T
9	Standardized metadata	68%	T
10	Cryptographic validation techniques	66%	T
11	Classification scheme or file plan	64%	S
12	Retention and disposition schedules	64%	S
13	Archival description	51%	S

Ranking of indicators

- Social indicators rank 4.5 out of 13 in work practice
- Technical indicators rank 5.6 out of 13 in belief

	WORK PRACTICE	BELIEF
TECHNICAL	9.1	5.6
SOCIAL	4.5	8.7

Definitions

- 46% of respondents who offered a definition (n=175) define authenticity in terms of integrity and security
- 8% reported no definition of authenticity: “Don’t know”; “I believe that we are still debating the finer definition of this.”
- Respondents overall adopt a pragmatic approach to authenticity, balancing controls with efficiency
“I want the records as authentic as they need to be... just authentic enough...” (the Goldilocks approach)

Differences

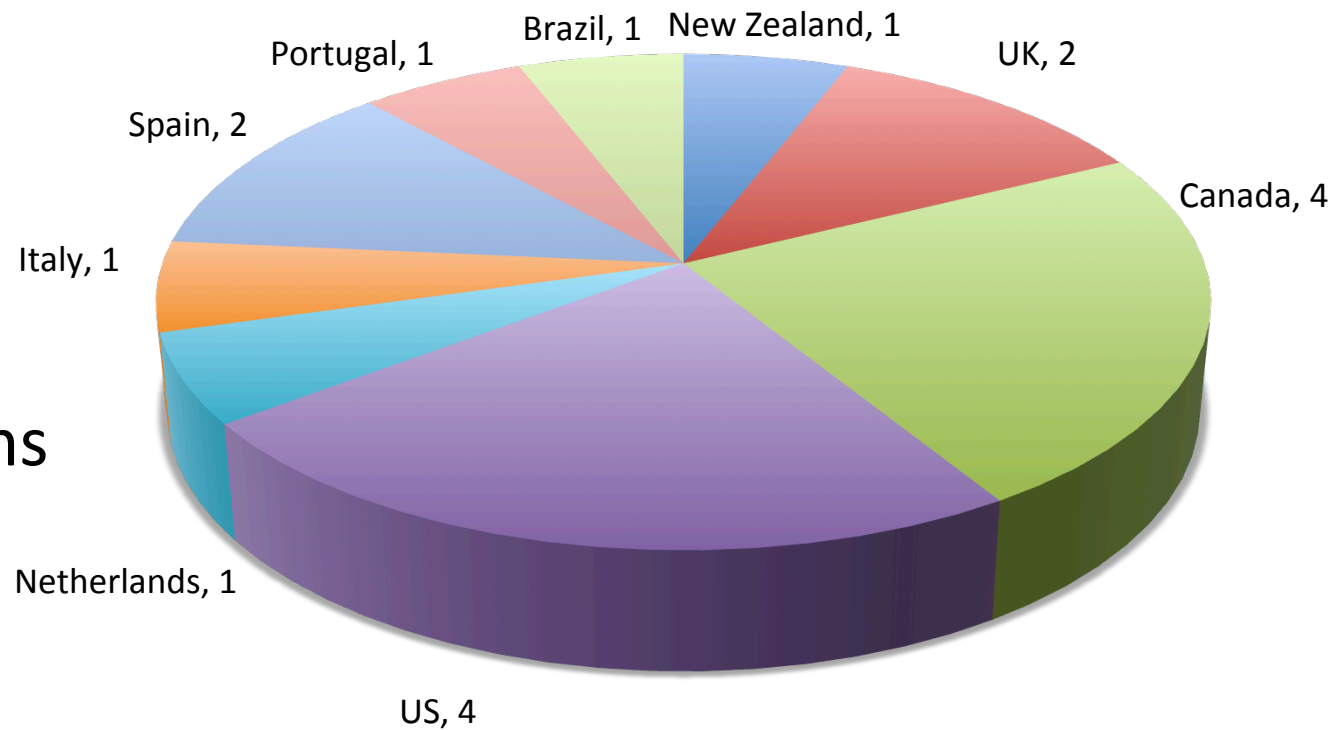
- Do significance tests (Pearson chi2) indicate differences in work practice and belief based on variables?

	# of Indicators:	
	Work	Belief
✓ Professional identity	4	2
✓ Sector	3	0
✓ Experience	1	5
✗ Country	0	0
✗ Legal system	0	0

Interviews

Balance of:

- professions
- sectors
- experience
- legal systems
- countries



Conclusions

- What mechanisms do records professionals use and rely on in order to determine and manage authenticity?
 1. records professionals are strategic, realistic, pragmatic given resources, expectations, and requirements
 2. social mechanisms ensure authenticity, while technical mechanisms prove authenticity at a moment in time

Conclusions

- Is the traditional model of authenticity of records used in the digital environment and if so, to what degree? And, Is the traditional model of authenticity sufficient?
 1. It still forms the foundation, but requires development
 2. In practice, the concept of authenticity is tied to purpose (focus of creator) or use (focus of user); getting the job done
 3. Theoretical models may be accepted in principle, but ignored in practice

Conclusions

- Complexity and ambiguity are driving pragmatic responses to a problem situation
- Work practice and belief (perceived value) in indicators of authenticity are qualitatively different
- Security has become the “new authenticity”, mediated by technology

Thank you

Corinne Rogers

corinne.rogers@ubc.ca

“Some problems are so complex that you have to be highly intelligent and well informed just to be undecided about them.”

--Laurence J. Peter