

*Trusting Records in the Cloud*. London, UK: Facet Publishing, 2019. Paperback, 306p. \$91.59 (£69.95) (ISBN: 9781783304028).

*Trusting Records in the Cloud* represents the results of the latest phase of InterPARES (International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems), an international research project established in 1998 to investigate preserving the evidential value of records in electronic record systems.<sup>5</sup> The project has generated numerous case studies from across the globe under international teams representing North and Latin America, Europe, Asia, Australasia, Africa, and NATO. InterPARES Trust (hereafter, ITrust) focuses on digital records shared and stored in the cloud, defined as infrastructures and services distributed across a network, such as the internet.

The publication of this book could not be more timely, given the prevalence of digital-cloud storage and computing in our everyday lives. For example, how do we know that the digital objects in our electronic systems are what they purport to be? What are the necessary requirements for ensuring their value as trustworthy evidence? How do we know if they have been significantly changed or altered over time, intentionally manipulated or unintentionally altered by system upgrades or data migration?

These are serious concerns in the digital environment for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the nature of digital objects. Unlike their physical counterparts, in which structure, form, and content are fixed and inherently embedded, digital records are assembled on demand and reproduced every time they are accessed. Furthermore, the contextual clues we take for granted in the analog world regarding provenance and function (think of a memo with a particular format, header information, and date) must be built into digital records if we are to preserve them. The challenge is compounded in the cloud, which introduces third-party services, systems, and software as intermediaries between users and collections of records.

For the past two decades, the InterPARES project has been led by Luciana Duranti, who is concurrently a professor of archival theory and diplomatics at the University of British Columbia and director of the Centre for the International Study of Contemporary Records and Archives. Duranti is perhaps best known for her work applying the study of form, function, and provenance, or diplomatics, to the authentication of electronic records.<sup>6</sup>

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5. The InterPARES Project, <https://www.interpares.org>.

6. See, for example, Luciana Duranti, "Concepts and Principles for the Management of Electronic Records, or Records Management Theory in Archival Diplomats," *Records Management Journal* 20, no. 1: 78–95.

*Trusting Records in the Cloud* presents the results from the fourth phase of the project<sup>7</sup> in three broad thematic areas, addressing why issues regarding online records matter, what can be done to address these issues, and how records professionals should prepare themselves to meet the challenges. Each chapter presents a facet of the ITrust project, much of which has focused on studies of open government and citizen engagement as critical components of national trust. The success of these endeavors is contingent upon establishing a balance among systems, stakeholders, and comprehensive policies, all working together to develop systems of trust. At the heart of *Trusting Records in the Cloud* are the theories, tools, and strategies embraced by archivists and records managers, employed in electronic systems in the service of establishing and preserving the evidentiary value of records. These include the ability to apply retention and disposition to records, authentication mechanisms, and the appropriate metadata to describe them.

A hidden gem and a highlight for me as an institutional archivist and records manager was the PaaST (Preservation as a Service for Trust) conceptual model, briefly touched on in the book.<sup>8</sup> PaaST refers to a holistic preservation environment defined by requirements rather than systems, making it useful for managing multiple systems with preservation needs. This is a valuable contribution to digital preservation that deserves further consideration.

The ITrust glossary, an abridged version of which is found in the book's appendix, will also be of broad interest, and critical to anyone who wants to avoid confusing conversations with IT staff about differing definitions of terms such as "archives" and "classification."<sup>9</sup> The usefulness of the glossary is enhanced by the inclusion of concurrent definitions from multiple perspectives.

*Trusting Records in the Cloud* has given me a new perspective on my work. It confirms what institutional archivists and records managers have known for some time: the road ahead is challenging, but not impossible. It demands that we be agents for change in a culture dominated by systems and infrastructure decisions made by others, lest we become complicit in the loss of control of our valuable digital assets. We must all embrace or at least champion the role of records professionals so that we do not forfeit our valuable insight and participation in building, maintaining, and preserving our digital cultural heritage.

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7. InterPARES Trust Project, <https://interparestrust.org>.

8. See NA12 (2018) Preservation as a Service for Trust (PaaST), [https://interparestrust.org/trust/research\\_dissemination](https://interparestrust.org/trust/research_dissemination).

9. One of the most useful ITrust products is the Trust Terminology Database, <https://interparestrust.org/terminology>, presented in abridged form in the book. Richard Pearce Moses is the editor of this and the Society of American Archivists Glossary.

The InterPARES and ITrust projects are without a doubt of great significance to the archival and records management disciplines. As with many things of great value, however, it requires some effort to plumb the depths of what it has to offer. Nevertheless, I urge archivists, special collections librarians, and records managers, especially those considering or actively moving their digital repositories to the cloud, to take the time and effort to become familiar with these projects and the book.—*Tamara E. Livingston, Kennesaw State University*



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