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Original, Original Document and Authentic Document: Revisiting the Relationship of Concepts

Abstract

Within the framework of the traditional methodology of records appraisal, tasks of transferring digital records, created without prior paper documentation, to archival storage present archivists with a dilemma of storing an original of a digital record. However, in electronic environment storing the original as the first and only copy of the record is fundamentally impossible. The article strives to substantiate the methodological approach generated in international practice to ensure storage of digital records. The article considers the origin and development of the concept of “original” in national terminological standards, meaning first or only copy of a record. The author draws attention to the fact that this term was introduced and used in conjunction with

the term “official record.” It was not universal in its nature, only to be used in the field of management. Concurrently, the term “original document” was used; this was associated with possibility of the author identifying the record. The analysis concludes that under modern conditions, the context for the term “original document” has been lost, and, therefore, its continued use is impracticable. Information technology induces to introduce the term “authentic document.” In recent years, it has been used due to studying international standards of records management. The concept of “authentic document” is usually translated as “original,” however, these concepts are not completely synonymous. Authenticity of a record implies not simply availability of information about its author, time and place of creation, but also a need to properly certify them. The introduction of the term “authentic record” allows to create a new methodological paradigm of storing digital records in a trusted execution environment, using migration and conversion procedures and creating legal conditions for usage of digital duplicates of paper records.

Keywords

Original, original document, digital document, authentic document, long-term storage, archival storage.

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