

## **Spanish archival experiences in the net: AER Project**

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The AER Project (Proyecto Archivos Españoles en Red = Spanish Archives on the Net; <<http://www.aer.es>>) is an archival worldwide project whose fundamental purpose is to make the content of Spanish Archives available over the Internet, incorporating both descriptions and digitised images of documents kept in the main Spanish Archives.

The AER Project has been developed by the Spanish State Archives Bureau of the Ministry of Culture of Spain in response to the need to tackle the challenges to archives presented by new information technologies.

If Archives must accept new challenges, play a more active role in the dissemination of information, and respond to ever more demanding and qualified user demands, AER is giving enormous visibility to the documentary heritage housed in Spanish Archives over the Internet. The AER platform makes standardised pre-existing State Archive data-bases available over the Internet and links archival descriptions to a digital image of the document for its consult on the PC screen.

In order to develop the contents of AER, major preparatory work on the archival description of records has had to be carried out to bring them into line with international standards.

Archive information is structured in a hierarchical manner applying a multilevel rule describing the most general to the most particular (ISAD -G-). Contextual information is fundamental to archival description and, furthermore, standards have been established (ISAAR -CPF-) to deal with the problem of context.

AER incorporates an intranet to facilitate all internal management including the organisation and description of documentary resources, movement of resources, standardisation, management of copying and restoration of documents.

The spirit and purpose of the project is that it should be extended to include other Spanish and Latin American archives, thus creating a space that could be called the 'Iber-Archives', the consolidated key to which is the Electronic Guide to Spanish and Latin American Archives.

AER is a flexible, ongoing project committed to meeting the challenges associated with making the content of the Archives available on the Web, eradicating the digital divide, and creating access for all to heritage over the Internet.