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The Construction of the Past: Towards a Theory for Knowing the Past

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Samenvatting	This paper presents Constructed Past Theory, an epistemological theory about how we come to know things that happened or existed in the past. The theory is expounded both in text and in a formal model comprising UML class diagrams. The ideas presented here have been developed in a half century of experience as a practitioner in the management of information and automated systems in the US government and as a researcher in several collaborations, notably the four international and multidisciplinary InterPARES projects. This work is part of a broader initiative, providing a conceptual framework for reformulating the concepts and theories of archival science in order to enable a new discipline whose assertions are empirically and, wherever possible, quantitatively testable. The new discipline, called archival engineering, is intended to provide an appropriate, coherent foundation for the development of systems and applications for managing, preserving and providing access to digital information, development which is necessitated by the exponential growth and explosive diversification of data recorded in digital form and the use of digital data in an ever increasing variety of domains. Both the text and model are an initial exposition of the theory that both requires and invites further development.
Aantekeningen	Knowledge of the past comes from vestiges and imprints, where vestiges are persistent objects that survive from former times and imprints are previously generated constructions of the past.
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