



DOCUMENTATION WORKING GROUP

NEWSLETTER, December 2006

CONTENT

- From the Coordinators
- What we intend to do?
- Assessment of the content of the conservation documentation used in memory institutions. A Checklist
- Terminology for art conservators: a new approach - Mireia Xarrié
- Paper Conservation Database – Istvan Kecskeméti
- Projects and Initiatives related
 - CEN TC 346
 - EPOCH
 - BRICKS
 - RecorDIM
 - EROS
- Then you are interested to become a member of ICOM-CC...
- Useful links

From the Coordinators

During the last ICOM-CC Conference, held in The Hague 2005, the Documentation Working Group (DWG) got both the new coordinator – Mrs Kriste Sibul and the assistant coordinator – Ms Dahlia Mees. On behalf of us, we would like to thank the former Coordinator Mrs G n vienne Aitken, who stood up for the working group 6 years.

During the working period 2005-2008, we try to justify the confidence of the group and we hope that our rather young experience in this field could bring together some good ideas. At the same time, we would like appoint the important role of the conservation documentation and in this way, to gather more people to join to our group.

ICOM-CC members - conservators, curators, scientists – were representatives of institutions with diverse possibilities. Creation and preservation of the new information is everyday work of all these “parties”, focusing dependently of their narrow interest on Context – Object – Materials – Damages – Analysis – Conservation – Preservation. In each point different people with wide-ranging knowledge were adding the new information related to the objects. Clearly, the conservation documentation is an essential part of our common history like the object itself. One of our tasks is to make it visible.

With an opportunity to use computerized world’s advantages the need of rather unified creation of information comes. In this field archives and libraries appears to be more advanced, somewhat different is with museums... One of the reasons could be found on the fact, that museums were describing the huge amount of objects made from all kinds of materials, and obviously, this could open the people’s mind, p ex for one damage there one can find many explanations, each of them having of different nuance.

When “the common language” for the description of cultural heritage is found, eventually, the created digital material could give a tremendous advantage both to the museum specialists and to the public.

Besides being an everyday tool for researches, it also forms a part from a broader preservation strategy: p ex digitizing of documents, books, gives the possibility to study them without touching the originals, which could safely lay in storages, instead. In the case of 3D objects, the task of digitization could vary from database imaging to complicated systems showing the inside of the object (X-ray).

Of course, negative aspects of the modern world should be considered – the easiest principle to keep in mind could be not freely open the information which has not been asked by the wider public.

In the present, first newsletter of ours, you will find our Working Plan what we with some limits, try to follow. Also, the checklist, what we ask institutions to fill for assessment of the content of the conservation documentation.

Two different examples were given to describe the extensity of the documentation: one about database for the specialists and one about the terminology. Obviously, the limited list of activities which were carried out in the field of conservation documentation and links of related resources is provided, too.

Enjoy the reading and give us the feedback,

Kriste Sibul & Dahlia Mees

What we intend to do? Our WP

A. Databases

- Inventory of documentary tools (databases) used by research institutions in the field of heritage conservation and restoration.
- Promote the connection of databases, which were geographically separated, but working on a comparable content.
- Create interactive encoding mode of scientific analysis and condition reports inside databases.
- Determine an ontological model based on the CIDOC-CRM reference in order to make databases inter-operative.
- Develop a website collecting various databases with limited access to institutions and specialized people in the field of heritage.

B. Co-operation

Development of an indexation vocabulary for objects and techniques (glossary and multilingual dictionary with pictures) for the use of institutions working in the field of heritage, museums and exhibition managers.

C. Sharing

Activate exchanges with countries where heritage conservation must be improved. Associate them as research partner (Turkey, Middle-East countries, Central Asia).

The overview of aforementioned objectives will be given at the next Triennial Meeting. Of course, introducing the different activities which

could be considered as the part of conservation documentation, are expected, as well.

The **15th Triennial Meeting** will be held in New Dehli, India, from 22-26 September 2008.

The broader theme of the Meeting ***Diversity in Heritage Conservation: Tradition, Innovation and Participation*** were called out. The interested people are welcomed to send their abstracts to the coordinator from the 1st of January to middle of the April 2007. More precise information about the writing, selection etc condition will be posted soon on the website of ICOM-CC <http://icom-cc.icom.museum>.

Assessment of the content of the conservation documentation used in memory institutions Checklist

In modern world, using the new media for description of our cultural heritage provides amongst the recognized ones and an opportunity to create different levels of access. Objects, which traditionally have been part of static museum collections and could still be visited locally, have started to move in to the internet and in this way, help us to share our cultural heritage.

It is true for conservation documentation, also. Descriptions on cards were yesterday, almost, but can't be ignored. Linking the "old" and "new" documentations might be more crucial than it seems at first place, especially in the sense of preservation. More than ever common understanding about terminology, conservation and preservation is needed.

The intent of following checklist is to make an inventory of documentary tools (databases) used by institutions in the field of heritage conservation and restoration.

The short-term objective of this work is to promote the development of databases with similar content, both on print and digital forms.

The long-term objective is to create a website with limited access, which could consist of examples (demo-versions) and advice-links about conservation documentation.

When filling the questionnaire, please note, that YES or NO answers were expected, only, of course, more precise information is very welcomed, too. When choosing the simplest way, the filling of this checklist should not take more than 10 minutes.

You can find a form from the website of our group: <http://icom-cc.icom.museum/WG/Documentation/Newsletters/>. Please return the filled checklist to Kriste Sibul, kriste.sibul@kanut.ee at the end of the year 2007, so we can make some conclusions during the Meeting.

The checklist includes the following topics:

Management of documentation

1. There is a written policy that guides the documentation procedure
2. There is a written policy or some other documents (guidelines, standards) which can be used as bases for long-term preservation of the documentation, both on paper ("cards") and electronic media
3. Conservation documentation (CD) is an organic part of the documentation system in institution which is developed using the CRM
4. Documentation department or relevant unit is responsible on documentation
5. There is a limited /open access to the conservation documentation

General

6. Any additional information, i.e. photographic / digital images were organic part of conservation documentation
7. New information formed during the conservation process is recognized as an important part of objects history and thus as a part of our cultural heritage
8. The used conservation documentation system is adequate and meets the professional needs

Cataloguing

9. Catalogue information is added by authorized persons other than conservator
10. Catalogue information includes minimum information:
 - object number,
 - object name,
 - brief physical description,
 - location information,
 - (owner if different from the organization),
 - image (if exists)
11. Catalogue information, which is added at some other level, p. ex during the conservation process, includes also:
 - description information (dimensions, inscriptions, colour, material),
 - content and subject information
 - production information (maker, technique),
 - historical information
 - bibliographical information
 - collection management information

Object condition assessment

12. As a tool for preventive conservation institution uses the condition checklist

13. As a bases of the condition checklist, institution uses the special software (could be commercial or institutional)
14. Objects' condition is described by a conservator or a curator etc like a survey or on a separate record, but what is linked with an object documentation
15. Information which is formed during scientific examination is an organic part of conservation documentation
16. Information about environmental conditions is formed by using related software
17. Requirements for object handling, display, storage, packing and transport are linked to object documentation
18. Institution uses a software to determine the exhibition duration / conservation treatment priority

Conservation

19. Documentation of conservation processes is the part of conservators' everyday work
20. Conservation treatments were recorded freely, but standardized forms
21. Treatments were described by using the standard terminology (termlists)

Terminology for art conservators: a new approach

Mireia Xarrié, art historian, MA, Spain

Documentation is simply information which provides us with an understanding of an object so that we can manage, protect, preserve and/or conserve it to the best of our ability. For documentation to be effective a degree of discipline is required. If we wish to retrieve information then we must be sure about the terms we use to recall are those we use to input.

The diversity of museum collections has been reflected in the diversity and richness of the vocabulary used to describe museum objects. These past years I have been searching for conservation terminology; currently it is the topic of my Ph.D. research; and last year I edited "Glossary of art conservation I, II, III".

The definition of a glossary is a list of terms with the definitions for those terms. Traditionally, a glossary appears at the end a book and includes terms within that book which are either newly introduced or at least uncommon. And the definition of a dictionary is a list of words with their definitions, a list of characters with their glyphs, or a list of words with corresponding words in other languages. In some languages, words can appear in many different forms, but only the lemma

form appears as the main word or headword in most dictionaries.

The methodology applied in "Glossary of art conservation" was closer to a process of compilation of an inventory then rewriting a glossary or a dictionary. The research work has consisted in "collecting" and ordering terms written by European and American prestigious professionals. So the bibliographical sources were written in English, French, Spanish, Italian and German, all translated to English and the definitions were arranged in alphabetical order in each volume.

This first edition of Glossary of art conservation (vol. I,II,III) contain five hundred terms from eighty sources. Here it is an example of how are the terms described:

Fresco

Technique of wall painting where the paint is applied on the fresh laid damp lime plaster, so that the pigments, which are ground in pure water-or in the lime water or milk of lime-are fixed by carbonization of the calcium hydroxide from the wet intonaco or whitewash.

Source: Mora 326

Painting on plaster with limewater as a medium

There are two types, buon fresco or true fresco, and fresco secco or dry fresco. Both types are often finished in egg tempera.

Source: Dudley & Wilkinson 210

A highly skilled method of wall or ceiling painting, of ancient origin, perfected during the Renaissance in Italy. The paint used was of the distemper/Tempera type, in which the colours are mixed with some binding substance soluble in water, and was usually applied to the wet plaster. In the second quarter of the nineteenth century the interest in fresco painting revived, especially in England and Germany. Some of these so-called frescoes were in fact executed in oil-based paint, unlike their Renaissance predecessors.

Source: Goldman 28-9

Although an inventory can never be completed, all scientific research it reflects the state of that science at given moment, it is also worth to show the results to the scientific community.

Dr. Dennis Allsopp, President of the International Biodeterioration and Biodegradation Society and The International Biodeterioration Research Group (IBRG), wrote about the Glossaries: *"There is always a need for authoritative glossaries and dictionaries, but few scholars have the resolve or enthusiasm to begin such works, let alone develop and refine them over time. Any new work will be open to*

criticism for incompleteness, balance, utility and arrangement of material. Such ventures are on-going and are never truly finished, but become more and more useful as they evolve and grow. The appearance of the first three volumes of this new work, which seeks to include material from many disciplines, is to be greatly applauded. If the initial impetus is maintained over the years, this glossary will no doubt become a major world reference work in modern conservation studies."

Conservation records represent a vast source of information which is at present largely unexploited. One reason could be the richness of conservation itself, a multi-discipline that uses many terminologies from art and science's disciplines, another reason could be that the sources are not in internet, and its access means to travel to the libraries and be able to read in many foreign languages.

The inventory is not an end in itself. It is part of a process and now it has provided the basis for new volumes of "Glossary of art conservation" with new terms, new sources and with pictures.

Good documentation is recognized as being an essential element of modern conservation. Good and standardized terminology should be the aim in this New Era of information technology and shared information.

Author: Mireia Xarrié is an art historian (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1994) and belongs to a family with a long tradition in art conservation. In addition to her experience in the Barcelona based family restoration business, she participates on several international conservation organizations. Currently she is writing her Ph.D. about conservation terminology. Comments are welcomed: mxarrie@balaam-art.com

The EVTEK Paper Identification Database

<http://conservation.evtek.fi>

Istvan Kecskeméti, MA, EVTEK, Finland

The EVTEK Paper Identification Database is meant for educational purposes in paper conservation, paper history and technology. It has been created to collect data for historic paper characterisation and identification. The potential users are paper conservators, paper historians and print collectors, museums with archival or art on paper collections and others interested in historic paper and the development of paper manufacturing in Europe, the USA and Asia. The database was officially published in a seminar at EVTEK

Institute of Art and Design in September, 15th, 2006.

At this early stage of the Database, we at EVTEK Institute of Art and Design have concentrated on the documentation of Finnish handmade papers. Networking will be needed to create a wide collection of European paper making with documented information of thousands of real paper samples. We wish to invite educational institutes in paper conservation, paper museums and conservation institutes as well as paper conservators and paper historians to join as partners in adding data to the Database.

Content of the Database

The content of the Paper Identification Database is divided into the following headings. All have subheadings where data will be written or chosen from pre-selected menus:

BASIC INFORMATION

TYPE OF PAPER

WATER MARK

VISUAL OBSERVATION

MEASUREMENTS

FIBER ANALYSES AND SPOT TESTS

REFLECTOMETRIC ANALYSES

ACIDITY, pH VALUE

INFORMATION ON PAPER

ILLUSTRATION

END USE OF PAPER

Up to eight illustrations, like photographs of transmitted/reflected light or spectrometric curves, can be added to the Database. The Database has a maximum image size around 0,4 MB. The recommended image size and format is: 15X20CM, resolution 72 lpi, jpg format, image size when open 0,7 MB, image size when closed around 0,3 MB.

Contact:

Istvan Kecskemeti, istvan.kecskemeti@evtek.fi
EVTEK University of Applied Sciences, EVTEK Institute of Art and Design
Lummetie 2, 01300 FINLAND
tel. +358-20 7553 435, mobile +358-40 5002604
fax. +358-9-823 7489

Projects and Initiatives related

CEN TC 346 - Conservation of Cultural Heritage

Within the frame of CEN (European Committee for Standardisation) a Technical Committee (TC 346) has been established. The objective for TC 346 is to develop European Standards describing "the state of the art" within conservation of cultural heritage.

Scope of the CEN/TC 346 is the standardisation in the field of definitions and terminology, methods of testing and analysis, to support the characterisation of materials and deterioration processes of movable and immovable heritage, and the products and technologies used for the planning and execution of their conservation, restoration, repair and maintenance.

There are five Working Groups who have started their work:

WG 1 "General guidelines and terminology" has the responsibility for the drafting of:

- guidelines on conservation planning, including monitoring;
- standards on terminology dealing with moveable and immovable components, with degradation processes and its graphic and symbolic documentation;
- guidelines on security and safety conditions relating to the use of cultural heritage by the public.

WG 2 "Materials constituting the artefacts" has the responsibility for the drafting of standards on examination, characterisation, and analysis, including eventual sampling of the materials constituting the artefacts, and on the evaluation of the state of conservation of the artefacts.

WG 3 "Conservation works" has the responsibility for the drafting of standards on the evaluation of the methods and/or products performance and operating/working conditions in relation to the conservation/restoration, repair, maintenance and preventive conservation work on the evaluation of the methodologies to be used.

WG 4 "Environment" has the responsibility for the drafting of guidelines for the control of environmental variables, and of standards on the measurement of indoor, including exhibition and storage conditions, and outdoor environmental conditions, and on artefacts/environment interaction.

WG5 "Transportation and packaging methods" has the responsibility for the drafting of standards on showcases requirements and on packaging and transportation methods.

EPOCH

European Research Network on Excellence in Processing Open Cultural Heritage <http://www.epoch-net.org/>. Epoch is funded by the European Commission under the Community's Sixth Framework Programme, contract no. IST-2002-507382.

EPOCH is a network of about a hundred European cultural institutions joining their efforts to improve the quality and effectiveness of the use of Information and Communication Technology for Cultural Heritage.

Participants include university departments, research centres, heritage institutions, such as museums or national heritage agencies, and commercial enterprises, together endeavouring to overcome the fragmentation of current research in this field.

Museums belong to the core of EPOCH scope. EPOCH aims at providing valuable tools for managing collections (through its standards and documentation activity), creating innovative communication with temporary or permanent virtual displays and facilitate visitors' involvement with state-of-art technology. The museum community has high expectations for the application of ICT to cultural heritage. Yet it also has real concerns. Too often in the past technology research and funding has been brought to heritage without the guidance of the true stakeholders – *the museum professionals* – resulting in distrust and disappointment. The ICT needs of the cultural heritage professionals are largely defined by their jobs. It is also clear, however, that much deeper and more diverse needs exist. Though, defining the latter in a precise way is not easy, because the diffuse lack of a digital culture among museum professionals makes it difficult, if not impossible, for them to envisage which contribution the digital technology might bring in their activity.

BRICKS

The **BRICKS** Project – **B**uilding **R**esources for **I**ntegrated **C**ultural **K**nowledge **S**ervices – researches and implements advanced open source software solutions for the sharing and the exploitation of digital cultural resources.

The **BRICKS** Community, <http://www.brickscmmunity.org/>, is a worldwide federation of cultural heritage institutions, research organisations, technological providers, and other players in the field of digital libraries services. The Community orientates and validates the project results, and co-operates towards the creation of the BRICKS Cultural Heritage Network that will provide access to and foster the European digital memory.

RecorDIM

Between 1995 and 1999, a series of outreach workshops held by the International Committee

for Architectural Photogrammetry (CIPA) has identified critical gaps in the fields of heritage Recording, Documentation and Information Management between those who provide information for conservation and those who use it. In response, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) and CIPA together created the RecorDIM - **Recording, Documentation and Information Management** - Initiative partnership, <http://extranet.getty.edu/gci/recordim/>.

The purpose of the initiative is to bring information users and providers together to identify the nature of the gaps between them, to develop strategies to close the gaps and to recommend a framework for action to be coordinated by the RecorDIM Initiative over a period of five years (2003-2007)." (2002 Activities Report, edited by Robin Letellier, International Coordinator RecorDIM Initiative, January 2003)

EROS database

The EROS database was developed internally to manage all manner of digital documentation. It was designed to handle museum collection analytical data from the laboratory as well as from museum conservation/restoration workshops. The information is focused on scientific and technical data. This include indexing vocabularies, study reports, restoration reports, digital data from quantitative analysis, spectra, graphs, chemical formulae, UV, Infra Red, raking light photography and scanning electron microscopy images. The database also includes administrative information such as inventory tracking and the restoration history of the works of art as well as periodic surveys of the collection. New features include automatic content recognition of objects, geographical location display, panoramic viewing, multi-spectral image and 3D models display.

EROS was conceived and constructed with the help of Hewlett-Packard. It was designed for museum research laboratories and conservation centres to efficiently handle extremely large quantities of records, multilingual metadata (including languages such as Russian, Chinese, Arabic and Japanese) and ultra-high resolution colorimetric and multi-spectral imaging. It was also designed to handle new technologies such as automatic image content recognition and new kinds of searching methods.

Currently, over 300,000 photographic and radiographic images, 10,000 technical

reports, 500 3D objects, 200,000 quantitative analyses related to 56,000 works of art are accessible online in digital form.

The *EROS* system is entirely Open Source and available under the GNU Public Licence (GPL). It is based on powerful and industry-leading free software such as Linux, Apache, MySQL and PHP. Web access is via a W3C standard compliant client such as Firefox.

Almost everything on the page is interactive. A system of dynamic linkage allows the user to search within a subset of the query, to see any definitions or to find Web sites related to the terms or the work. Clicking on an image thumbnail opens a viewer appropriate to the image format. Several buttons under the thumbnails allow the user to download either a full-size image or a dynamically generated image in JPEG format at a size chosen by the user. In addition, it is possible to view the colour distribution within the image in a colour space diagram or to perform a search based on image similarity according to different criteria.

The database now contains ultra high resolution images that can be up to several gigabytes in size. In order to handle, display and organise such large quantities of data, a special imaging system is required. It now contains other advances in digital imaging such as accurate colorimetry, extended dynamic ranges and multi-spectral acquisition.

Information Technology is allowing research to be conducted far more openly and internationally than ever before. Multilingual Internet access, the ontological classification of scientific vocabularies and remote image viewing allow research centres to work together on a global basis. In order to further this, interoperable standards and formats are essential. These include image formats (quality and compression), colour management (calibration, gamut mapping, colour transformations), archiving system security (watermarking, data hiding), computer management systems and applications, language exchange formats, multilingual vocabularies for indexing.

Contact:

Geneviève Aitken, genevieve.aitken@culture.fr;
Christian Lahanier, christian.lahanier@culture.fr
Centre de recherche et de restauration des musées de France, Palais du Louvre
Porte des Lions, 14, quai François Mitterrand
75001 Paris cedex 01, FRANCE

When you are interested to become a member of ICOM-CC...

To be eligible for ICOM-CC membership, you must join ICOM by applying to the National Committee of your country of residence. Contact information for your ICOM National Committee can be found at <http://icom.museum/nationals.html>. If there is no National Committee in your country, or if your National Committee does not accept your application, please apply directly to ICOM (see http://icom.museum/mem_categories.html).

As soon as you are a member of ICOM, you can become a voting member of ICOM-CC (free of extra charge). Please note that you can be voting member of only one International Committee. The application form that should be sent out directly to the ICOM Secretariat in Paris can be found at http://icom.museum/join_int_committee.html. We encourage you to send a copy of your application form to the ICOM-CC secretariat (secretariat@icom-cc.org) so that it can ensure that your application has been properly processed.

If you cannot or do not wish to become a member of ICOM but wish to join ICOM-CC, you can do so by becoming a Friend or Student-friend of ICOM-CC (see <http://icom-cc.icom.museum/About/Membership/Friend/>).

To find more about ICOM-CC membership benefits, working groups and activities, please consult the ICOM-CC website (<http://icom-cc.icom.museum>) or contact the ICOM-CC Secretariat at secretariat@icom-cc.org.

Useful links about conservation documentation

ICOM-CIDOC International Committee for Documentation of the International Council of Museums, <http://cidoc.icom.museum>.

AIC Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice (chapters on documentation), <http://aic.stanford.edu/pubs/ethics.html#seven>

Guidelines for documenting conservation of papyrus (University Library, University of Michigan), <http://www.lib.umich.edu/pap/conservation/guidelines.html#documentation>

Bibliography on digital conservation treatment documentation (Preservation Conservation Information Technology)
<http://www.marlangreen.net/pcit/resources.html#resdoc>

Michelle Moore (2000), Conservation documentation and the implications of digitisation, *Journal of Conservation and Museum Studies*, Issue 7, November 2001,
<http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/jcms/current/0111Moore.pdf>

Guidelines for the Preservation of Digital Heritage, UNESCO 2003,
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001300/130071e.pdf>

GCI Newsletter, 20.3 (Fall 2005)
http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/newsletters/20_3/

Angelica Zander Rudenstine and Timothy P. Whalen (2006), Conservation Documentation in Digital Form: A Dialogue about the Issues, GCI Newsletter 21.2 (Summer 2006),
http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/newsletters/21_2/news_in_cons.html

Issues in Conservation Documentation: Digital Formats, Institutional Priorities, and Public Access, April 2006,
<http://mac.mellon.org/issues-in-conservation-documentation>