

Press Release 3rd Feb 2015

CIDOC Conceptual Reference Model (CRM) Extension for SPECTRUM

The Collections Trust and the CIDOC (Documentation Committee of the International Council for Museums) CRM Special Interest Group have agreed plans to create an extension of the CIDOC CRM for SPECTRUM collection management procedures and formally align SPECTRUM's 'units of information'. This strategic move is designed to provide SPECTRUM communities with support for wider digital strategies, improve opportunities for quality reuse and encourage collaboration while also addressing issues of efficiency and unnecessary duplication. It also supports the Collections Trust's, "Create Once Publish Everywhere" (COPE) campaign.

The International (ISO) CIDOC CRM model provides a way of simply representing cultural heritage data with rich and contextual semantics necessary for meaningful data integration, cross collection exploration, research and collaboration. SPECTRUM is an internationally adopted standard supporting a range of quality collection management procedures. This initiative will connect the two standards and help expand the use of knowledge representation and Semantic Web principles in the cultural heritage sector. The CRM already includes specialist extensions for archaeology, scientific observation, argument and belief, digital provenance, bibliographic (FRBR) and periodical data and spatiotemporal refinement, supporting cross disciplinary digital projects.

The move will allow the SPECTRUM community to transition to a contextualised and event based approach and allow museums and other cultural heritage organisations to address the needs of "Open World" audiences whether for education, research or general exploration. The integration of SPECTRUM into the CIDOC CRM reflects the new possibilities of cultural heritage digital data in addressing answers to questions from many different communities and explaining the significant and relevant of objects in terms of events, people, places, time and concepts. It is also designed to encourage the creation of flexible information systems capable of working with highly heterogeneous datasets both within the organisation and externally with other organisations and the public.

Stephen Stead (Paveprime Ltd.) and Dominic Oldman (Head of ResearchSpace at the British Museum), representing the CRM Special Interest Group in the discussions, commented by saying:

"This agreement opens the door for a new focus on the importance of cultural heritage documentation. Many documentation strategies still focus on internal processes and traditional catalogue information, but new digital audiences require a different approach and different types of knowledge generated by museum experts and researchers. Moving to the CIDOC CRM knowledge representation system will provide the SPECTRUM community with a way of connecting museum experts with wider digital audiences and strengthening the relevance of museum knowledge in our society."

Nick Poole, the chief Executive of the Collections Trust said,

"The agreement between the Collections Trust and the CIDOC CRM SIG represents a major step forward in harnessing the power of technology to open up cultural heritage for new audiences. Building on nearly 20 years of standardisation and professionalization in Collections Management, uniting these two initiatives will help unlock the richness and value in heritage collections for generations to come. I welcome this development and look forward to a successful collaboration."