Inter committee cooperation: CIDOC, COSTUME and ICMS

Museum Focus Day *at the Museu da República, Rio de Janeiro 14 August 2013*

Maija Ekosaari, CIDOC Secretary

Introduction

At the kind invitation of the director, Senhora Magaly de Oliveira Cabral Santos, three ICOM international committees ICMS, COSTUME and CIDOC came together for a joint day of workshops and study at the *Museu da República*, the former presidential palace, as part of the ICOM 2013 triennial meetings in Rio de Janeiro. The event was attended by over 100 participants, divided roughly equally between the three committees.

The day began with a series of short presentations on topics of mutual interest by speakers from each committee. Paola di Trocchio and Isabel Alvarado from COSTUME spoke about *Documentation of art work at the NGV, Australia* and *Costume exhibition, storage and security, Santiago, Chile*. Pavel Jirasek from ICMS talked about *Documentation as an integral part of the museum security system*, and CIDOC chair Nicholas Crofts spoke about *Object ID and the importance of documentation for security*.

After a coffee break, each committee looked at survey techniques and evaluation methodology before separating for a 'behind the scenes' visit to the collections, during which they conducted an informal assessment of the institution's documentation, costume collections and security arrangements. Following lunch, each committee discussed the results of their review separately before getting together for a joint presentation of the conclusions from each working group.

A reception was offered in the evening, after which participants left for an open rehearsal of Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* at the *Theatro Municipal*.

Mobile simultaneous translation was provided in the morning by Tradinter.

The CIDOC checklist

The CIDOC participants conducted their review using a checklist of twenty three questions about museum documentation. This checklist, which is based on CIDOC recommendations, notably *the Statement of Principles of Museum documentation* and the *CIDOC information categories*, is a self-assessment tool, designed to help museum staff quickly identify any shortcomings in their existing documentation system. The list used at the Museu da República is the first in a series of three checklists devoted to different aspects of museum documentation:

1. Documentation content
2. Documentation procedures

3. Security and Preservation of documentation

Parts 2 and 3 are in preparation. Copies of the checklist were provided in English and Portuguese, kindly translated by CIDOC board member Gabriel Bevilacqua.

The checklist questions all represent key functional requirements that a well-designed and well-maintained documentation system should be able to meet. They do not presuppose any specific technical setup and can be applied equally well to the documentation of small and large collections, or to a subset of an institution's collections. Each question can be answered by checking one of three responses: completely, partially or not at all, indicating the degree to which the documentation system satisfies the criterion. Areas identified as only partially satisfactory may require attention, while areas in which the system fails to meet CIDOC recommendations probably need urgent review.

It needs to be emphasized that a self-assessment checklist of this sort is only useful when the questions are answered frankly and honestly by someone with the necessary experience and knowledge. Ideally, this would be the person directly responsible for the museum's documentation.

The joint working day at the Museu da República was the first time that the checklist has been used by a large group of documentation specialists, so the outcome was interesting both for what it might reveal about the museum's documentation systems and as 'test drive' of the methodology.

Museum focus outcomes

The review process using the CIDOC checklist proved highly successful. Participants answered the checklist questions both for the *Museu da República* and for their own institutions. On average, the time needed to complete the checklist was less than fifteen minutes. The participants all found that the questions were, for the most part, clearly formulated and easily understood, provided a comprehensive overview of the key areas of museum documentation and provided a useful tool for the identification of problem areas in need of further attention. In a few instances, the terminology used was found to be potentially misleading, and the ordering of questions was also found to be a source of confusion. Both will be revised in the next version of the checklist.

Following the review process, an overview of the results was presented by members of each committee. Confidential written reports will also be submitted to the director.
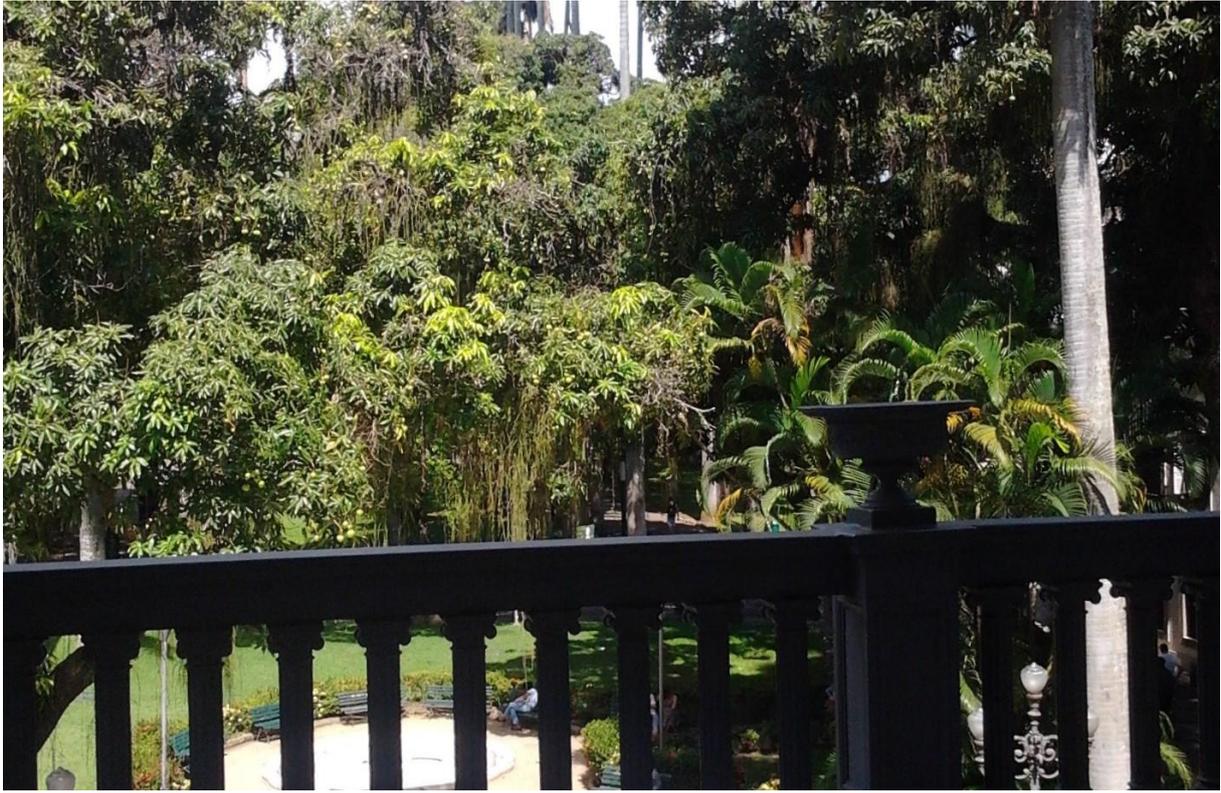
Figure 1 The luxurious museum gardens

Figure 2 Early morning Presentations

Figure 3 Translation on the move

Figure 4 Using the CIDOC checklist

Figure 5 COSTUME hard at work

Figure 6 ICMS reporting

Appendix : CIDOC Museum documentation checklist on coverage and content English and Portuguese

Museum documentation checklist: coverage and content

Institution or department:

Recorded by :

Date :

	Completely	Partially	Not at all
1. Does the system provide full information about acquisitions? This should include the method of acquisition, the date and the source.			
2. Does the system provide full information about the condition of each item? Including the date on which the condition was assessed and a textual description.			
3. Does the system provide information about alienated items? (Ones that have been deaccessioned and are no longer in the museum's possession).			
4. Does the system provide a description of the physical (observable) characteristics of each item? (e.g. dimensions, weight, colour, material, etc.)			
5. Does the system provide a description of the subject depicted or represented by pictorial items? Including style and the manner of depiction?			
6. Does the system contain photographs of each item?			
7. Does the system provide information about the current custodian of each item? i.e. full name, address and contact details			
8. Does the system allow each item to be accurately located?			
9. Does the system retain information about past locations?			
10. Does the system provide information about marks and inscriptions visible on items? Including their type, position, language, technique and a transcription?			
11. Does the system provide information about the materials and the techniques used to create man-made items?			
12. Does the system provide detailed measurements of collection items? Including different aspects and parts, the unit of measurement, the measured value, the technique used, the person making the measurement and the date of measurement?			
13. Does the system provide information about actors, places, events and documents that are related to each collection item?			
14. Does the system provide information about all the collection items that are related to a specific actor, place, event or document?			
15. Does the system provide full information about items that have been collected? Including where, when, how and by whom they were collected?			
16. Does the system record details of each item's physical entry into and exit from the institution? Including the date and reason, the current owner, the depositor and the number of items?			
17. Does the system provide information about the classification and typology (name) of each item? Including the authority upon which the classification is based?			
18. Does the system record at all codes and numbers that are or have been used to identify each item in the collection?			
19. Does the system provide information about the way in which man-made items were produced? Including where, when, and by whom?			
20. Does the system record all proper names and titles that have been given to collection items such as works of art? Including the type of title and translations?			
21. Does the system provide information about the parts and components of which items are composed?			
22. Does the system record when and by whom each item of information has been entered?			
23. Does the system provide information about reproduction rights concerning collection items and reproductions thereof?			

Lista de verificação de documentação de museal, cobertura e conteúdo Instituição ou departamento: Analisado por: Data:	Completamente	Parcialmente	Nenhum
1. O sistema fornece informações completas sobre aquisições? incluido o modo de aquisição, a data e a fonte.			
2. O sistema fornece informações completas sobre a condição de cada produto? Incluindo a data em que a condição foi avaliada e uma descrição textual.			
3. O sistema fornece informações sobre os itens alienados? (Aqueles que foram deaccessioned e não estão mais na posse do museu).			
4. O sistema fornece uma descrição das características físicas (observável) de cada item? (Por exemplo, dimensões, peso, cor, material, etc)			
5. O sistema fornece uma descrição do objecto representado ou representados por itens pictóricas? Incluindo o estilo ea forma de representação?			
6. O sistema contém fotografias de cada iten?			
7. O sistema fornece informações sobre o custodiante atual de cada produto? ou seja, nome completo, endereço e detalhes de contato?			
8. O sistema permite que cada item a ser localizado com precisão?			
9. O sistema de reter informações sobre os locais do passado?			
10. O sistema fornece informações sobre marcas e inscrições visíveis em itens? Incluindo seu tipo, posição, linguagem, técnica e uma transcrição?			
11. O sistema fornece informações sobre os materiais e as técnicas utilizadas para criar itens feitos pelo homem?			
12. O sistema fornece medições detalhadas de itens de coleção? Incluindo diferentes aspectos e peças, a unidade de medida, o valor medido, a técnica utilizada, a pessoa que faz a medição ea data da medição?			
13. O sistema fornece informações sobre atores, lugares, eventos e documentos que estão relacionados a cada item de coleção?			
14. O sistema fornece informações sobre todos os itens da coleção que estão relacionados a um ator, um lugar, um evento ou um documento específico?			
15. O sistema fornece informações completas sobre os itens que foram recolhidos? Incluindo onde, quando, como e por quem eles foram recolhidos?			
16. Os detalhes da entrada na instituição e da saida física de cada item são enregestradas no sistema? Incluindo a data ea razão, o atual proprietário, o depositante eo número de itens?			
17. O sistema fornece informações sobre a classificação e a tipologia (nome) de cada produto? Incluindo a autoridade e o sistema da classificação?			
18. Faz o registro do sistema em todos os códigos e números que são ou foram utilizados para identificar cada item da coleção?			
19. O sistema fornece informações sobre a maneira pela qual o artefatos na collecçaõ foram produzidos? Incluindo onde, quando e por quem?			
20. O sistema de registro de todos os nomes e títulos que foram dadas aos itens de coleção, como obras de arte? Incluindo o tipo de título e as traduções?			
21. O sistema fornece informações sobre as peças e componentes de quais itens são compostos?			
22. Faz o registro do sistema quando e por quem cada item de informação foi inserido?			
23. O sistema fornece informações sobre direitos de reprodução sobre itens de coleção e reproduções do mesmo?			