

Wider perspective - Broader base  
Conference documentation CD - rom

CIDOC annual meeting and conference

Museums of World Culture

Gothenburg, Sweden

10-14 September 200

**CIDOC06**

**GOTHENBURG**

**S W E D E N**

## Dear conference participant

The theme "Wider perspective - Broader base" was developed early in the planning process out of the awareness of the moving focus in museum documentation.

The old comparison between the cardbox and the database as a metaphore for new ways of collecting information about museum objects – or any other information - is not top level any more. It has become archaic - maybe it should be put in museum itself.

The fantasy has no real limits for in what shape the end users – or the expert systems will find and reuse knowledge – or information. Today it's fully possible to store, send and retrieve information between machines without a helping human hand – and the modern user is familiar with search engines far more complex and competent than ever a curator can be.

Information from museums – and from archives, libraries, etc – is to be found in any knowledge management situation. Not only inside the museum or the heritage institutions, but also in a variety of normal everyday situations. Thus it is important for us and for those outside museums to agree on technical standards, on intellectual standards and on rights management agreements, to enable the museum knowledge to be considered valuable and usable in a wider context.

Technical standards are a central field for CIDOC and the CRM work is mirrored by a group of papers showing both the central ideas and adoptions or experimental applications.

Paradoxally – the technical development – or evolution – has come to set the focus back on content and users – which was the theme of last year conference. In Gothenburg we want to take this perspective a bit wider – opening for a dialogue with groups outside the traditional museum documentation staff and technical experts. Invitations has been sent to the libraries and archives

communities as well as to research and educational institutions to form an open dialogue and discussion. We are glad to have a close relation to the International master program in museology at Göteborgs University, Museion, and to find students from other universities around the world among the participants and presenters.

We need, so to speak, to make friends with other heritage sectors dealing with the same questions to meet the users wish to get easy retrieved answers with high quality and high relevance – here, now and without bothering about institutional borders.

Furthermore we need to take a wider focus on documentation issues within museums – bridging culture, fine arts, nature and other specialities. The unseen merging of information masses will probably lead to not yet asked questions and unpredictable answers. Thrilling, it can be, if this means possibilities to form new knowledge for the users.

The call for papers have resulted in some 40 papers and sessions of various themes and from authors with background in museums, archives, libraries, universities, and private companies, to be presented at the conference. Ca 120 participants come from 25 countries around the world, with a natural overweight from Europe, and papers show the development in a row of countries and different conditions.

Just to mention a few in order to catch the width there is the large European initiative MICHAEL - which will ease the users way to collections in different context, and there is smaller local projects aiming to publish and integrate content. We discuss methodology for tacit knowledge representation and evaluate user experiences in art museums as well as we consider more traditional ethnological museum documentation strategy such as the Swedish Samdok.

The ALM-theme is showing a European and Nordic landscape of collaborative efforts in working where these sectors meet.

Digital preservation is another new interesting issue – technical in itself , but also open for ongoing strategic considerations that must reshape the way institutions take care of their material in a long time span.

Intangible heritage and illicit trade are two important buzz words within ICOM work of today. The non-physical heritage needs other tools than objects and the fight against looting and other illegitim use need other information to be stored and to be used by other actors. A couple of papers are presenting examples of these new aspects, one of them connected to the actual exhibition on trafficking at the host museum, The Museum of World Culture.

The CIDOC CRM is regarded with great interest not only from museums – where the natural focus is supposed to be. Archives and libraries and more free-formed heritage projects with great ambition consider the model worth taken into use. On highest international level there is ongoing harmonisation between the CRM and sister models within library documentation.

It is natural that a major group of papers are presenting several different approaches to the CRM world, from strictly technical to projects presentations.

Not to forget all other contributions!

We hope that You will find this CD useful as a snapshot of museum and heritage documentation in 2006, at the conference and back at work.

Anne Murray

Bengt Wittgren

Hans Rengman, Coordinator

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