

CIDOC Chair Report 2011

A word from the chair

2011 was a busy and eventful year for ICOM and for CIDOC. The new board came into office at the 2010 triennial meeting in Shanghai. Thanks to the efforts of our predecessors, we inherited a lively and truly international organisation, an enthusiastic and committed membership and a healthy bank balance. We hope to build on these foundations and ensure that CIDOC fulfils its mission as the professional forum for the field of museum documentation.

CIDOC 2011 Sibiu

The annual conference of ICOM's International Committee for Documentation, CIDOC 2011, took place in Sibiu Romania, from September 4th – 9th. The conference was attended by an international audience of 120 delegates, spanning all five continents. Simultaneous translation in four languages was available for all the plenary sessions – English, French, Spanish and Romanian. Keynote speakers were Dr Tom Moritz and Prof. Ioan-Aurel Pop. The President of ICOM Dr Hans-Martin Hinz also attended the conference, welcoming delegates to the opening ceremony.

The theme of the conference, "Knowledge management and museums", focused on one of the most basic and fundamental aspects of museum documentation: the recording and diffusion of all forms of information and the ways in which museums can harness the rich potential of the knowledge they embody. Increasingly, knowledge is being recognised as a valuable resource, one that requires careful management, and recent innovations in information science provide new perspectives on these broad strategic and philosophical issues. The conference provided an opportunity to take stock of recent developments in the theory and techniques of knowledge management, evaluating their impact on documentation practice and examining current tendencies to anticipate future developments.

The city of Sibiu and the conference venues provided an elegant historical backdrop to the conference. Conference events made use of the Brukenthal museum and its annexes, the town hall and other municipal buildings. The conference programme was varied and stimulating, consisting of tutorials, presentations, study visits and social events.

Enriching Cultural Heritage

As I write, preparations are well under way for the 2012 CIDOC conference, which will take place in Helsinki, Finland June 10-14. The main venue is the National museum; some events will take place other, nearby venues, mostly within walking distance. The organisers have put together a lively and varied programme, packed with workshops, tutorials, scientific papers, socials events, study tours and excursions. The keynote speakers will be Nick Poole of the Collections Trust, Ora Lassila, technology strategist at Nokia and Patrick le Boeuf from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France¹. Early registration is open until March 30th, so sign up soon to benefit from the reduced fee.

Getty Foundation Grants

The Getty Foundation again provided CIDOC with a substantial grant in 2011 which allowed us to offer financial support for participants from developing countries to attend the annual conference. Bursaries are calculated to cover the conference registration fee, as well as reasonable travel and

¹ <http://www.cidoc2012.fi/programme.html> / <http://www.cidoc2012.fi/fr/programme.html>

accommodation costs. Fourteen people from ten different countries took advantage of this possibility. By all accounts the recipients, who each provided detailed feedback on their impressions, were very satisfied with the event and hope to return to future conferences. We are immensely grateful both to the Getty Foundation for their generosity, without which these documentation professionals would not have been able to attend, and to the ICOM secretariat for their assistance in preparing the request. We hope to obtain similar support for the 2012 conference in Helsinki. Details will be available on the conference website².

Membership

The long awaited ICOM membership finally came into operation. This new facility provides access to lists of current members with their status, position, preferred language and other details. We are working with ICOM secretariat to consolidate the central database with CIDOC's own mailing lists. Unfortunately, many email addresses are still inaccurate or missing. If you suspect that yours may not be up to date, do please contact either myself or Regine Stein, the CIDOC secretary, so that we can keep in touch.

Thanks in large part to the new database, ICOM was able to provide some interesting statistics covering many aspects of ICOM membership at the executive board meeting in Paris in June³.

As of 2010, CIDOC had 481 members – an increase of 6% compared to 2009. This makes CIDOC the seventh largest of the ICOM international committees. This is encouraging, though still a long way from the high point in 1995 when CIDOC had 750 members. And as Christian Emil Ore pointed out in the 2010 newsletter⁴, the potential CIDOC membership is far greater: every museum in the world has at least one staff member responsible for documentation and information management so, logically, CIDOC should have several thousand members. Getting in touch with these potential members and improving CIDOC's visibility is a strategic priority. As a first step, we have asked ICOM to provide us with a list of institutions that are registered with ICOM but for which there is no known CIDOC member.

Another interesting aspect revealed by ICOM's membership statistics is that CIDOC's membership, in common with most other ICOM ICs, is over 80% European. Recent changes in ICOM's policy on membership dues make membership more affordable for participants from developing countries – this presents us with an opportunity to reach out to some areas where CIDOC is not well represented at present.

CIDOC Summer School

CIDOC launched a new initiative in 2011, the CIDOC Summer School. The aim is to provide a comprehensive training programme in museum documentation for both newcomers and experienced documentation professionals. The programme is organised in collaboration with the Museum of Texas Tech University (MTTU). Twelve participants attended the inaugural 2011 CIDOC Summer School that took place from June 25 – July 1 on the MTTU campus. Seven instructors drawn from CIDOC and MTTU faculty and staff delivered a total of ten training modules, forming the core of the basic training programme in documentation principles and practice. Participants also spent one day out of the classroom on study visits to the Palo Duro Canyon State Park⁵ and

² <http://www.cidoc2012.fi/bursary.html> / (<http://www.cidoc2012.fi/fr/bursary.html>)

³ http://archives.icom.museum/download/june2011/en/5-item4_AC_Membership_Report_230511_ENG-1.pdf
http://archives.icom.museum/download/june2011/fr/5-item4_AC_Membership_FR_110523-1.pdf

⁴ <http://network.icom.museum/cidoc/archives/past-newsletters.html>

⁵ http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/findadest/parks/palo_duro/

the Panhandle Plains Historical Museum⁶. Participants were given a ‘behind the scenes’ tour and met with curators and documentation specialists. Thanks are due to the executive director of MTTU, Dr Eileen Johnson, for welcoming the Summer School to Lubbock and for generously providing staff, facilities and other services, without which the event could not have taken place. The collaboration was mutually beneficial and MTTU has agreed to host additional CIDOC Summer Schools in the future. The 2012 Summer School will take place on the Texas Tech campus May 20 – 25 and we have plans for a 2013 Summer School in Brazil, in conjunction with the ICOM triennial.

ISO licensing agreements

Thanks in large part to the help of Ms Samia Slimani, ICOM’s legal advisor, licensing agreements have now been established with ISO, the International Standards Organisation. These agreements provide a basis for the mutual and non exclusive exchange of ISO standards and the CIDOC standards from which they are derived. One immediate benefit of this is that the CRM Special Interest Group can use ISO translations of the CRM as the basis for their own translations.

CIDOC Statements

An online survey revealed substantial support among CIDOC members for the *Statement of Principles of museum Documentation*, produced by the Documentation Standards Working Group.⁷

The result of a collaborative effort and wide consultation, the Statement can be seen as a detailed development of section 2.20 of the ICOM code of Ethics for Museums, providing a clear and explicit statement of a museum’s legal, ethical and practical obligation to maintain adequate documentation of its collections. The goal is to ensure that museum documentation is clearly recognized as a fundamental requirement for any professional institution.

During the Shanghai conference, the CRM SIG and the co-reference working groups agreed on a *Statement concerning Linked Open Data*, recommendations for museums⁸. These recommendations emphasise the importance of ensuring that museums provide the published identifiers that are needed for linked data applications.

The logical next step is to present these documents for adoption as official ICOM policy. This requires a resolution by the General Assembly during the triennial meeting in 2013. With this in mind, the statements were presented at the ICOM advisory board meeting in June⁹ (item 12), and two resolutions were passed at the CIDOC AGM in Sibiu¹⁰ (item 6).

Website

As part of the general overhaul of support services, ICOM now provides a free web-hosting environment for the benefit of International Committees. The opportunity seemed too good to miss so we have migrated the content from the previous web site to the new platform. The URL remains the same: <http://cidoc.icom.museum>. Many thanks to Richard Light for maintaining the previous website throughout the process. The new site offers some additional features, such as a photo album, forms for surveys and other interactive elements. There are still a few teething problems and missing pages, but we hope you will like the new look. Please let us know if you

⁶ <http://panhandleplains.org/pages/home.asp>

⁷ http://network.icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/minisites/cidoc/AGM_2011/Principes_6_en.pdf

http://network.icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/minisites/cidoc/AGM_2011/Principes_6_fr.pdf

⁸ http://www.cidoc-crm.org/URIs_and_Linked_Open_Data.html.

⁹ http://icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/Advisory_Minutes/AC_75_minutes_EN.pdf (EN only)

¹⁰ http://network.icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/minisites/cidoc/AGM_2011/2011-09-08-Sibiu-CIDOC-AGM%28preliminary-minutes%29.pdf

would be interested in contributing to the website in any way.

CIDOC Newsletter/Bulletin

Frances Lloyd-Baynes has taken over from Maja Sojat-Bikic as editor of the CIDOC Newsletter. We thank Maja for all her hard work in reintroducing the newsletter in 2006. Frances returns to CIDOC after a few years' absence, having returned to the USA. Welcome back.

Sibiu, September 8th 2011

Nicholas Crofts

CIDOC Chair