

Encontros de outono
Sistemas de Informação em Museus
Estado da Arte em Portugal
November 2013

Issues in museum documentation
an international perspective

Nicholas Crofts
Chair ICOM CIDOC

Overview

- ICOM CIDOC - what it is, what we do
 - Scope, values and aims
 - Projects and working groups
 - Standards and publications
 - Training program
- State of the art
 - Challenges
 - S.W.O.T analysis



What is CIDOC?

- *Comité International pour la Documentation*
- “A neutral, international forum for the discussion of all issues relating to information management in museums”
- 1 of ICOM's 31 International Committees
- Founded in 1950
- > 450 members from 60 countries

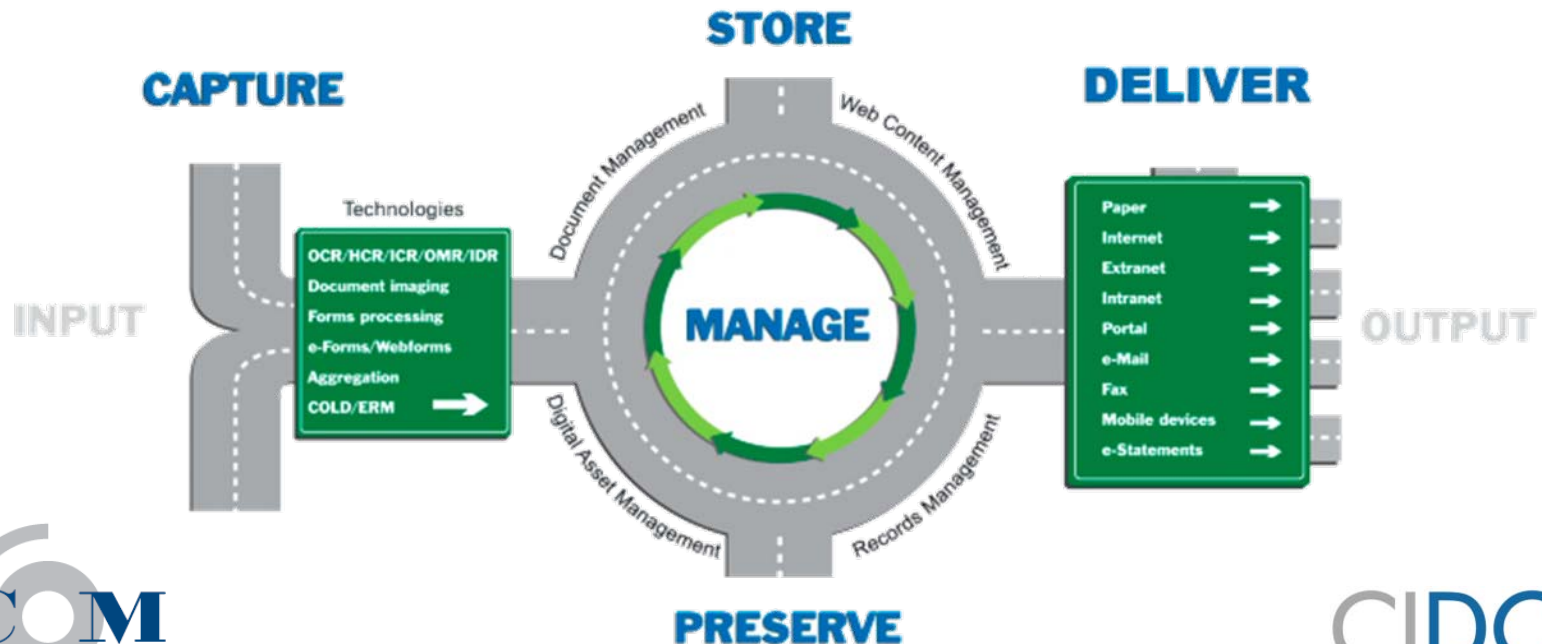
What's in a name?

- International Committee for *Documentation*
 - *Paper-based*
 - Documentation of *collections*

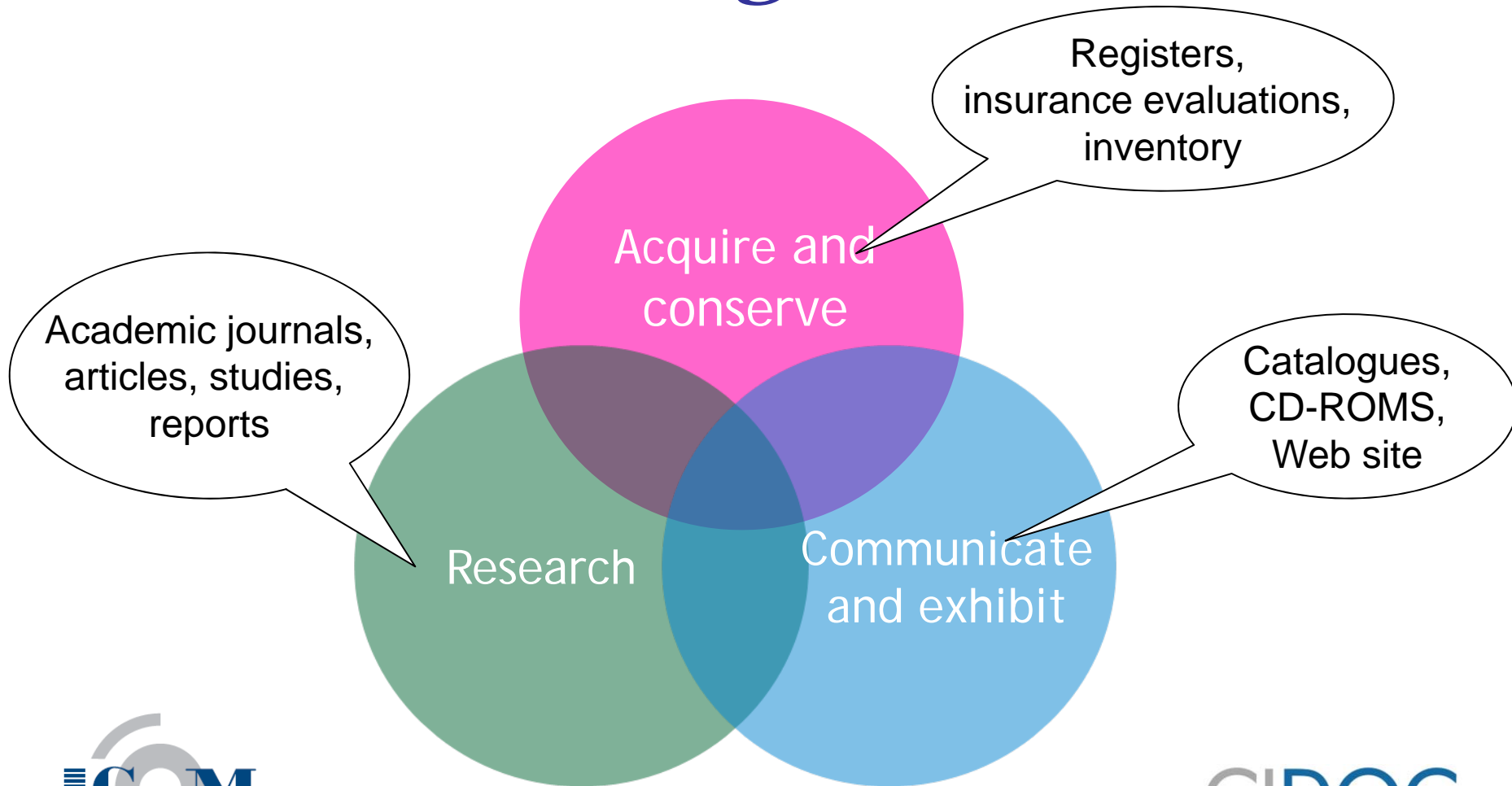


Information management

- Information management (IM) is the collection and management of information from one or more *sources* and the *distribution* of that information to one or more *audiences*. [...] Management means the organization of and *control* over the structure, processing and delivery of information.



Museum *information management*



Principles of Museum documentation

- CIDOC believes that collections without adequate documentation cannot be considered to be true *museum* collections. This is because:
 - they cannot be adequately safeguarded and cared for
 - the museum cannot demonstrate legal accountability
 - their value for research and interpretation is greatly reduced



CIDOC Principles of Documentation, ICOM Rio 2013

How does CIDOC work?

- Annual Conference
- Working groups
- Newsletter, web site, mailing list
- *facebook* and *linkedIn*
- Publications
- Training program
- Membership *free* for ICOM members



Working groups

1. Archaeological Sites
2. Conceptual Reference Model SIG
3. Co-reference
4. Data Harvesting and Interchange
5. Digital preservation
6. Documentation Standards
7. Information Centres
8. Multimedia
9. Museum process implementation
10. Research Environments



Standards and publications

- CIDOC Fact Sheets:
 - Registration step by step
 - Labelling and marking objects
 - Recommendations for identity photographs
- International Guidelines for Museum Object Information
- Statement of principles of museum documentation
- Statement on Linked Data identifiers for museum objects
- The CIDOC Conceptual Reference Model (ISO 21127)
- Annual bi-lingual newsletter since 1989



CIDOC training programme

- Partnership with Museum of Texas Tech University (MoTTU)
- For newcomers & experienced staff
- Modular - allows flexibility
- Tutors from CIDOC and MoTTU faculty
- Annual:
 - 2011, 2012, 2013 Texas
 - 2013 São Paulo



2012 Summer School Session

	Morning		Afternoon	
	100 level	200 – 400 level	100 level	200 – 400 level
Sunday 20 May			Welcome reception and orientation	
Monday 21 May	101 Introduction to museum documentation	403 Independent study	102 How to set up a basic inventory system	203 Object ID: Documentation and illicit trafficking
Tuesday 22 May	103 Marking objects with identification numbers	323 Data exchange between institutions	104 Photographing objects for inventory purposes	403 Independent study
Wednesday 23 May	Summer School teacher training		Field trip to area museums	
Thursday 24 May	111 Defining and maintaining a Descriptive System: information fields and terminology lists	403 Independent study	112 Defining and maintaining a Procedural Manual: documentation policy and methods	305 Copyright and licensing issues
Friday 25 May	121 Job descriptions and organizational structure	404 Museum procedures and business processes	122 Budgets, productivity, planning, and reporting	403 Independent study

State of the art

- Challenges
- S.W.O.T.
 - Strengths
 - Weaknesses
 - Opportunities
 - Threats



New challenges

- C-generation expectations
 - Mobile, ubiquitous
 - Friendly, playful, intuitive
 - Participative, social
- “New” museology (1989)
 - visitor-centred ethos
 - Interpretation vs Pontification
 - Welcoming and accessible vs Exclusive and forbidding



Strengths

- Content
- Expertise
- Experience
- EU Community support
- Public trust



Weaknesses

- Few standards:
 - Adapted vs respected
- Slow to change
- Legacy content
- Documentation backlogs
- Languages



Threats

- Loss of visibility and authority
 - “Google” barrier
 - Behaviour (“google it” reflex)
 - Technical (password access, query screens)
 - Wikipedia, etc.

Opportunities

- Improve :
 - Content capture
 - Content management
 - Usability
 - Visibility



Content capture

- “Forgotten” documents
 - Exhibition catalogues
 - Brochures
 - Reports
 - Correspondence
 - Educational material
 - Presentations
 - Photographs
- Relevant, useful content
- Hours of effort to produce



Document Management

- Policy + DMS
- DMS benefits
 - Secure storage
 - Controlled access
 - Integrated metadata
 - Search engine
 - Version management
- Open source software
- Modest cost

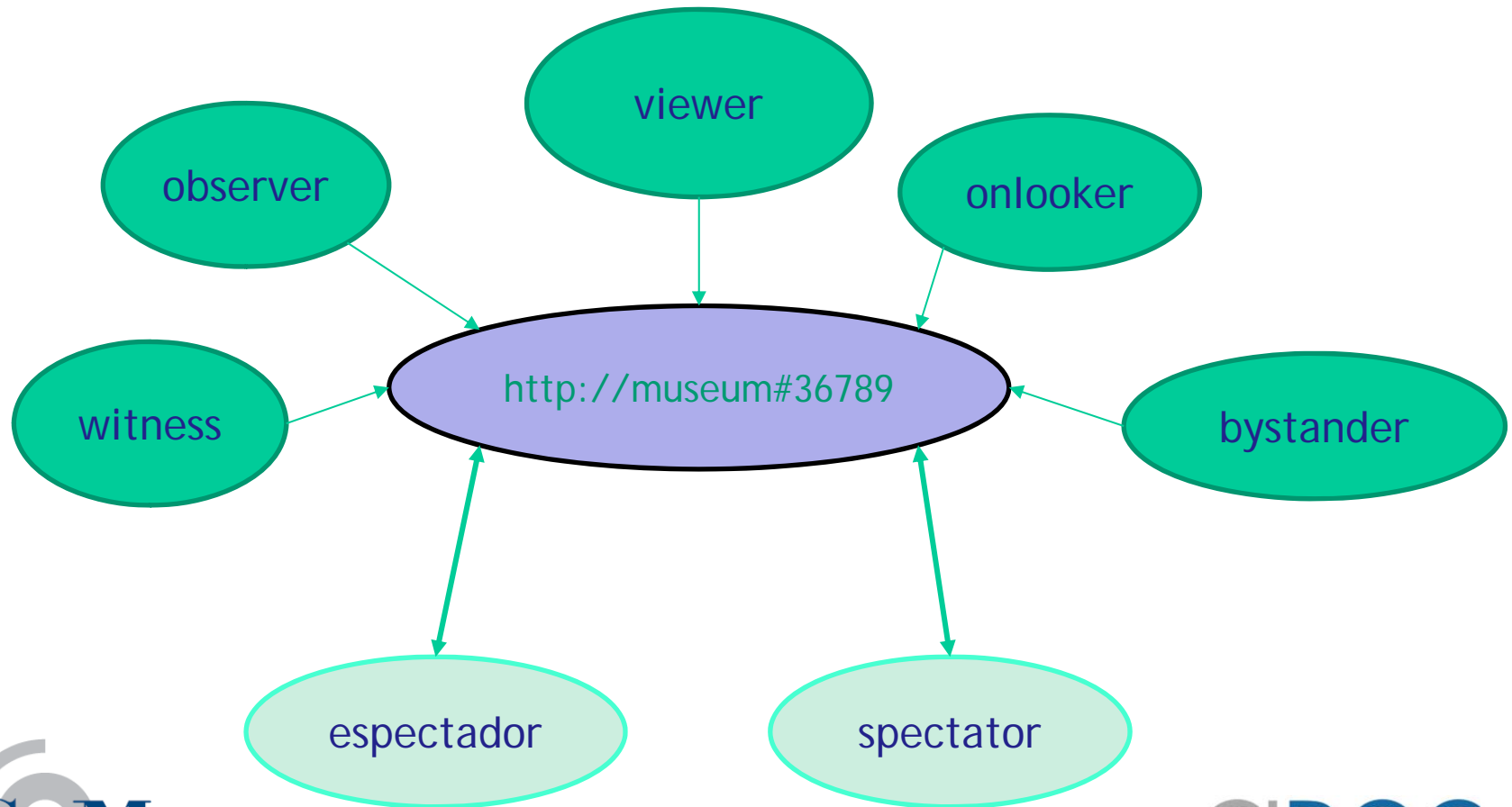


Adding value

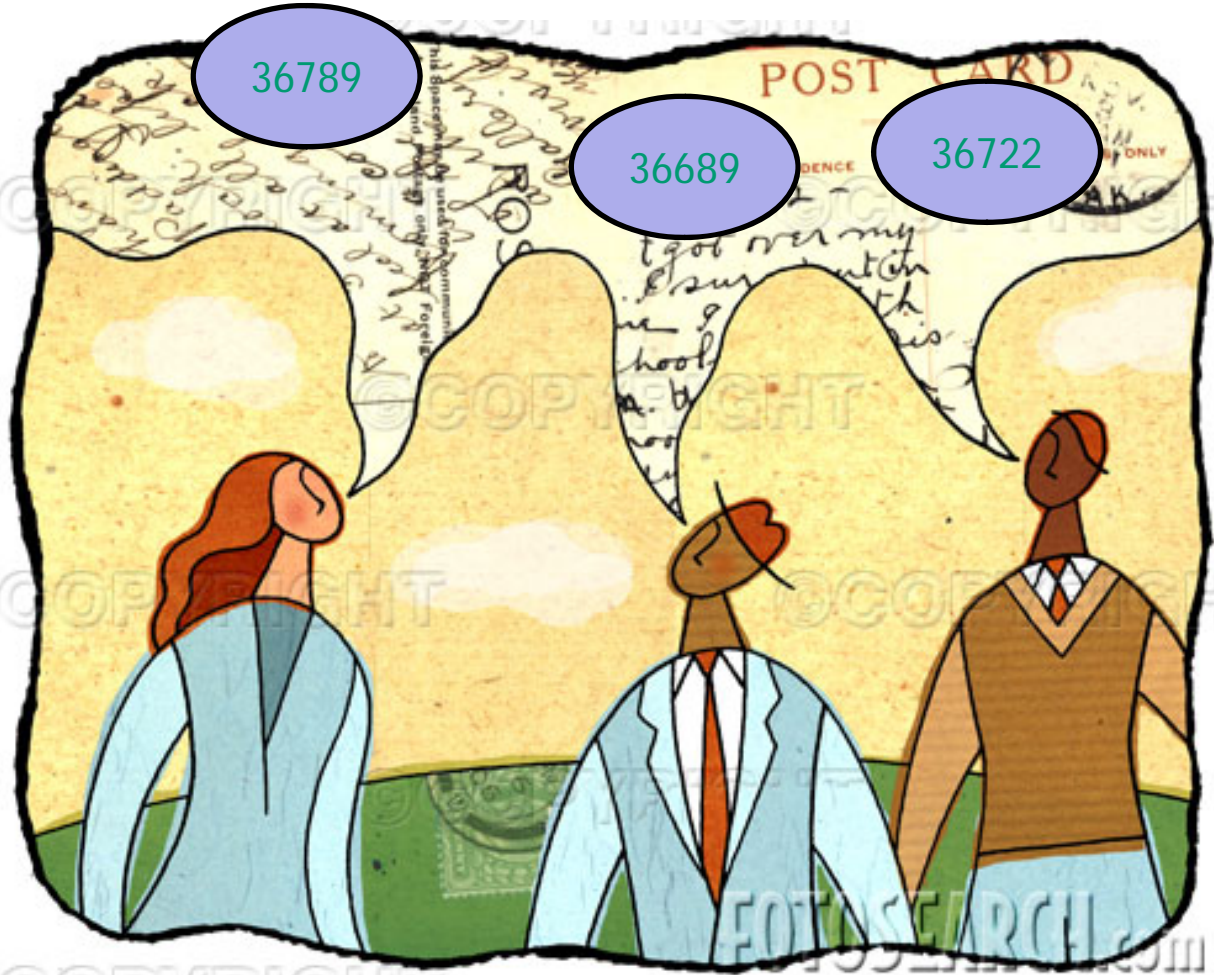
- Semantic indexing with SKOS
- Simple Knowledge Organization System
 - Thesaurus exchange format
 - Compatible ISO 25964-1
 - Lots of tools and resources available
 - SKOS-ify your terminology
 - *Your terminology as a part of the semantic web...*
 - Linked Heritage WP3 and ATHENA WP4
 - <http://www.linkedheritage.org/>



Synonyms share a common identifier



Index once for any language



Benefits of SKOS

- Multilingual potential
- Improved retrieval
- Tap into existing resources = reduce costs
- Share your work = more friends
- Linked data = interoperability

Crowd sourcing

- What is it?
 - *Social tagging*
 - *Folksonomies*
 - *User Generated Content (UGC)*
- Wikipedia
- Open-source software



Steve: social tagging project

- Ongoing research project
- User input: "folksonomy"
- *Adds to* institutional metadata
- Open-source software available
- Bolt-on to existing website

Large Torso Arch

Creator

[Henry Moore](#)

Title

[Large Torso Arch](#)

Created

[1962-1963](#)

Rights

[Reproduced by permission of the
www.henry-moore-fdn.co.uk](#)

Institution

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art



abstract anthropomorphic arc arch architectural arms **art** artist biomorphic
bipedal black blunt body bone bridge bronze cartesean carved cast clay court curves doorway elephant **figure**
flame form forms gate henrymoore hole **holes** idk iron massive **metal** model monument moore movement nature
nice passage **piece** placement **primitive** puzzi railingtoupstairsfloor relationship rock round rounded sculpted
sculpture sculpyure scuptue **shadow** shape solid **space** statue stone tools twist

Steve conclusions

- A folksonomy of 552,092 terms
- 8,346 contributors
- 86% of tags not found in museum documentation
- 88.2% considered as *useful* by museum staff
- 46% of users always contributed useful Tags
- 5.1% never assigned a useful tag
- *Usefulness increased* when terms were assigned more than once



Benefits of crowd sourcing

- Taps into huge potential
- User-oriented content
- Complements existing data
- Low cost
- Simple to implement



Conclusions

- Three opportunities:
 - Document management systems (DMS)
 - Semantic indexing (SKOS)
 - Social tagging (Steve)
- Huge potential
- Modest investment
- ICOM CIDOC is here to help!



Thank You

- Contact details:
 - Email:- nicholas@crofts.ch
 - CIDOC web site:- cidoc.icom.museum
- I would like to thank ICOM Portugal and the Portuguese association of Librarians and Archivists