

Notes from 3rd Icon DG meeting

29-07-2014 14:00 Wellcome Trust

Present:

- Louise Bacon
- Gillian Boal
- Jane Eagan
- Clare Finn
- Jennifer Marchant
- Jennifer Murray
- Heather Ravenberg
- Haris Theodorakopoulos
- Joyce Townsend
- Thanasis Velios
- Francesca Whymark

Apologies:

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- Caroline Babington
- Sheila Banks
- Gabriella Barbieri
- Marta Garcia Celma
- Martin Edwards
- Simon Fleury
- Frances Halahan
- Maria Jordan
- Sophie Julien-Lees
- David Leigh
- Tuula Pardoe
- Louise Robertson
- Anne-Marie Steel
- Richard Williams

Points raised from the notes of the 2nd Icon DG meeting

The group went through the action points from the 2nd Icon DG meeting and some further points were made:

1. Website – email: Not everyone has received the documents from previous meetings or the group's website address. Francesca Whymark to contribute to the maintenance of the website alongside Heather Ravenberg.

Action – Thanasis Velios to circulate the website address to all.

2. Icon News article: Jennifer Marchant has circulated a draft of the article. Several comments were made including a) the requirement for an example about the layered approach to documentation as part of the article and b) the reference to Icon's existing description about the role of documentation in the profession with particular reference to the PARC documentation.

Action – All to send individual comments to Jennifer Marchant by Friday the 1st of August. Jennifer Marchant to produce final text and liaise with Icon News editor for the submission.

3. ConservationSpace: an update about ConservationSpace will be given by Anne-Marie Steel, hopefully during the next meeting.

Deferred action – Anne-Marie Steel to pass specific questions about ConservationSpace to the development team:

- How does ConservationSpace integrate with existing documentation systems?
- Who provides support for ConservationSpace?
- Under what software license will ConservationSpace be available?

Deferred action – Anne-Marie Steel to contact the Courtauld to arrange a demo for ICON-DG.

4. Commercial companies: The group received communication from Alison Richmond on the proposed wording to be used when dealing with commercial companies, which is: “any presentation or other work with Icon does not indicate endorsement by Icon.”

5. Group designation: The group received no further information about this matter.

Documentation at the Horniman Museum

Louise Bacon gave an overview of the documentation system in use at the Horniman Museum:

Special reference was made to the work by Suzanne Keene and Joel Taylor. Four categories of assessment are used (Good, Fair, Poor, Unacceptable) and different levels of detailed according to the purpose of documentation. It was noted that although detailed documentation is possible in the Horniman's system it is often the time required for input which is a limitation regardless of keeping paper or digital records. The Horniman has reviewed a number of thesauri prior to developing its own in-house thesaurus.

Action – Louise Bacon to check if the thesaurus or other information from Horniman's documentation system can be shared with the group.

Documentation for conservation science

Joyce Townsend gave an overview of the challenges of documenting conservation science work. Some points made are:

- Documentation is the link between people with a lot of knowledge who eventually leave an organisation and people with limited knowledge who join an organisation to continue with the work.
- There are two types of information at risk: a) the evidence of the analysis and b) the conclusions because of this evidence.
- Systematic naming of (typically) computer files is important.
- Images are a useful tool to present conservation science data.
- Contaminated samples is another risk with conservation science records as it alters the quality of the evidence.
- Reporting conservation science data depends on the audience (e.g. reporting the existence of beeswax is different to reporting that the artwork is sensitive to temperature).

Action – Joyce Townsend to circulate a version of her presentation to the group (internal use only).

Development of layered approach to documentation

Following previous recommendations about possible criteria for layering conservation records, the group identified an additional one based on Joyce Townsend's presentation:

- A more qualitative record tends to be lower level while a more quantitative record tends to be higher level. I.e. the existence of measurements makes a record more detailed.
- Describing an object at its current state tends to be lower level, while specifying the sequence of events which led to the object's current state is higher level. About this point it was noted that this criterion would not apply to objects with full history of treatment records.
- **A record including only observations/measurements (e.g. 10% of the surface covered with mould) is different to a record that includes assessment (e.g. surface unstable). It appears that a lower level record is more likely to only include assessments. Evidence tends to be included in higher level.**

Deferred action – Thanasis Velios to email the group for volunteers to take the layered approach development further.

There was no decision on the date and place of the next meeting, but the Welcome Trust is again a possibility, as is Chelsea College.