Notes from 4th Icon DG meeting

03-12-2014 14:00 Wellcome Trust

Present:
- Gillian Boal
- Angela Craft
- Jane Eagan
- Clare Finn
- Velson Horie
- David Leigh
- Jennifer Murray
- Anne-Marie Steel
- Austin Nevin
- Haris Theodorakopoulos
- Thanasis Velios
- Francesca Whymark

Apologies:
- Caroline Babington
- Louise Bacon
- Isabelle Egan
- Kostas Ntanos
- Joseph Padfield
- Heather Ravenberg
- Joyce Townsend
- Peter Whitehead

ICON-DG formal designation

The group discussed the proposal circulated at the meeting about Icon Networks (Attachment 1: Icon Network proposal). In general the group felt that this was a good proposal. Jane Egan proposed that the Network reported regularly to Icon, perhaps at the AGM at an annual basis. Velson Horie recommended the formation of a core group in the Network with people who will be expected to attend on a regular basis and will contribute to the organisation of Network activities.

Action – Thanasis Velios to incorporate these changes to the proposal, circulate to the group for comments, also receive comments from Isabelle Egan and Konstantinos Ntanos from the Group Chairs group and send to Icon (Alison Richmond).

Points raised from the notes of the 3nd Icon DG meeting

The group went through the action points from the 3nd Icon DG meeting and some further points were made:

1. Icon News article: Jennifer Marchant's article was published in the Icon News. The group reported limited feedback, but all of it positive.

2. Horniman Thesaurus: The group has enquired on whether the in-house Horniman Thesaurus could be shared.

Deferred action – Louise Bacon to check with the Horniman.

3. Documentation for Technical Studies: Joyce Townsend has now circulated her presentation about documenting technical studies to the group. The group emphasised the importance of a point made in Joyce's presentation about communicating conservation information to three audiences: conservators, curators and the public.

4. Layered documentation: Thanasis Velios reported no progress in this matter.

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

Stakeholders list

Francesca Whymark has setup an online spreadsheet with organisations from the group's

stakeholders list and members of the group have already contributed to it. Some minor technical access problems are now resolved. The list will be included (password protected) on the Icon-DG website once complete. Francesca Whymark to maintain it. Contact names on the stakeholders list should be people who members of the group can contact personally.

Action – All to contribute to the stakeholders list.

Library of documentation forms

Claire Finn proposed the development of a resource to maintain a library of documentation forms used in conservation. This will be a way for the group to identify good practices when designing documentation forms. It will also allow the group to identify minimum standards.

Action – Claire Finn, Francesca Whymark and Heather Ravenberg to setup a basic online filing system and classification for documentation forms. All to contribute to the library by sending samples of forms.

Terminology standards

Velson Horie gave a presentation about the development of standards in the conservation profession and his extensive involvement in such activities. In his presentation:

- he emphasised that authority files are of great importance for documentation,

- he referred to a number of relevant ISO standards,

- he explained that it is relatively easy to describe **objects**, more difficult to describe **properties** and even more difficult to describe **processes**,

- he explained that most of the standards are products of long periods of hard work by relatively small groups of people and the bureaucratic nature of the standardisation organisation ensures the quality of the produced work,

- he considered the standard as a conservation tool which comes at a cost and which performs a job like every other tool.

The group agreed that the awareness about conservation standards needs to be raised, within the group and in the wider conservation community.

ConservationSpace

Following an action point from the previous meeting Anne-Marie Steel has shared the answers to the group's questions about ConservationSpace[1]. Austin Nevin joined the group and gave an overview about ConservationSpace. He pointed the group to an online screencast showcasing features of ConservationSpace.

Action – Thanasis Velios to circulate the web-address of the screencast. All to view the screencast and raise questions with the group.

Future plans for Icon-DG

The group discussed the proposal for future activities which was circulated in advance of the meeting (Attachment 3: Icon-DG future activities). In general, the group agreed with the proposal but a few points were raised:

Some of the proposed activities could be grouped in a conference/workshop although concerns were

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1   These can be found in the mailing list archive, but also included as an attachment here (Attachment 2: ConservationSpace questions from the 2nd meeting).

raised about a single event being too dense for new-comers as the subject could be seen as too technical. Other concerns about attracting a wide enough audience were expressed and it was agreed that the conference/workshop should be offered for free and that any expenses should be paid after fund-raising. The contact points with stakeholders should be a good way of communicating the event and attracting a relevant audience.

Action – Thanasis Velios to redraft the future plans document so that it can be used as a starting point for approaching stakeholders.

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.

Attachment 1: Icon Network proposal

ICON-DG as a Network (DRAFT)

This document is a proposal for a new format for Icon groups which could be tested within the ICON-DG.

Why a new format?

The proposal for a new Icon group on Conservation Documentation initiated a discussion on whether conservation sub-domains which are of interest to every other group (e.g. the work of the new documentation group may be of interest to the Book and Paper group, Ceramics and Glass group, Ethnographic group etc.) should constitute their own entity. Existing similar groups (such as the Conservation Science group) often consider the administrative work associated with a group structure as disproportionate. The Group Chairs group indicated in their last meeting that Icon would be open to consider alternative structures for groups.

Proposed format for ICON-DG

We propose the development of ICON-DG into a *network*.

Membership: The network's membership will be open to any Icon member. At least one representative from every other group will have to be formally designated to contribute to the network. This will ensure some continuity in communication.

Budget: The network will not be financially supported by Icon based on the number of its members, but it will request financial support on a per project/event basis.

Administration: The network will have no requirement to routinely report to Icon. Budget/activity reporting will be done on a per project/event basis. The network will have access to reasonable administrative and office support as offered by Icon to the rest of the membership and groups.

Attachment 2: ConservationSpace questions from the 2nd meeting

- How does ConservationSpace integrate with existing documentation systems?

  ConservationSpace, which exists in beta form now, is designed to integrate with other databases, for example collection management and digital asset management systems. The first real release will be ready in late 2015 or early 2016.

- Who provides support for ConservationSpace?

  Funding for development comes from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. We have a committee working with outside contractors on a sustainability business model to support users.

- Under what software license will ConservationSpace be available?

  It is an open source product that will be made freely available although there will be cost in time and money to integrate it with institutional systems.

ICON-DG - Future plans

This document is a proposal for focussed activities of the ICON-DG group over the next 2-5 years.

Linked Open Data for conservation documentation

Assist ICON members to publish conservation records as Linked Open Data (LOD)[2,3]. LOD is an initiative for sharing data in formats which allow data to be re-used by other parties often with automated techniques. Publishing conservation records as LOD would allow conservation research on wider samples thus resulting more accurate conclusions. It would also allow sharing observations made by conservators which could inform decision making for the conservation of objects or the care of collections. (copyright, conservation science, software companies)

Conservation documentation in education

Compile a collection of resources and produce training material which can be offered as a training module on conservation documentation. Work with conservation educational departments to deliver this module to conservation students.

Reference resources

Compile a list of reference resources which can be used both as look-up material and as permanent reference points (e.g. as required by LOD). Compile and produce conservation visual glossaries. Maintain a library of conservation documentation forms. (layered conservation records, system implementation)

Tasks and timeline

Year	1	2	3	4	5
Invite ICOM-CIDOC members to discuss the use of the CIDOC Conceptual Reference Model (CRM).	X				
Invite Getty vocabularies and GCI staff to discuss the representation of the conservation domain in the Getty Arts and Architecture Thesaurus.	X				
Invite British Museum staff to discuss their LOD initiative and the representation of conservation records.	X				
Discuss open access.	X				
Establish links with stakeholders.	X X				
Produce guidelines for publishing conservation data as LOD.		X			
Inform stakeholders on best practices for		X			

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2   http://5stardata.info/

3   Berners-Lee, Tim, Christian Bizer, and Tom Heath. "Linked data-the story so far." International Journal on Semantic Web and Information Systems 5.3 (2009): 1-22.

publishing conservation records as LOD. 🟥🟦										
Assist stakeholders with implementing pilot projects. 🟥					X	X	X	X	X	X
Repeat process until a critical mass of conservation data is online. 🟥										
Maintain a library of documentation forms. 🟧										
Maintain a list of reference resources and produce new ones. 🟧										