A Survey of Documentation Standards in the Archaeological and Museum Community

October 2006

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Overview

This report, produced as a component of the EPOCH Project's AMA (Archive Mapper for Archaeology) initiative, aims to provide a unified and topical reference guide to the current state-of-the-art in cultural heritage documentation, specifically those sectors associated with material heritage: Archaeology and Museums. It is intended to capture the current, collective knowledge of European heritage practitioners for the purpose of creating a single professional reference for documentation standards. It also aims to broaden the awareness of these standards, and to encourage continued dialogue across national and regional boundaries.

The scope of the survey is dictated by four considerations:

- **Type:** the survey will report on standards for cultural heritage documentation only. Documentation standards that are not specific to cultural heritage, but are nonetheless widely employed by the cultural heritage community, will be included as a second priority. The survey will not address specific file formats.
- **Domain**: the survey will include only those standards employed in the archaeology and museum communities; libraries and archives will not be addressed.
- **Use:** only those standards that have been created by, or are supported by, mutual agreement of a professional community will be addressed; the survey will not include project-specific or vendor-specific implementations. The report must be topical; included standards must be in use, or forthcoming.
- **Region:** as a matter of practical necessity, the survey focuses on standards employed in Europe. While those employed elsewhere are equally valid, and will be included where possible, the scope of the AMA initiative does not provide the means for a wider survey.

The survey acts as an initial point of reference, and does not attempt to duplicate information easily found elsewhere. The information provided to the reader therefore addresses those items which are of specific interest to the domain practitioner:

- Geographical and chronological scope of the subject: is the standard intended to document material culture from a specific time and place?
- Summary: a short description of the standard and its history.
- Where it is employed: what organisations are using it, and where is it seeing active use.
- Documentation Format: what format does the documentation take: for example, the standard may be a text document describing units of information, or it may be provided as an XML schema or DTD.
- Availability: how can it be obtained, under what license, and at what cost?
- Authority Lists: what standardised vocabularies are employed by this standard?
- Language: In what language(s) does it exist?
- Further reference: hyperlinks to additional, more detailed, reading.

Domain-specific and multimedia documentation standards are not included in this report.

CIDOC CRM: Conceptual Reference Model

The CRM provides definitions and a formal structure for describing the implicit and explicit concepts and relationships used in cultural heritage documentation. The primary role of the CRM is to promote a shared understanding of cultural heritage information by providing a common and extensible semantic framework that any cultural heritage information can be mapped to. In this way, it can provide the "semantic glue" needed to mediate between different sources of cultural heritage information, such as that published by museums, libraries and archives. It is intended to be a common language for domain experts and implementers to formulate requirements for information systems and to serve as a guide for good practice of conceptual modelling (http://cidoc.ics.forth.gr/).

Summary:
The CRM is an ontology for describing cultural heritage information, but is fundamentally unlike every other standard in this document: the CRM ontology does not contains 'units of information' to which your own collections are mapped, but rather provides a formal, scientific vocabulary, based on class-property relationships, used to describe the units of information employed in the documentation of your own cultural heritage collections. The CRM is used to clarify the documentation process, and to ensure no loss of somatic content when integrating heterogeneous cultural heritage data sources. The CRM was released as an ISO standard in standard in October 2006: "ISO 21127: A Reference Ontology for the Interchange of Cultural Heritage Information".

Scope:
Designed to accommodate all information required for the scientific documentation of cultural heritage collections with a view to enabling wide area information exchange and integration of heterogeneous sources. (http://cidoc.ics.forth.gr/scope.html) It is designed to be extended and extensible: an example is the on-going CRM/FRBR harmonisation, integrating the documentation standards of the library and museum communities.

Deployment:
Used most widely in Europe, especially in pan-European applications. This European presence is an artefact of its original working group rather than a limitation of its chronological and geographical scope.

Format, Availability and License:
Available in MS Word HTML versions; proposals exist for RDFS and OWL. The standard is free to use and free to downloaded from the CIDOC CRM Website: http://cidoc.ics.forth.gr/official_release_cidoc.html

Languages:
Currently available in English, French, Greek, German and Japanese. Ongoing translations in Russian, Czech, and Portuguese.
(http://cidoc.ics.forth.gr/translation_guidelines.html)

Aegis:
The CIDOC Documentation Standards Working Group and CIDOC CRM Special Interest Groups, working groups of CIDOC

CIDOC CRM Core

CRM Core is a proposal of metadata elements for resource discovery. It captures the basic functions of identification, classification, participation, part decomposition, references and similarity. CRM Core is also a very simple schema for summarization of historical facts. CRM Core is more general than Dublin Core, yet more precise, as it allows for specifying different kinds of events (http://cidoc.ics.forth.gr/working_editions_cidoc.html).

Summary:
CRM Core is not an ontology like the CRM, but rather a data standard that allows users to encapsulate a limited subset of their data in a CRM-compliant, XML format; a more advanced, event-driven alternative to Dublin Core.

Scope:
Employed to address the same scope as the CRM, above.

Deployment:
In progress: it has been accepted by CIDOC in May 2005 as working item for a metadata recommendation, and it was revised by the CIDOC CRM Special Interest Group in November 2005.

Format, Availability and License:
Available as a XML DTD. Free for use and download.

Languages:
Available in English only.

Authority Lists and Reference Data:
None.

Aegis:
As CIDOC CRM, above.

International Guidelines for Museum Object Information: The CIDOC Information Categories

Summary:
The International Guidelines for Museum Object Information contain a description of the information categories that can be used in the documentation of objects in a museum collection. They include a definition of the categories that should be recorded for museum objects, how information should be recorded for each of the categories and recommendations for the terminology with which this information should be recorded, an outline of the format rules and conventions governing how information is entered in these categories and, comments on the terminology that can be used in these categories.
(http://www.chin.gc.ca/English/Standards/metadata_documentation.html#crm)

Scope:
The International Guidelines for Museum Object Information have been developed for museum documentation intended to ensure accountability for objects, to aid the security of objects, provide an historic archive about objects, support physical and intellectual objects. They are intended to establish a standard for the documentation of inventories of cultural property at a national level for use by curators, researchers, and the public (http://www.willpowerinfo.myby.co.uk/cidoc/guide/guideint.htm#int1)

Deployment:
This standard was designed to be implemented on an international scale either to act as an intermediary when comparing (mapping between) existing museum information standards or as a basis for new national standards if there are no current standards in a country. An object-oriented model called the CRM (above) based on the CIDOC *Guidelines* has been developed to facilitate interchange of museum information which has been adopted widely in Europe.
(http://www.chin.gc.ca/English/Standards/metadata_documentation.html#crm)

Format, Availability and License:
Available in printed and HTML versions. The standard is free to use and can be obtained from: ICOM, on-line at: http://www.willpowerinfo.myby.co.uk/cidoc/guide/guide.htm.

Languages:
Currently available in English only. Ongoing translation into French.

Authority Lists and Reference Data:
The guidelines make recommendations for syntax, format, and controlled vocabularies but do not explicitly define the terminology to be used.

Aegis:
Published by International Committee for Documentation of the International Council of Museums, edited by CIDOC Data and Terminology and the CIDOC Data Model Working Groups

CIDOC International Core Data Standard for Archaeological Sites and Monuments

The CIDOC International Core Data Standard for Archaeological Sites and Monuments aims to identify the categories necessary for documenting the immovable archaeological heritage: http://www.object-id.com/heritage/intro2.html

Summary:
The International Core Data Standard for Archaeological Sites and Monuments was the result of a collaboration between several groups, the documentation committee (CIDOC) of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and the archaeology documentation group of the Council of Europe. It became clear at an international conference in 1991 that whilst there were already many similarities between the approaches used to document different national records, there was still a need for further co-operation in the area, of documentation standards. In 1992 it was decided that a core data standard for archaeological sites and monuments should be developed and the CIDOC Archaeological Sites Working Group was established to undertake the task. This standard was produced to assist users when documenting archaeological sites and monuments, its ultimate aim was to facilitate the international exchange of information by encouraging standardised approaches to database structures.
http://www.object-id.com/heritage/intro4.html

Scope:
This standard was developed with the intention of complementing the Council of Europe's own Core Data Index to Historic Buildings and Monuments of the Architectural Heritage. The aims of the standard are:

- To facilitate communication between national and international bodies responsible for the recording and protection of the archaeological heritage;
- To assist countries at an early stage in developing systems for the recording and protection of the archaeological heritage; and
- To facilitate research utilising archaeological core data where this has an international dimension.

The standard developed by CIDOC (which had already begun to be developed before its adoption by the Council of Europe) was to be subjected to some minor adjustments that will better reflect the narrower geographical focus of the Council of Europe.
http://www.object-id.com/heritage/intro4.html

Deployment:
This standard is widely used internationally and has been accepted as part of the Council of Europe's European Plan for Archaeology. A revised version of the standard - CIDOC Core Data Standard For Archaeological And Architectural Heritage (see below) is in preparation now.
http://www.object-id.com/heritage/intro4.html

Aegis:
CIDOC Archaeological Sites Working Group.

CIDOC International Core Data Standard For Archaeological And Architectural Heritage

This standard was produced to guide users in documenting archaeological sites and monuments. It aims to facilitate international exchange of information by encouraging standardised approaches to database structure. The first edition of the Core Data Standard for Archaeological and Architectural Heritage was published in 1995. A second edition, revised as the International Core Data Standard for Archaeological Sites and Architectural Heritage, in the light of practical experience and new theoretical insights. This second edition is in the final stages of editing and will shortly be available through CIDOC.

Summary:
The International Core Data Standard for Archaeological Sites and Monuments of the Architectural Heritage is a revision of CIDOC: International Core Data Standard for Archaeological Sites and Museums that was published in 1995 (see above). It is intended to retain a close relationship with the Core Data Index to Historic Buildings and Monuments of the Architectural Heritage so that countries wishing to include all information relating to the man-made environment on one database can do so. The standard has also be designed to make it possible to link it to other standards for movable objects such as the CIDOC standard for archaeological objects (1992), CIDOC's International Guidelines for Museum Object Information (1995), and Object ID (1997). It is compliant with the CIDOC CRM.

Scope:
The standard has been designed to make it possible to record the minimum categories of information required to make a reasonable assessment of a monument or site, whether for planning, management, academic, or other purposes. It also allows the provision of references to further information held in places such as databases or documentation centres to be accessed that may lead to the construction of a better understanding of either individual or categories of sites and monuments. It has also envisaged that the standard will:

- Provide a model that can be used as a framework by organisations wishing to establish new recording systems,
- Encourage consistency in the recording of archaeological sites and monuments,
- Function as an exchange format for the sharing of data
- Form the basis of collaborative projects.

The need for organisations to record archaeological information in varying degrees of detail has been recognised in the design of this standard. A number of sections, sub-sections, and fields are therefore optional rather than mandatory, which will allow this standard to be used by organisations at a level appropriate to their individual aims and resources. The standard is intended for use in conjunction with the data model selected for the national or regional database and will, in most cases, require modification to reflect the requirements of the organisation.
http://www.object-id.com/heritage/intro4.html

Deployment:
The first edition of the International Core Data Standard for Archaeological Sites and Museums is deployed throughout the world.

Format, Availability and License:
The second edition will be available as a text document and hard copy.

Languages:
Available initially in English only followed by French.

Aegis:
CIDOC Archaeological Sites Working Group.

CIDOC International Core Data Standard for Archaeological Objects

The International Data Core Standard for Archaeological Objects sets out minimum categories of information to be recorded about archaeological objects including fields for identification, institution, references, object name, title, iconography, description, material, technique, dimensions, form, archaeological context, author and cultural milieu, inscriptions and marks, date/epoch, acquisition, and state of conservation. (http://www.chin.gc.ca/English/Standards/metadata_description.html#core_data_arch_objects)

Scope:
The International Data Core Standard for Archaeological Objects is designed to accommodate information required for the documentation of archaeological objects. It is intended to be extended and extensible. It is in fact extremely minimalist to the point of irrelevance in the context of current practice.

Deployment:
Its current use is unclear. The standard appears to have stagnated judging by the lack recent material and the last update to the CIDOC Archaeological Sites Working Group website (http://cidoc.natmus.dk/engelsk/introduction.asp) in August 2000.

Format, Availability and License:
The standard is free to use and is available to view online from the CIDOC Denmark website: http://cidoc.natmus.dk/engelsk/standard_for_arch.asp.

Languages:
Currently available in English.

Aegis:
CIDOC Archaeological Sites Working Group

MIDAS: A Manual and Data Standard for Monument Inventories

MIDAS is a content and metadata standard for historic environment information. A vast body of knowledge and understanding of the historic environment is held in a wide variety of 'inventories', maintained by national bodies of record, local authorities, museums, amenity groups, individual and university based researchers. To make the best use of this information, especially where these resources are available on the internet, it is important to establish a shared understanding of what information should be recorded. MIDAS sets out that shared understanding based on the experience of many of the key organisations involved in the collection and dissemination of information about the historic environment in the UK.
(http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/filearea.cgi?LMGT1=FISH&a=get&f=/web_midasintro.htm)

Summary:
MIDAS was developed by English Heritage in 1998 (http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/userinfo/standards.html). It provides a framework data standard for monument inventories. It includes checklists to assist inventory managers with decision-making, units of information to be recorded, along with definitions for each unit of information. The standard, in its first incarnation, is very much focused on indexing monument inventory.
http://www.chin.gc.ca/English/Standards/metadata_description.html

Scope:
MIDAS is designed to accommodate information from monument inventories and assist in decision making processes relating to the management of associated data. It is intended to be used by a wide variety of heritage projects including local societies and amenity groups, university based research projects or individual studies, professional heritage managers and national thematic study groups.

Deployment:
Used widely in the UK. The Forum for information Standards in Heritage (FISH) is currently producing a second edition, due to be published in 2007. The developed Standard (now called MIDAS Heritage – the UK Historic Environment Information Standard) will cover all types of heritage assets in the United Kingdom including covering mainly landscape character, artefacts, ecofacts, archaeological science and GIS data.
http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgibin/filearea.cgi?LMGT1=FISH&a=get&f=/web_midasupdates.htm

Format, Availability and License:
MIDAS is free to use. A number of XML schema for the MIDAS standard – including schema for monuments, events, and portable antiquities – form the core of the 'FISH Interoperability Toolkit' (http://www.heritage-standards.org).

The on-line, browsable version of the standard has been withdrawn pending the impending release of the second edition. However, a reprint of the current edition is available to download as a pdf file from the English Heritage website:
http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/upload/pdf/MIDAS3rdReprint.pdf

The mapped data annex – standardising how MIDAS entities are represented on maps and map layers – was published in 2004:
http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/upload/pdf/MIDAS3rdReprint.pdf

Languages:
Available in English only.

Aegis:
First published in 1998 by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, reprinted with amendments in 1998 by English Heritage. The standard is now maintained by a consortium of professional heritage organisations in Britain known by the unfortunate moniker, FISH (The Forum for Information Standards in Heritage): http://www.fish-forum.info/

Authority Lists and Reference Data:
MIDAS contains an inclusive body of wordlists and formal, polyhierarchal thesauri, some of which are addressed in more detail here:

Thesaurus of Monument Types

This standard was produced by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) in 1995. The purpose of this thesaurus is to standardise the terms used to describe archaeological sites or standing buildings in the UK by, for example, listing terms hierarchically and relating the levels of this hierarchy to one another or indicating preferred terms in the case of synonyms. Synonyms are dealt with by pointing the user to a preferred term. This thesaurus is now maintained by English Heritage, and is available on-line, or in CSV format under license from English Heritage. http://thesaurus.english-heritage.org.uk/frequentuser.htm

MDA Archaeological Objects Thesaurus

This resource was developed by English heritage in partnership with mda as part of the Archaeological Objects Working Party. The goal of this thesaurus is to encourage access to, and reuse of, collections, archives and record systems, and to facilitate cooperation and data exchange between all individuals and institutions involved in the retrieval, research and curation of archaeological objects. The resource is now maintained by English Heritage.

No date limitation was imposed on the scope of the thesaurus, recognising that archaeological fieldwork is concerned with the recovery of ancient and modern objects. As far as the geographical scope is concerned, it was recognised, at the outset, that it would be impossible for the thesaurus to provide comprehensive coverage for archaeological collections from cultures world-wide, and the object names which have been included cover predominantly British and Irish material. However, a small number of foreign names do appear. These were included partly because they are names in common usage and partly because they frequently appear in museum collections. It was also considered worth testing whether they would fit into the overall structure, and to indicate that the geographical scope of the thesaurus could be extended to include collections of foreign archaeological material if required.

The standard is free to use and is available to view /download at either

http://www.mda.org.uk/archobj/archcon.htm (for the original published version). or through the English Heritage website at http://thesaurus.english-heritage.org.uk/frequentuser.htm for the most recently updated version.

Other English Heritage Thesauri

Other thesauri managed by English Heritage include:

- **Components:** Components of monuments, buildings and significant craft types
- **Main Building Materials**: Thesaurus of main constructional material types (eg. the walls) for indexing of monuments.
- **Aircraft Type**: types of aircraft
- **Cargo**: Thesaurus of cargo types carried by vessel on final voyage (Maritime).
- **Defence of Britain**: Physical remains of WWII
- **Land Use**: Authority list of present land use or uses for an archaeological item.
- **Maritime Craft Type**: A thesaurus of Maritime Craft.
- **Maritime Place Name**: Test thesaurus for ports of registration, departure and destination and country of origin.
- **Evidence**: A new 'Evidence' Thesaurus
- **National Trust Thread**: Terminology for the description of archive type and format, jointly developed by the National Trust and English Heritage.

MIDAS INSCRIPTION

INSCRIPTION (http://www.fish-forum.info/inscript.htm) is an authoritative set of wordlists for use in recording archaeological heritage in the UK, currently being developed by the The Forum on Information Standards in Heritage (FISH). This resource is intended for use with MIDAS (above). A variety of termlists and scope notes have been developed for high-level terminology control for things such as scientific dating techniques used in archaeology. http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/userinfo/standards.html

Format, Availability and License:
The standard is free to use and is available to view at the FISH website

SPECTRUM: Documentation Standard for Museums

Summary:
SPECTRUM was created by the MDA in 1994 to provide a standard for documenting museum collections. The standard contains procedures for documenting objects and their processes, as well as identifying and describing the information which needs to be recorded to support these procedures. It sets out a definition for each unit of information, guidance and examples of how and when to record the information, and a list of the procedures for each unit of information is needed (http://www.mda.org.uk/specfaq.htm).

Scope:
SPECTRUM is an industry standard for museum documentation and has been developed in partnership with over 100 museum professionals. It is an open standard held in trust by the MDA, formerly the Museum Documentation Association, on behalf of UK museums. SPECTRUM defines best practice for completing documentation for twenty-one museum activities (procedures), setting out the definition, minimum standard and information requirements for each procedure.

Deployment:
Museums in the UK who have registered with the Museum and Galleries Commission are required to use SPECTRUM. It is a well-respected standard internationally, and is increasingly used as the basis for international interchange of museum data. An XML DTD has been produced for *SPECTRUM* which serves as a system-neutral interchange format for museum data that is based on *SPECTRUM* or that can map to *SPECTRUM*
(http://www.chin.gc.ca/English/Standards/metadata_documentation.html)

Format, Availability and License:
SPECTRUM is available as an XML DTD and can be downloaded and viewed free of charge for non-commercial use (under a standard licence) and commercial use (under an organisational licence) from the MDA website at http://www.mda.org.uk/spectrum.htm. It is also possible to request a hardcopy through the MDA.

Languages:
English. Translations are currently being addressed by MDA.

Aegis:
MDA (formerly The *Museums Documentation Association*)

SPECTRUM Terminology

SPECTRUM Terminology is an online service providing general information about terminology for museums, guidance on creating thesauri and a set of existing standard terminologies including *Terminology Essentials* (general information about terminology for museums), *Terminology Studio* (guidance on creating thesauri) and *Terminology Bank* (a set of existing standard terminologies). It also supports the requirement of many *SPECTRUM* 'Units of Information' to "maintain a list of standard terms". http://www.mda.org.uk/spectrum-terminology/

ICOM AFRIDOC: Handbook of Standards Documenting African Collections

Summary:
The Handbook of Standards. Documenting African Collections was published in 1996. It was designed to provide guidance on the minimum amount of documentation – information units – required for museums curating objects from Africa in order to protect the African heritage by documenting and producing systematic inventories and developing museum activities (research, collecting, exhibitions, educational programmes etc.) by facilitating the exchange of information on collections and the sharing of professional practices. All museum disciplines were covered from humanities subjects to natural science subjects. http://icom.museum/afridoc/html_gb/accueil/accueil2.html

Deployment:
It was designed and tested initially using six pilot museums in Africa. It is hoped however that eventually all African or Africanist museums worldwide will adopt this standard. http://icom.museum/afridoc/html_gb/accueil/accueil2.html

Format, Availability and License:
The standard available online at http://icom.museum/afridoc/

Languages:
Available in English and French

Authority Lists and Reference Data:
The proposed terminology lists included in this standard are of two kinds. The first types are introduced merely as illustration, to facilitate the use of the handbook and the recording of the data. They are not exhaustive and can be developed for each museum, even if the creation of lists common to all museums is the ultimate goal. The second types are “closed lists” which are cross-referenced with the phrase “it is mandatory to use the terminology list”, and are an integral part of the standard. They contain the only vocabulary that can be used for recording and are indispensable, especially in the framework of exchanges. http://icom.museum/afridoc/html_gb/accueil/accueil2.html

Aegis:
International Council of Museums (ICOM)

CDWA: Categories for the Description of Works of Art

Summary:
CDWA describes the content of art databases by articulating a conceptual framework for describing and accessing information about works of art, architecture, other material culture, groups and collections of works, and related images. They identify vocabulary resources and descriptive practices that will make information residing in diverse systems both more compatible and more accessible. They also provide a framework to which existing art information systems can be mapped and upon which new systems can be developed. The *Categories* advise the use of controlled vocabularies, authorities, and consistent formatting of certain information to ensure efficient end-user retrieval.
(http://www.chin.gc.ca/English/Standards/metadata_description.html)

The CDWA includes 381 categories and subcategories. A small subset of categories are considered ***core*** in that they represent the minimum information necessary to identify and describe a work. The CDWA includes discussions, basic guidelines for cataloguing, and examples.
(http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/standards/cdwa/index.html)

Format, Availability and License:
The standard is free to use and is available on-line at http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/standards/cdwa/index.html. An overview of the List of categories and descriptions is available to view as a pdf at http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/standards/cdwa/8_printing_options/definitions.pdf

Languages:
Available in English only.

Authority Lists and Reference Data:
The standard provides guidance on the use and implementation of controlled vocabularies and authority lists.

Aegis:
J.Paul Getty Trust & Art Association Inc

CDWA Lite

Summary:
CDWA Lite is an XML schema used to describe core records for works of art and material culture, based on the data elements and guidelines contained in the CDWA and CCO. (CCO is based on a subset of the CDWA categories and VRA Core.) CDWA Lite records are intended for contribution to union catalogues and other repositories using the Open Archives Initiative (OAI) harvesting protocol. Elements 1 through 19 in this schema are for descriptive metadata, based on CDWA and CCO; elements 20 through 22 deal with administrative metadata. All attributes are optional unless otherwise noted
http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/standards/cdwa/cdwalite/index.html

Format, Availability and License:
the XML Schema is free to use and is available to view and download as a pdf file at
http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/standards/cdwa/cdwalite/cdwalite.pdf

Languages:
Available in English only.

Aegis:
As CDWA, above

CCO: Cataloguing Cultural Objects

"A Guide to Describing Cultural Works and their Images": Cataloguing Cultural Objects (CCO) "provides guidelines for selecting, ordering, and formatting data used to populate catalogue records" in development by the Visual Resources Association (VRA). It is the first comprehensive "data content standard" (or format standard) for museums, intended to help guide the "choice of terms, and define the order, syntax, and form in which data values should be entered into a data structure". It is similar in purpose (and in its recommendations) to the "Cataloguing Rules" that are included within CHIN's Data Dictionary (below), but is much more comprehensive for those fields that it covers. The CCO is designed for descriptive cataloguing; it does not cover information for the full extent of collections management functions (e.g. loans processing, conservation reporting, etc.) It covers many types of cultural objects - "architecture, archaeological sites and artefacts, and some functional objects from the realm of material culture".
http://www.chin.gc.ca/PM.cgi?pmLANG=English&pmAP=return_full_record&pmLM=News&pmPR=FORUM_NEWSRELEASES&pmSource=canned&chinKey=8552

Deployment:
"Cataloguing Cultural Objects focuses on data content standards that guide the choice of terms used in description, and that define the order, syntax, and form in which those terms, phrases, values, and narrative descriptions are recorded." Although its primary emphasis is on art, CCO will be of interest to all institutions who manage cultural heritage collections.

Format, Availability and License:
The standard is available as a manual; the most recent draft (Feb 2005) is freely available online at http://www.vraweb.org/ccoweb/

Languages:
Available in English only.
Aegis:
Visual Resources Association

VRA Core

"The VRA Core is a data standard for the cultural heritage community. It consists of a metadata element set (units of information such as title, location, date, etc.), as well as an initial blueprint for how those elements can be hierarchically structured. The element set provides a categorical organization for the description of works of visual culture as well as the images that document them. "
http://www.vraweb.org/datastandards/VRA_Core4_Intro.pdf

The principle developed by the Dublin Core community of only one object or resource may be described within a single metadata set was used to create VRA Core. *VRA Core* is not intended as a completed application – the elements that comprise the *Core* are designed to facilitate the sharing of information among visual resources collections about *works* and *images*. These elements may not be sufficient to fully describe a local collection and additional fields can be added for that purpose.
http://www.vraweb.org/

VRA Core 4 is now in a final draft form. While it offers significant enhancements on its predecessor in terms of the ability to catalogue works and visual representations of these works, it suffers from the lack of an event-based model which would otherwise provide it with the framework upon which to hang the many activities associated with works of art.
http://www.vraweb.org/datastandards/VRA_Core4_Intro.pdf

Format, Availability and License:
VRA Core 4 is freely available as an XML schema.

Languages:
Available in English only.

Authority Lists and Reference Data:
A number of abbrowviated authority lists are embedded in the extended form of the XML schema.

Aegis:
VRA Data Standards Committee

CHIN Data Dictionaries

The *CHIN Data Dictionaries* are not a data structure for use in a collections management system, but are designed to be used as the basis for such a structure. They can be used by a wide range of museums to help them to identify their institution's information needs and standardize their documentation. They include fields for describing objects, specimens, and archaeological sites, as well as fields for collections management.
http://www.chin.gc.ca/English/Standards/metadata_preservation.html

Deployment:
CHIN's *Data Dictionaries* have been used by Canadian museums since the 1970s and are still used by many museums for contributing to *Artefacts Canada* and the *Virtual Museum of Canada*, to design collections management systems, and to standardize cataloguing. The CHIN Data Dictionaries can be mapped to SPECTRUM or to the CIDOC Guidelines for Museum Object Information. CHIN has completed a mapping between selected fields of the Humanities Data Dictionary and other international standards.
http://www.chin.gc.ca/English/Standards/metadata_preservation.html

Format, Availability and License:
The standard is free to use and is available to view and search for free at http://daryl.chin.gc.ca:8000/BASIS/chindd/user/wwwae/SF, it is also possible to download the information as an Excel Spread sheet.

Languages:
Available in English and French.

Aegis:
Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN)

OBJECT ID

Object ID was developed to provide an international standard for the information needed to identify cultural objects, in response to the threat posed by the illicit trade in the movable heritage. http://www.object-id.com/

Summary:
Object ID is an international documentation standard for the information needed to identify cultural objects. It was "developed through the collaboration of the museum community, police and customs agencies, the art trade, insurance industry, and valuers of art and antiquities". The project was designed to combat art theft by encouraging use of the standard and by bringing together organisations around the world that can encourage its implementation. Among other things, *Object ID* encourages museums to record information about "Inscriptions & Markings" and "Distinguishing Features" of items in their collection that would help to identify the item. Museums that are designing collections management systems or procedures are encouraged to consult *Object ID* to ensure that they are recording information that can identify an object in case of theft. The *SPECTRUM* standard is compatible with *Object ID*.
http://www.chin.gc.ca/English/Standards/metadata_description.html

Deployment:
UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property (1999) endorsed Object ID "as the international standard for recording minimal data on movable cultural property" and invited the Director General "to bring this recommendation on Object-ID to the attention of the General Conference and to recommend that all UNESCO Member States adopt Object-ID and use it, to the fullest extent possible, for identification of stolen or illegally exported cultural property and international exchange of information on such property" http://www.object-id.com/who.html

Law-enforcement agencies around the world assisted in the development of Object ID and a number of these are already using the standard including Interpol the FBI and the Metropolitan Police Service. The Object ID checklist is also compatible with the majority of art theft databases. The International Council of Museums (ICOM) adopted a resolution put forward by the Council's Documentation Committee (CIDOC) in 1997 stating that "A museum should be able to generate from its collection information system such data (preferably according to the Object ID standard) that can identify an object in case of theft or looting." A number of insurance and appraisal companies in Europe and North America are now also promoting the standard. http://www.object-id.com/who.html

Format, Availability and License:
The standard is free to use and is available to use, available at http://www.object-id.com/.

Languages:
The OBJECT ID Checklist is available in English, French, Arabic, Chinese, Czech, Dutch, German, Hungarian, Italian, Korean, Persian, Russian, and Spanish.

Aegis:

The Council for the Prevention of Art Theft