

Introductory section of the CRM extension for business transactions.

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Introduction

This document presents CRMcom, an extension of the CIDOC CRM created to support the study of real business transactions, formal and informal exchange and transfer of goods and services and related communications from all sorts of evidence, in particular via reliable information integration from archival material and evidence of the whereabouts of respective things. This document describes work which uses and extends the CIDOC Conceptual Reference Model (CRM, ISO21127). The CIDOC-CRM definition document should be read before this document. References to the CIDOC-CRM in this document are taken from CIDOC-CRM version 7.1.1 maintained by CIDOC.

Scope

The classes and properties of the CIDOC-CRM can be used to describe events that have taken place in the past, their material context, participating entities and, in the case of activities, the general influence on and motivations of people as it becomes evident from activities. Such events are known to us through observation of the events, reports from the past or through observation of the extent material evidence that such events have produced. The CIDOC-CRM classes and properties, as defined in the CIDOC-CRM version 7.1.1, do not include more detailed classes of activities characterizing collaborations between social partners in the pursuit of some shared or complementary goals. This extension aims at contributing to the documentation of such phenomena, completely within the functional specifications of the CIDOC CRM.

Consequently, the theoretical scope of this extension can be described as communications and interactions between partners in an exchange of material goods, information and services, together with the related concepts of the created and resolved social obligations, but also other communication, be they related to duties in offices and enterprises, to research, scholarship or other interests. Such knowledge can provide substantial insight into the economic bases, needs and ambitions of individuals, enterprises and whole social groups, their wider intentions, needs and hardship and the influence on their decision and other activities of any kind.

As practical scope, we refer to commercial account books and archives of historical enterprises, exchange of objects between memory institutions and/or private collectors, including evidence of illegal trafficking of cultural objects, in particular now via Internet, but also any other exchange of letters and messages between individuals of historical interest.

Research questions

Information integration in order to investigate as complete knowledge as possible about transactions and communications, in particular message exchange, orders and offers, as exemplified by particular cases, in order to interpret:

- commercial relations between partners
- evolution of commerce and flow of goods, at any scale in cultural historical context
- provenance of art objects and illicit trafficking
- social networks of partners in business, research or political relations
- economic basis of individuals and groups.

Initial empirical material for the development of the model:

Publicly accessible archival material from the European SeaLit Project (<https://sealitproject.eu/one-institution-information/362>, i.e., logbooks, account books, registration data etc. from commercial ships.

The "Spectrum" data model, instances to be found

Internet data of auctions and other sales offers of archaeological objects, in particular suspect items.

Expert opinions, if possible, from the British Museum about illicit trafficking.

All partners on this mailing list are kindly invited to look for other data that could be used.