Report on the FRBR/CRM Harmonization Group's activity (19/12/2003)

Delegates from the CIDOC CRM SIG and the IFLA Working Group on the FRBR/CRM dialogue (affiliated to the FRBR Review Group of IFLA) have come together in Paris, Nov. 12-14, in order to discuss the Harmonization of the CIDOC CRM with

the FRBR model from IFLA, with the aim to contribute to the solution of the problem of semantic interoperability between the documentation structures used for library and museum information, such that:

* all equivalent information can be retrieved under the same notions and
* all directly and indirectly related information can be retrieved regardless of its distribution over individual data sources;
* knowledge encoded for a specific application can be repurposed for other studies;
* recall and precision in systems employed by both communities is improved;
* both communities can learn from each other's concepts for their mutual progress;
   for the benefit of the scientific and scholarly communities and the general public.

In this first meeting, a common understanding of the FRANAR, FRBR and CIDOC CRM modelling approach, their benefits and potential was achieved.

Particularities of conceptualisations currently characteristic for museums and for libraries were discussed. It was agreed that traditional museum documentation and library documentation are distinct in form and focus. But it was also agreed that the tasks of libraries and museums overlap to some amount, and that in the future each of both communities will even more engage in activities traditionally characteristic for the other.

In particular, the meeting discussed notions of work, manifestation, collective items, subject relationship, documentation of manuscripts and persons acting under roles, in a general context and seen from the CRM and FRBR/FRANAR framework. Some methodological issues of information modelling were discussed, with respect to ontological considerations, applications and their complexity and the effect for the end user.

The practical value of a common model and its possible form was discussed.
Without coming to a final conclusion, it was acknowledged the the value of a common model is the common understanding of the concepts and phenomena relevant to the functions and documentation practice of both communities, so that information systems can be designed
* that allow for seamless exchange between libraries and museums information,
* and that are more fit for specific user requirements than the current ones.

A practical collaboration plan to realise a common model was discussed.
(More detailed report to follow).

The next meeting, open to interested members of both communities, is envisaged for March 22-25, in Crete.
So far, no dedicated funding could be raised for this activity, therefore all interested parties are kindly asked to look for any funding source possible.

With best wishes,

Patrick Le Boeuf & Martin Doerr

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