# Posted by Richard Light 12/08/2014

Hi,

While I was happy to spend over an hour reading this document, and while I understood and agree with its content, I'm not sure that someone who started by knowing nothing of the CRM would achieve either of these things.  Sometimes "less is more", and I think this document tries to do too much.

The first sentence states the document is for "cultural heritage managers, professionals, researchers and scholars".  If that is the case, one could argue that the arguments should be made conceptually, and that the technical details of RDF, Linked Data, etc. could be removed entirely, or just mentioned in passing in a brief "implementation" section.  Putting this point another way, if the document were for "cultural heritage systems developers, web programmers and data integrators", in what ways would it be different?  I would certainly hope that it would be.

The primer should start from a position that is meaningful to the intended audience (e.g. by taking an example of an object as it might be catalogued in two rather different systems) and lead them in a logical way through to an understanding of the intellectual harmonisation which the CRM offers.  It might be useful to write a training brief for the primer: "by the end of this document you will know/understand A, B, and C, and will be able to do X, Y and Z".  And a one-page Executive Summary might be useful, both for the creator of the primer, and for those readers who don't have a spare hour to enhance their knowledge.

# Posted by Georg Hohmann 12/08/2014

Dear all,

i would second Richards opinion about this paper.

In the first half, it is a "primer" to the CRM itself, in the the second half, it becomes a linked data implementation guide.

The second part of this paper is in my opinion problematic on several levels. First of all I think it was always a good decision not to "approve" and "ideal" implementation of the CRM. In fact, the second part does right that in outlining an implementation of the CRM in RDF / Linked Data. If we consider this part as some kind of "good practice", there are several points that would be at least

inconvenient dealing with RDF and Triple Stores. These are just a few things I found skimming through the text:

- The proposed URI schema (p12) does not reflect the structure of a triple stores and knowledge graphs. In the example given the URIs themselves reflect paths inside a graph from a given starting point.

It seems that "object" is a favourite starting point, and also "thesauri". But who decides on which point to start? For example,"http://collection.[domain]/id/object/[idenitifier]/material" might also be "http://collection.[domain]/id/material/[identifier]".

Additionaly, using class names inside a URI becomes instantly painful when it comes to multiple inheritance. To implement the URI scheme in the given format would imply to use a triple store against its internal structure.

- The figure on p.12 ("Here is the RDF view") shows an instance

["http://collection.amuseum.org/id/object/1234"](http://collection.amuseum.org/id/object/1234) that is connected to itself(!) by the property P1. The instance ["http://collection.amuseum.org/id/object/1234"](http://collection.amuseum.org/id/object/1234) in this figure is rdf:type E22 Man-made Object and also rdf:type E42 Identifier.

- The figure on p.14 mixes up authority terms with classes and instances. It shows that the "type" of a production should be expressed as directly by assigning a "P2 has type". I think something like "Engraving" would be a "E29 Design or Procedure". The property "P7 took place at" has the range "E53 Place" and not some thesaurus term as indicated. A thesaurus of production types is an instance of "E32 Authority Document".

- The figure on p.15 shows a red property "PX" which is not mentioned in the surrounding text. Properties about properties can not be expressed in RDF(S) and so it is very problematic to mention them at all with any hint on how to deal with them. The "Production Association" has two properties "P2 has type". Therefore the distinction between "Person (Authority)" and "Person (Made for)" would

be implecit knowledge and not represented by the graph without further information. As stated in this figure, "Person (Authority)" and "Person (Made for)" is the same.

- The "Bibliographic Object" in the figure on p.20 has two rdf:type properties with range <http://purl.org/ontology/bibo/Journal>

- The paper lacks information on how to deal with datatypes. In many figures (e.g. p19) the information where to put the name of a person or the title of an image as a string or literal is missing. If they are mentioned, the usage is not very consistent when you look at the

figures in the annex. The "Inscripton"-figure (p.18) uses rdfs:label to represent the string of the translation which is attached to an instance of "E33 Linguistic Object". The scope note of E33 says: "The text of an instance of E33 Linguistic Object can be documented in a note by P3 has note: E62 String". The construct of assigning appellations and identifiers with "E41 Appellation" and its subclasses

is mentioned once on p.11, but it is missing in every figure.

In my opinion the current state and focus of this paper is far from being photo-ready and it is a way too early for any kind of approval.

# Posted by Georg Hohmann 12/08/2014

Dear Dominic,

It would be nice if you also could tell me if you thought that there was anything positive and useful in the paper that you thought should stay?

It's hard to say as long as the primary focus of the paper is not clear. To my understanding a primer is a document that provides a brief overview of the goals, purposes, concepts, documents and sources about a specific topic. This could be complemented by a rough walkhtrough by example as Richard noted. There are several primers on the web that could serve as a model.

There is already a "comprehensive introduction" (<http://cidoc-crm.org/comprehensive_intro.html>) to the CRM available, so first there should be a clear definition of audience to be addressed by this paper. What is the kind of audience you had in mind?

I would prefer a primer that addresses people not only from the cultural heritage sector who come in contact with the CRM the first time. These people should be considered as museums staff(!),historians, archaeologists, lingustists, librarians, archivists and so on and not as computer scientists or linked data architects.

Given that, the first part of the paper (Chapter 1-7) could be a good starting point for a primer with additional examples. Chapter 8-9 may support the idea of "crm linked data guidlines", but I don't really see the need for that. The purpose of Chapter 10 is unclear to me, the part about "The Power of Big Data" doesn't fit (in this way) to the

idea of a primer.

Two additonal remarks:

- Overall it seems a bit odd that a document should be "approved as CRM-SIG statement" that is obviously work in progress - at least regarding the many comments, questions and underlinings in the document itself. Why the hurry?

- As I'm not a frequent participant of the SIG meetings, it's a kind of suprise to me that the SIG focuses on implementation guidelines. In the past there has been quite a discussion about this topic, and to my understanding there was a common sense not to give implementation recommendations. Now the primer states something like "If you would like to find out more about the CIDOC CRM and how to implement it", there is a "CRM Lab" (with unknown/not be specified members) and there are explicit drafts for rdf(s) implementations and URI schemes. Is that a paradigm shift I missed?

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# Posted by Barry Norton 12/08/2014

Georg, your comment about the URI scheme into which a given material fits seems motivated not by the Primer but rather by the British Museum data (since the Primer mentions in passing that URIs in the scheme from an object root might include /material, but says no more about this case, nor indeed the standard one).

In fact in those 15 cases where the material is defined relative to a BM object, rather than by being a standard thesaurus term, it's because the material is associated with a unique material creation event associated with the object and is not named and included in our thesauri.

That being said, one should not attempt to 'read' URIs, that's a basic principle of REST as much as Linked Data; what's important about the thesaurus terms is their relatedness under skos:inScheme (not their URI path).

Further, nothing about the illustrative identifier scheme implies the use of a triplestore (I should know, I load our data into other forms of DBMS).

The problem you mention about 'multiple inheritance' counts only under the unique name assumption, which holds neither in REST nor Linked Data.

# Posted by Georg Hohmann 12/08/2014

Dear Barry,

Georg, your comment about the URI scheme into which a given material fits seems motivated not by the Primer but rather by the British Museum data

Since the the URI scheme of the BM is given as a linked data example in the primer, my comments are about the texts and the figures in the primer and the purpose they serve.

That being said, one should not attempt to 'read' URIs, that's a basic principle of REST as much as Linked Data;

Yes, for sure. So why should a primer include an example that creates the appearance that URIs should have a structure that makes them "more readable" for humans?

Further, nothing about the illustrative identifier scheme implies the use of a triplestore (I should know, I load our data into other forms of DBMS).

Yes, you are right, it is not explicitly mentioned. Nevertheless when talking about RDF and Linked Data like the example does, it seems to be obvious to assume a triple store. If you take a look at Linked Data Resources available, it will be hard to find any other resource that mints URIs the way that is given in the primer, because - as you said yourself - it is not common practice. As you deal with other kinds of DBMS than triples stores you might have good reasons to expose your data that way, but then it is a special case that is not suitable for a example in some kind of primer.

The problem you mention about 'multiple inheritance' counts only under the unique name assumption, which holds neither in REST nor Linked Data.

By refering to "multiple inheritance" I refer to the fact that any instance can be an instance of one, two or more classes at the same time. If you have the name of the classes inside a URI, you should have a rule on how to deal with multiple names. For example: In the last figure (p.20) "A Bibliographic Object" is rdf:type of many classes. According to the given URI scheme "http://collection.[domain]/id/object/[idenitifier]" what would its URI look like? <http://collection>.[domain]*/id/document-bibliographic\_series-skosconcept/*[idenitifier]

?

# Posted by Geog Hohann 12/08/2014

Dear Dominic,

before answering to your e-mail I would like to point to the fact that

your e-mails do not reach the mailinglist.

See <http://lists.ics.forth.gr/pipermail/crm-sig/2014-August/thread.html>

My guess is that you are posting your messages with sender-adresses

that are not registered.

# Posted by Dominic 12/08/2014

Dear Georg (take two!),

That's a no then. ;-)   However, I can now see more clearly your issues, so thank you for this additional email.

The paper makes it very clear that CRM can be implemented using different models and is independent of technology.  I am happy to make this a stronger statement if you feel that it needs it. In Section 5 is states - "It is independent of any technical implementation framework".

The use of RDF in this paper is simply as a device for showing examples. "Real" examples are important and users of the document have asked for them, and actually asked for more examples to be inserted. Whenever I make presentations to the Directors of the BM they ask for concrete examples. I am not sure why people are reluctant to provide them and why you wouldn't.

Commonly, because museums and other CH organisations are slowly entering the linked data world, people want to know what the connection is between CRM and linked data. It would be a mistake to try and show many different examples using different schemas in a Primer (I accept that you wouldn't provide any examples but I will come on to that later). This means that all the information that managers hear about linked data from all sorts of different sources can be associated with and have a connection with CRM information (from the Primer). This is an important point because if people don't understand that there is a connection then it might not be included/mentioned in organisational digital strategy policies that include a linked data strategy. It is therefore, without making any recommendations, extremely expedient to use linked data as the representational example and to make this valid association while still stating that it is neutral as to technology - which it is (we currently have BM CRM data in two different models one of which is not RDF). RDF just becomes a vehicle for showing how it works in practice. One aim of the primer should be to get people to use the CRM. What is the most likely way that they may use it?

The common factor underlying some of your criticisms (for which I am very grateful that you have taken the time to provide) seem to imply a reluctance to give a non-technical audience some technical information. The idea of the Primer is not to teach people RDF or linked data but to show that CRM has real practical application and show that it is not just a theoretical and conceptual thing - something still assumed by some people. I am not sure why there is a problem with non-technical people seeing technical examples. This division is often cited as one of the reasons why the Digital Humanities is not progressing as it was envisaged. Digital Humanities needs Digital Humanists/Curators. For example, Unsworth 2002 statement.

*"Those representations — ontologies, schemas, knowledge representations, call them what you will — should be produced by people trained in the humanities. Producing them is a discipline that requires training in the humanities, but also in elements of mathematics, logic, engineering, and computer science"*

Many technical people get very upset about showing supposedly “non-technical” people, technical examples. However, if we don't start introducing our curators (and humanists generally) to these things and continue to keep this knowledge separate, how can they participate in the discussions and the work more fully?The examples are very basic in any case, but why shouldn't curators (I am a curator) take an interest in some computer science and technology? Isn't that what Unsworth's quote is saying. This happens in other disciplines.

There is no particular hurry or deadline. It would be good to have a Primer though and some people have got together in their own spare time to contribute some time towards producing one. That must be a good thing, and something that we can all be positive about.

The CRM Lab was constituted at the CRM-SIG and has terms of reference which are on the site.  The link is here http://www.cidoc-crm.org/docs/29th-meeting-presentations/CRMLab%20Terms%20of%20Reference09.docx . The aims include;

1. Education of end users.

2. Implementation of CRM within new projects.

3. Specification and development of new tools to support the use of the CRM.

4. Specification of processes of good practice

The Primer was an agreed output from one of the SIG meetings.

Thanks very much for your comments and I will certainly attend to some of the issues that you have kindly spotted.

# Posted by Dominic 12/08/2014

Apologies,

None of my emails have made it to the list - probably for a long time - but I haven't been getting a bounce.

Below is the last email which explains the rationale for the paper.

I would add this. We wanted the paper to be as short as possible. The additional information on RDF/Linked data is more about orientation. They answer questions that are not deep and technical but provide some insight at a high level about how some aspects work in practice. The document is not aimed at people who want to start programming. There is little point having detailed technical discussions about the details of RDF and URI with respect to this paper. This misses the point.

We all come from different backgrounds but all already have an understanding of a lot of the issues. The real test is when non CRM-SIG people read it and feedback. Therefore although I have posted this paper to the list I have also given review copies to people who have no dealing and knowledge of CRM i.e. the people that this document is aimed at. We can debate this till the cows come home but the real test is whether we can convey what the CRM is about to people who don't know anything about it but work in an environment where it is relevant for them to know about it.

The first two responses were as follows;

A project manager working on general business projects. The questions were;

1. Did you understand the CRM after reading the document. Ans: Yes

2. Was it at the right level for you. Ans: Yes

3. Do you think it would be useful for other people in other posts: Ans: Yes  (e.g. People working with digital content, people working with museum systems (CMS), people who use the data (curators, researchers), Managers of all those roles. Other types of managers might not get it.

4. Did you think it was over complicated: Ans: No

5. Did you think it was too simple: Ans: No

6. Things that could have been done better: Ans: More analogies could be useful.

7. Was the technical content the right level: depends - it was fine for me. Some people might want to know more technical information but memorable examples are more important.

8. General comments:

You can't just skim it or read bits (unless you know the CRM already) you need to read all the way through it to get the benefit from the document.

I haven't got the full response from a second reader yet (a Head Keeper of a Curatorial department) but the initial response was that they felt that they now understood the CRM to the level they needed but that the document could do with a few more examples.

My point being that it may be more useful to give the document to people who are not closely linked with CRM and linked data already and don't already have a firm view about what such a document should contain but the information may be relevant to them in the near future. The document is no use to people who already have a good understanding of these things. They do not need a Primer.

# Posted by Mark Fichtner 12/08/2014

Dear all,

it seems that you feel yourself personally offended, Barry. I don't think Georg did mean this, Martin asked for feedback and he got some - personally I think that is the best that can happen for science.

I think many points which Georg mentioned are valid. I don't want to repeat them, I just also got the same impression that Georg got from the document. I want to explain my point of view with PDF pages 13-14 (labeled 11-12 in the document itself - I would suggest to make this consistent, too.):

This paragraph is labelled "9.2 Example of using Entities with Properties with RDF" - so it is an example and examples should be easy to understand because they illustrate important parts. However the image on top of page 14 (or 12 due to the label on the page) is absolutely not the semantically equivalent in rdf to the image on the bottom of page 11 which illustrates the CRM view. A possible correction is illustrated in the attachment.

If you look carefully at the current image, then you can see that it is semantically equivalent to: "<http://collection.amuseum.org/id/object/1234> being a E42\_Identifier and a E22\_Man-made\_Object at the same time and refering to itself via P1\_is\_identified\_by." However the crm-example states "There is a Man Made Object which is called The Hoa Hakananai and it is identified by an identifier which is an accession number". This is not what the primer tries to describe above, it is not easy to understand, not logical correct, not the rdf representation of the crm view above and therefore just a bad example in a primer. Thank you for pointing that out, Georg, I didn't see it so clear this way before.

The following part is labelled "9.3 URI Schema" and not "9.3 Examples for a consistent URI Schema". Furthermore it states that "Resources (like an object or an identifier) are assigned a URI providing a logical structure when  implementing RDF. URI schemata are created to reflect the resources in question.". This means that the URI has to provide "a logical structure" - what are the requirements for this "logical structure" in detail? Is a UUID a valid logical structure? Why are all examples URLs?



Perhaps this helps to get this a little bit more constructive.

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# Posted by Dominic 12/08/2014

Dear Mark,

On E42\_Identifier

Yes, you are correct.  This is simply a typing mistake easily rectified and I am very grateful for you picking up on this.

On 9.3 – I am happy to change this to “Examples” as you suggest.

Indeed, these are constructive comments.

# Posted by Barry Norton 12/08/2014

Ah, the mailing list is slow, so I didn’t know you’d replied on list, Mark.

I’ll repeat then that I take no personal offence, and have no reason to do so, either comments on the URI scheme the BM uses nor on the Primer in itself including its use of a generalised projection from that URI scheme.

I didn’t comment on the issue of the typo on p12 (that the identifier should be labelled with a different URI from the object) as likewise I’d already seen Dominic’s reply. To be clear though, that’s nothing more than a typo and I’d already heard that it will be fixed.

My understanding of the use of URIs as identifiers throughout the document is that it reflects the frequent use of Linked Data discussed in Section 8. When needing a concrete syntax for examples I’d be equally happy with, say, Cipher definitions, and happy to then see the URIs dropped in favour of any scalar identifier, but I fear I’d be in the minority. Have you another suggestion (I mean for a syntax to define relationships, not just the idea of using UUIDs as identifiers)?

# Posted by Martin 12/08/2014

Dear All,

Just a comment from my side: The CRM does not deal with the ways URIs are formed and used.
I would not like to mess up a document about how the CRM is used with a discussion about how URIs are created.
I would neither like to have an introduction to the CRM using blank URIs just to avoid mentioning URIs, or to use only UUIDs to avoid any prejudice on another scheme or practice.

There is a CIDOC recommendation for URIs for museum objects, for a thousand other kinds of things we have no official recommendation.

If this helps, I recommend the Primer to contain a disclaimer that the way URIs are formed or selected in the examples of this document are not part of what this document wants to render.
It is a task of other standards to solve this issue. In particular, the CRM is not a guide to LoD, but can be used as ontology for Linked Open Data formulation.

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# Posted by Vladimir 13/08/2014

Dear all,

(Everything quoted is response to Georg's comments)

Such a document is greatly needed by the community.

0. Martin, maybe there's some breakage on the site:

<http://www.cidoc-crm.org/technical_papers.html> and <http://www.cidoc-crm.org/working_editions_cidoc.html> return just a single unicode char.

1. May I suggest you put it on Google Docs, so we can comment inline?

I have a some very specific comments that would be inconvenient to make in email.

- E.g. "Nick Crofts" and "Chair of ICOM CIDOC and Vice Chair of the ICOM Advisory Committee" being separated by a page break.

2. I think the examples should be made in Turtle.

The approach with tables is inconvenient typographically (observe the middle column),harder to understand (have to repeat the object in every row),and cannot be validated programmatically.

always a good decision not to "approve" and "ideal" implementation of the CRM. In fact, the second part does right that in outlining an implementation of the CRM in RDF / Linked Data. If we consider this part as some kind of "good

practice"...

3. Such "good practices" are crucial to achieve real interoperation between collections.So it's a good thing that Dominic's writing about them.

4. Accepting such "good practices" will take a lot of discussion and collaboration, but the result will be worth it.

However, I am convinced that we need a wiki to develop such "good practices":doing it in a monolithic document will not scale.

"http://collection.[domain]/id/object/[idenitifier]/material" might

also be "http://collection.[domain]/id/material/[identifier]"

5. "http://collection.[domain]/id/object/[idenitifier]/material" should be removed from the doc: ideally, the consists\_of value of an object should come from a thesaurus, so the second form is correct.

6. This is unlike <http://collection.amuseum.org/id/object/>[identifier]/accessionnumber, which is an Identifier local to the object, so it makes sense for its URL to be nested under the object's.

- The figure on p.12 ("Here is the RDF view") shows an instance

["http://collection.amuseum.org/id/object/1234"](http://collection.amuseum.org/id/object/1234) that is connected to

itself(!) by the property P1.

Yes, the right node should be <http://collection.amuseum.org/id/object/1234/accessionnumber>

7. The intro section should cover a bit more of the class hierarchy (at least the physical/conceptual partition),

and explain shortcut/longcut (which is mentioned at the end)

By refering to "multiple inheritance" I refer to the fact that any instance can be an instance of one, two or more classes at the same time. If you have the name of the classes inside a URI, you should have a rule on how to deal with multiple names. For example: In the last figure (p.20) "A Bibliographic Object" is rdf:type of many classes. According to the given URI scheme "http://collection.[domain]/id/object/[idenitifier]" what would its URI look like? <http://collection>.[domain]*/id/document-bibliographic\_series-skosconcept/*[idenitifier]?

8. No: "object" means "a museum object" or "cultural heritage object".

There's no implication that the URI will carry part of a CRM class name.

So <http://collection.amuseum.org/id/bibliography/><id> is correct.

- The figure on p.14 mixes up authority terms with classes and instances. It shows that the "type" of a production should be expressed as directly by assigning a "P2 has type". I think something like "Engraving" would be a "E29 Design or Procedure".

9. So instead of this:

 <object/ID/production> P2\_has\_type <thes/production/engraving>.

you're proposing that:

 <object/ID/production> P33\_used\_specific\_technique <object/ID/production/engraving>

This is wrong, because "E29 Design or Procedure" should be a specific procedure ("engrave X in the left corner, Y in the right corner, use concentrated acid, call Z if you burn yourself").

But in the example we have merely an enumeration of types, i.e. a thesaurus.

For Engraving, this is suitable and perhaps better than P2\_has\_type:

 <object/ID/production> P32\_used\_general\_technique <thes/production/engraving>

But for some other kinds of production (e.g. Publishing), I think P32\_used\_general\_technique is worse, because would you call Publishing a "technique"?

A thesaurus of production types is an instance of "E32 Authority Document".

10. Or a skos:ConceptSchema, as in the current BM LOD.

The property "P7 took place at" has the range "E53 Place" and not some thesaurus term as indicated.

11a. In the current BM LOD these are both E53\_Place and skos:Concept.

11b.But for the Getty TGN I've adopted a "Concept vs Place Duality":

<http://vladimiralexiev.github.io/aat/index.htm#Concept_vs_Place_Duality>

For example:

tgn:3000034 a gvp:AdminPlaceConcept; # Great Lakes Region

 gvp:broaderPreferred tgn:1000001; gvp:broaderPartitive tgn:1000001; # North and Central America

 gvp:tgn3000\_related\_to tgn:7029370; # Great Lakes (lakes)

 foaf:focus tgn:3000034-place. ######## see here ########

tgn:3000034-place a wgs:SpatialThing, schema:Place;

 wgs:lat "45.0000"; wgs:long "-85.0000"; wgs:alt "183.1840";

 schema:geo tgn:3000034-geometry.

tgn:3000034-geometry a schema:GeoCoordinates, schema:GeoShape;

 schema:latitude 45.0000; schema:longitude -85.0000; schema:elevation 183.1840;

 schema:box "-92.0160,43.1560 -92.0160,48.8120 -82.4910,48.8120 -82.4910,43.1560 -92.0160,43.1560".

VIAF, FR, UK, SE follow this approach.

US, DE don't follow this approach.

The approach has its share of disadvantages

<http://vladimiralexiev.github.io/aat/index.htm#Cons_of_the_Dual_Approach>

12.Acquisition example (p.17)

- no explanation why Acquisition Element 1 and P9\_consists\_of is needed.

- P29\_custody\_received\_by is attached to wrong nodes.

13. Production example (p.18)

- Period-Culture has wrong URL;

and "Material Culture authority" should be renamed to "Period-Culture thesaurus" to avoid confusion

# posted by Martin 13/08/2014

Dear Vladimir,

Thank you for your detailed comments! From my side, just one remark:

From the side of CRM-SIG so far we **do** recommend not to use SKOS:Concept for places and persons, regardless if such practice exists. It is logically inconsistent.
The separation of particulars and universals is fundamental to knowledge representation.
This has been supported equally clearly by the FRBR Review Group. Literary characters based on Persons have clearly been separated from real persons in FRBRoo.

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# Posted by Martin 14/08/2014

Dear All,

After some relatively global criticism we have heard by some of you about the CRM Primer <http://www.cidoc-crm.org/docs/CRMPrimer_v1.1.pdf>,
I'd like to point out that I regard this document as particularly well written, and to express my particular thanks to the authors!

We also have indications that the document is much better accepted by real audience, than appears following your critisism.

On that occasion, I would like to remind you, that CRM-SIG is a group of volunteers.
All texts are created without payment, out of personal engagement and interest.
We have discussed for more than 10 years the need of such an introduction, but no one has provided one.

Lack of positive engagement is an issue for this group.
Normally I would expect comments to be constructive, providing explicit alternative texts rather than telling colleagues who invested a considerable effort to do another homework.

Probably my fault how I have introduced this work.

If I am mistaken, I gladly accept your criticism!

# Posted by Mark Fichtner on 15/08/2014

Dear Martin,

I would be happy to contribute and provide constructive alternative texts. However I also think just like Vladimir that on google docs it would be easier to contribute than by discussing .pdf-files on the mailing list. Criticising people who at least try to contribute is not very positive either in my humble opinion.