Categories for the Description of Works of Art

Describe, catalogue, link works of art, architecture, and cultural heritage

CDWA, the **Categories for the Description of Works of Art**, is a data content standard for the visual arts and related disciplines. CDWA includes rules for best practice, discussions of issues, and a conceptual framework for cataloguing, describing, and accessing information about works of art, architecture, other material culture, groups and collections of works, and related images. It provides a model for linking data. CDWA is mapped to various other standards. Its audience includes museums, special collections, archives, libraries, conservation professionals, archaeologists, documentation projects, visual resources professionals, and the information professionals associated with these groups.

The discussions in CDWA identify fields, vocabulary resources (including the Getty vocabularies), and descriptive practices that will make information residing in diverse systems more accessible and more compatible for sharing and linking. CDWA may be used to map existing art information systems, to identify issues related to the development of new systems, and to inform the linking of data in an open environment.

CDWA includes 540 categories and subcategories. A small subset of subcategories is considered **core**, in that it represents the minimum information necessary to identify and describe a work. For each subcategory, CDWA includes discussions of issues, basic cataloguing rules, guidelines, and examples.

Broad CDWA Categories:

OBJECT/WORK, Type **(core)**
CLASSIFICATION **(core)**
TITLES OR NAMES **(core)**
CREATION, Creator, Creation Date **(core)**
STYLES/PERIODS/GROUPS/MOVEMENTS
MEASUREMENTS **(core)**
MATERIALS/TECHNIQUES **(core)**
INSCRIPTIONS/MARKS
STATE
EDITION
FACTURE
ORIENTATION/ARRANGEMENT
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION
CONDITION/EXAMINATION HISTORY
CONSERVATION/TREATMENT HISTORY

SUBJECT MATTER **(core)**
CONTEXT
DESCRIPTIVE NOTE
CRITICAL RESPONSES
RELATED WORKS
CURRENT LOCATION **(core)**
COPYRIGHT/RESTRICTIONS
OWNERSHIP/COLLECTING HISTORY
EXHIBITION/LOAN HISTORY
CATALOGUING HISTORY
RELATED VISUAL DOCUMENTATION
RELATED TEXTUAL REFERENCES

PERSON/CORPORATE BODY AUTHORITY
PLACE/LOCATION AUTHORITY
GENERIC CONCEPT AUTHORITY
SUBJECT AUTHORITY

How can CDWA be obtained?
- CDWA is available online: **www.getty.edu/research/publications/electronic_publications/cdwa/index.html**.
- A core subset of CDWA is available in the book *Cataloging Cultural Objects (CCO)*, published by ALA.

What is CDWA Lite?
- CDWA Lite is an XML schema to describe core records for works of art and material culture based on CDWA and *Cataloging Cultural Objects* (CCO). The CDWA Lite schema has been integrated into the Lightweight Information Describing Objects (LIDO) schema, which is available on the CIDOC site.

The J. Paul Getty Trust

www.getty.edu/research/publications/electronic_publications/cdwa/index.html
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