

Assignment #6: Content Standard - Analyze

Content Standard:

Cataloging Cultural Objects (CCO)

<https://vraweb.org/resourcesx/cataloging-cultural-objects/>

Description:

- **When was it created / published and by whom?**

The Cataloging Cultural Objects (CCO) guide was originally created by a diverse group of professionals involved in the cultural heritage community in 2003. The project was originally governed by the Visual Research Association (VRA). "Cataloging Cultural Objects: A Guide to Describing Cultural Works and their Images" is currently available as a complete downloadable PDF under Creative Commons licensing or as a print publication by the publisher, the American Libraries Association (ALA).

- **Who maintains it?**

The CCO is currently maintained by a Cataloging and Metadata Standards Committee (CaMS), a sub-committee of the VRA. The committee works closely with the committees for whom the CCO was created and the CCO Advisory Committee consists of representatives from the visual resources, library, museum and archival communities.¹ The project has also been supported by the Digital Library Federation, the Getty Research Institute, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

- **What resources / concepts does it label and describe?**

The CCO was created to describe cultural works and their images, including art and architecture, as well as paintings, sculpture, prints, manuscripts, photographs, built works, installations, and other visual media.² The CCO can also label and describe other types of cultural works such as archeological sites, artifacts, and functional objects that exist under the realm of material culture.³

¹ Ann Baird Whiteside, "Cataloging Cultural Objects: New Descriptive Cataloging Guidelines for the Cultural Heritage Community," *Art Documentation* 24, no. 2 (2005): 16, <https://go.exlibris.link/xNMf5Mlq>

² "Cataloging Cultural Objects (CCO): About CCO," *Visual Research Association (VRA)*, March 12, 2022, <https://vraweb.org/resourcesx/cataloging-cultural-objects/about-cco/>

³ "Cataloging Cultural Objects (CCO)," *VRA*, March 12, 2022, <https://vraweb.org/resourcesx/cataloging-cultural-objects/about-cco/>

Example

Figure 4
Work Record for a Single Work: Baroque Painting⁷
Required and recommended elements are marked with an asterisk.

Work Record	
■	Class [controlled]: paintings • European art
■	* Work Type [link to authority]: painting
■	* Title : <i>Vase of Flowers</i> Title Type : preferred
■	* Creator display : Jan van Huysum (Dutch, 1682-1749) * Role [link]: painter * [link]: Huysem, Jan van
■	* Creation Date : 1722 [controlled]: Earliest : 1722; Latest : 1722
■	* Subject [links to authorities]: still life • flowers • urn • ledge • crown of thorns plant • tulips • roses • bird's nest • insects • beauty • transience • life • death • senses • Vanitas • Passion of Christ
■	* Current Location [link to authority]: J. Paul Getty Museum (Los Angeles, California, United States) ID: 82.PB.70
■	* Measurements : 79.4 x 60.9 cm (31 1/4 x 24 inches) [controlled]: Value : 79.4; Unit : cm; Type : height Value : 60.9; Unit : cm; Type : width
■	* Materials and Techniques : oil on panel Material [link]: oil paint • panel (wood)
■	* Style [link to authority]: Rococo
■	Description : The subject is a still life of flowers spilling onto a ledge, some decaying and being eaten by insects. It represents the senses of sight and smell; the decay and broken stems symbolize the transient nature of life, youth, and beauty; the ledge pushed up to the picture plane resembles the ledge seen in posthumous portraits, thus symbolizing death. The crown of thorns flower at the top symbolizes the Passion of Christ.
■	Description Source [link]: J. Paul Getty Museum. <i>Handbook of the Collections</i> . Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1991; Page : 115.



CREDIT: The J. Paul Getty Museum (Los Angeles, California, United States), Jan van Huysum (Dutch, 1682-1749). *Vase of Flowers*. 1722. Oil on panel, 31 1/4 x 24 inches (79.4 x 60.9 cm). 82.PB.70. © The J. Paul Getty Trust.

Source: (Baca et al., 2006, p. 35).

- What institutions / collections is it for? Which currently / historically use it?

The CCO is best used for cultural heritage organizations that manage cultural heritage materials and collections, such as museums, archives, and libraries. One organization that currently uses CCO is the [Society of Architectural Historians Architecture Resources Archive \(SAHARA\) project](#), “a dynamic online library of images of architecture and landscape for research and teaching.”⁴

- **Who is expected to do the description work for this standard? Creators of items? Librarians? Anyone who has time?**

CCO is designed for professionals working in museums, image collections, archives, and libraries. It is best used by someone who has familiarity and training with cataloguing and metadata, including: museum professionals, image management professionals, archivists, and librarians. It was created to accommodate the needs of multiple different communities which affords users a large degree of flexibility to accommodate localized and diverse cataloging needs.

Analysis:

- **What use case is it best for?**

CCO is best used for describing, documenting, and cataloging cultural objects and the visual media (such as photographs) that represent them. The CCO manual is intended to be used by catalogers in their daily work, such as “[promoting] consistency in cataloging, to develop training manuals and in-house cataloging rules, or it may be used more broadly in shared environments to build consistent data about cultural materials.”⁵

- **Are there materials that are awkward in describing?**

The CCO is not well suited to describe national history or science collections. In a library context, CCO is best applied to complement library cataloging standards to create records for art and cultural works to coexist within the main library catalogue collection.

- **What are the obvious issues with the system?**

Currently, the CCO is only available in English and Russian, meaning its application in non-English-speaking contexts is limited. It was also noted in a review by Edward Swanson that some sections are repeated throughout the manual, however the CCO is not intended to be read from cover-to-cover, but rather used as a cataloging reference

⁴ Erin Coburn et al., "The Cataloging Cultural Objects Experience: Codifying Practice for the Cultural Heritage Community," *IFLA Journal* 36, no. 1 (2010): 22, <https://go.exlibris.link/OmyJvIVM>

⁵ Ann Baird Whiteside, "Cataloguing Cultural Objects: New Descriptive Cataloguing Guidelines for the Cultural Heritage Community," *Art Documentation* 24, no. 2 (2005): 16, <https://go.exlibris.link/xNMf5Mlq>

tool on a case by case basis.⁶ It should also be noted that different institutions apply CCO in varied ways which can lead to discrepancies and issues in understanding the system. Re-learning may have to occur in each specific context.

- **How are you likely to encounter / implement it?**

One is most likely to encounter the CCO while working in the organizations listed in the **What institutions / collections is it for? Which currently / historically use it?** section. Implementation would take place in a database system.

⁶ Edward Swanson, "Book Review: Cataloguing Cultural Objects: A Guide to Describing Cultural Works and their Images," *Library Resources & Technical Services* 52, no. 2 (April 2008): 69, <https://go.exlibris.link/VYI8ZP5v>

Sources:

Baca, Murtha, Patricia Harpring, Elisa Lanzi, Linda McRae, and Ann Whiteside. *Cataloguing Cultural Objects* (CCO). Illinois: American Library Association, 2006: p. 35.

https://edisciplinas.usp.br/pluginfile.php/5506147/mod_resource/content/1/Cataloging_Cultural_Objects.pdf

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Quimby, Sarah E. *Cataloging Cultural Objects: A Guide to Describing Cultural Works and their Images*. Illinois: American Library Association, 2008. <https://go.exlibris.link/wBcTKFGS>

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Whiteside, Ann Baird. "Cataloguing Cultural Objects: New Descriptive Cataloguing Guidelines for the Cultural Heritage Community." *Art Documentation* 24, no. 2 (2005): 16-18. <https://go.exlibris.link/xNMf5MIq>