

“One Ontology to Rule Them All” - CIDOC CRM in the Humanities and its use in OpenAtlas

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The CIDOC Conceptual Reference Model (<https://www.cidoc-crm.org/>), developed by the International Council of Museums (ICOM), is a widespread ontology in the field of Digital Humanities. Its current version 7.1.1 (<https://www.cidoc-crm.org/version/version-7.1.1>) consists of 99 classes that can be connected via properties to structure data in a standardized way and create an entity-relationship model.

Mapping one's research data using an ontology that is accepted and widely used in the community is consistent with the FAIR Principles (<https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>). These aim at making data findable, accessible, interoperable and re-usable. By using CIDOC CRM as ontology for the INDIGO data set a recombination of it with already existing other research data as well as the further use in new projects using the same ontology is easily possible. This significantly extends the life cycle of the data and prevents the laboriously collected data from remaining unused after the end of the project.

However, the use of ontologies including the CIDOC CRM requires a certain training period and the time and resources to learn how to use it. OpenAtlas (<https://openatlas.eu/>), as an open source database system, allows the input of research data into the user interface without prior knowledge of ontologies or other digital humanities applications. The stored data is mapped to the underlying CIDOC CRM model in the background of the application without the user needing to engage with it.

The use of OpenAtlas thus allows for easy and user-friendly data entry, while taking care of the requirements of the FAIR principles and fundamental tenets in the Digital Humanities at the same time.