STIPPLE

System for **T**abulating and **I**ndexing **P**eople, their **P**ossessions, **L**ife and **E**verything

STIPPLE is a unique and most powerful research tool for the fine and applied arts and for the humanities. It is an advanced system for cataloguing collections and archives of any size and for recording history. STIPPLE combines any number of collections of diverse object types from multiple institutions, in one central system, creating integrated catalogues raisonné and union catalogues. Thus fine and applied art history is integrated with economic, social, political, military, family and local history, and with archaeology, geology etc.

STIPPLE can handle enormous volumes of data and images, accessed and updated by large numbers of concurrent users, with very rapid response times. Data is entered, retrieved and presented over the Internet using a standard browser. Because the system "grows-as-you-go", all object records, once entered, can be extended with new data and new data relationships, enriching the research environment for both data input and retrieval. All users can browse through all data to which they have authorised access, navigating bi-directional connections in either direction at the same speed and so find connections of which they were unaware.

STIPPLE integrates the data from all disciplines. It can also be used to compare multiple images from many sources, even when they are stored on diverse servers.

Functional Characteristics

- STIPPLE can record all types of fine and applied art and other objects, as well as biography and genealogy, places, buildings and events, all with images, bibliography and unlimited connections between any pieces of data.

- Most cataloguing systems use a single standard schema for all object types. This one size fits all solution is an uncomfortable match for most object types. In STIPPLE, each object type has its own separately defined schema – paintings have painters, books have authors and publishers, prints have engravers, etc.

- All data, for multiple institutions, for all collections and departments, is stored in a single totally integrated database. A standard STIPPLE feature of "public" and "private" data allows the creation of Union Catalogues. Each institution retains control of its own data.

- Public data is available to all with the required access authority and can be updated by users with the separately defined update authority, whilst private data is only available to the institution that owns it and can only be updated by their staff who have the required authority.

- For objects of which there are multiple examples, such as prints, sculpture, ceramics, coins and medals, postage stamps, motor cars, etc., standard information such as name or title, description, engraver, bibliography, etc. only needs to entered once, however many examples are catalogued. Institutions put in the accession numbers of their examples, together with other data that only applies to that particular object. Such data can only be changed by and may only be accessible to authorised staff from the institution that owns that particular example. When an institution retrieves records for its own objects, the "private" data entered will be appear as though it is totally integrated with the "public" standard data, although that is only stored once.

- Print records are organised on a hierarchical basis, accessing a print record then allows two

options – access to records of the states and then to impressions with accession numbers help by multiple institutions or access to impressions and then to their states.

- Any object, including prints, can be accessed directly by accession number in records for each collection, irrespective of the type of object.

- For such "multiple" objects, the level of scholarship is not limited to one museum's staff but is the result of the combined knowledge of all contributors. If one museum has, say, Rembrandt etchings which it has catalogued with references, and another institution, also with Rembrandt etchings, puts up references to a newly published reference book, the records of the first museum's prints will automatically inherit the new data, even though the records of their prints have not been changed.

- Thus STIPPLE can "learn and grow".

- All institutions can share biographical records, records in the gazetteer, bibliographic references etc., much reducing research and data entry costs.

- All bibliographic references are displayed in the date sequence of the source material, showing how scholarship has progressed; in addition, the citations taken from the source can be displayed in reference number (e.g. page number, catalogue number) sequence, so that, for instance, Rembrandt etchings can be viewed in the sequence of their various catalogues, such as Gersaint, Daulby, Bartsch, Wilson, Hind, Hollstein, etc..

- STIPPLE can handle multiple versions of personal and other names. Controlled authorisation lists of the names of people, places, etc. ensure that only one particular name is used as a standard. These can only be updated by those with adequate authority.

- STIPPLE has a synonym facility for all record types that allows records to be accessed through alternative names. These all lead to the accepted standard names in authority lists, etc.

- STIPPLE ensures a consistent look and feel across all departments and disciplines.

- The user interface is quite separate from the data so that there can be multiple "views" of the same data, each defined in the database rather than in programs. This could be for labels for an exhibition or with rather more detail for an exhibition catalogue or for a special view of some part of the data for education and outreach purposes.

- STIPPLE can store unlimited levels of hierarchy, ideal for ontology and taxonomy.

Cataloguing

- When STIPPLE is used by multiple institutions and collectors, all their objects will be catalogued to the same standards.

- An audit trail records who changed every single piece of data so that high cataloguing standards can be maintained.

- As new cataloguing requirements arise, STIPPLE can be changed very quickly, generally without any programming and without shutting down the system.

Organisational Characteristics

- STIPPLE can be used by institutions and individuals on a project-by-project basis. These projects may be of any size: a small specialised study undertaken by a single person; a larger undertaking by a group, perhaps in multiple locations around the world.

- In addition, the "look" of STIPPLE can be personalised to suit individual museums or institutions, with, for instance, their own banner, logo and colours. Each can have its own portal or entry point into STIPPLE, tailored to emphasise the more significant parts of its collection.

The Internet

- STIPPLE is available now, as a service in the "cloud".

- Data entry and retrieval is done over the internet, using browsers on existing Pcs, laptops, Macs, tablets or smartphones.

- All data is immediately available over the web as soon as it has been added or changed. STIPPLE provides the collections' web site for each institution and there is no need for a separate content management system as STIPPLE generates all HTML and javascript on the fly.

- As STIPPLE works over the internet, no staff at a museum or institution needs to be allocated to creating and maintaining web sites related to its collections.

Size and Volumes

- STIPPLE was created using ERROS with its unique patented Connectionist Database.

- As a result, STIPPLE can handle enormous volumes of data and images, accessed and updated by large numbers of concurrent users, with very rapid response times. These do not noticeably deteriorate as file sizes grow. No SQL is used.

- There is no limit to the amount of data that can be stored about any object, person, place, event, etc. Relational databases, the computing industry standard, require "null" values to be stored in fields which have no data, adversely affecting performance and disk space requirements. The ERROS Connectionist Database used by STIPPLE only uses disk space for data that actually exists.

- The value of a totally integrated system is much higher than the sum of the parts, particularly when it is shared by multiple institutions and projects.

Economics

- STIPPLE eliminates the high cost and risk of creating cataloguing applications.

- Users do not need to invest in a computer centre, with new expensive hardware (servers) or software (operating system and cataloguing package).

- No in house support staff are required for STIPPLE for maintaining hardware, software or databases for collections, reducing headcount.

- One system is used for both data entry and for internet access, much reducing costs.

- Dramatically reduced cost of data entry, particularly for "multiple" objects.

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For videos of STIPPLE in action, go to www.erros.co.uk

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