

UNESCO - ICOMOS

DOCUMENTATION CENTRE

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A BRIEF HISTORY

The Documentation Centre was created in 1965 when the statutes of the organization provided for the establishment of an International Documentation Centre on the conservation and restoration of architectural heritage. This was done at the initiative of UNESCO.

In 1966 the Brussels Symposium was held with the purpose of defining the aims, structure, and objectives of the ICOMOS Documentation Centre, which are also described in the Statutes: "to gather, study and disseminate information concerning principles, techniques and policies for the conservation, protection, rehabilitation and enhancement of monuments, groups of buildings and sites". (Art. 5b)

The centre was inaugurated in 1974 and became operational in 1977, when ICOMOS hired a documentalist and an assistant to organise and manage it.

In 1982 the centre is computerised and a bibliographical database devoted to cultural heritage - ICOMOS - is created. The documentation centre is part of the UNESCO-ICOM-ICOMOS network, it is linked to the central computer at UNESCO by a special line where all the bibliographical information accessible from the computer terminals placed in the different centres is stored.

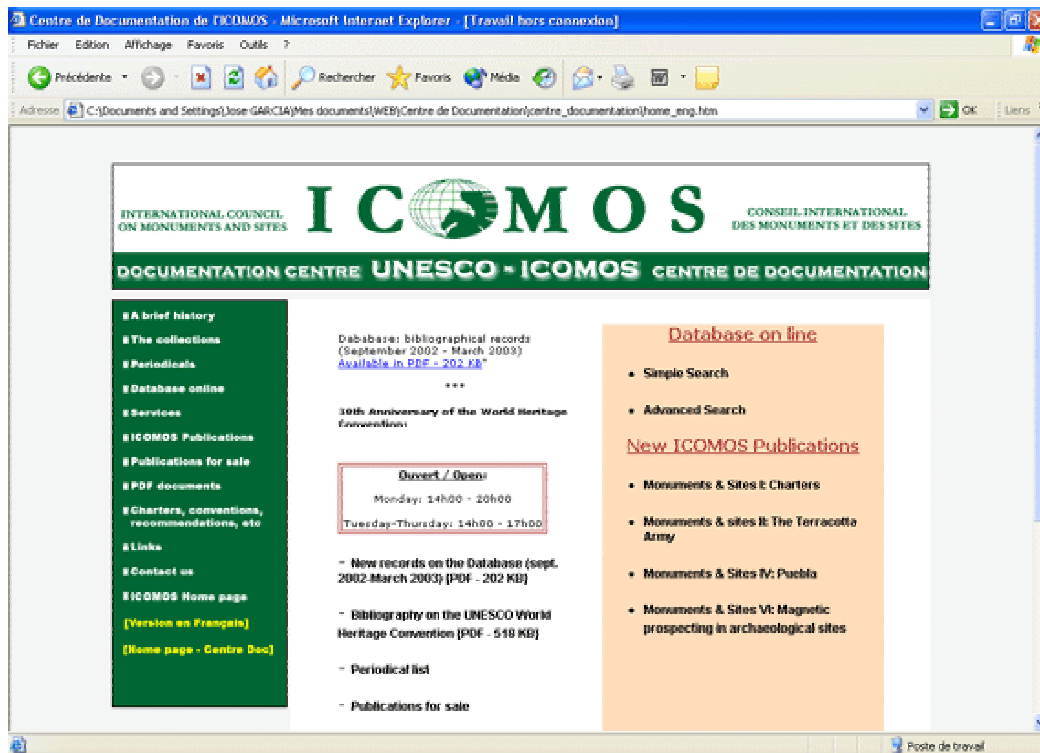
In 1986 ICOMOS became a partner in the international Conservation Information Network (CIN) created by the Getty Conservation Institute. The ICOMOS Documentation Centre has been participating since then in BCIN, the bibliographical database of the CIN, managed by the Canadian Conservation Institute. This database contains over 200,000 citations, including the combined holdings of the libraries and documentation centres of the contributing institutions (ICCROM, CCI, GCI, ICOM, ICOMOS, National Archives of Canada, SCMRE).

In 1990 the documentation centre launches a selective diffusion computer program on diskette support, with the goal of facilitating the access to bibliographical information managed by ICOMOS.

In 1998 UNESCO changed its computer systems, and so the bibliographical database had to be transferred from their mainframe system to ICOMOS's own micro system.

Since June 2002 the database can be searched on the internet at <http://database.unesco.org/icomos>. It is also available on the Conservation Information Network (CIN) web site (<http://www.bcin.ca>), of which ICOMOS is a partner.

One information officer is in charge of the Documentation Centre, who is occasionally helped by documentation interns.



(http://www.international.icomos.org/centre_documentation/)

THE COLLECTIONS

The UNESCO-ICOMOS Documentation Centre specializes in the built heritage, its conservation and restoration, and historic monuments and sites with :

- 40.000 titles concerning most countries in the world;
- 400 periodicals received regularly by exchange;
- 25.000 slides, photographs, and plans;
- The original nomination files of World Heritage sites and monuments.

The specialised bibliographical collections list include:

- archaeology;
- conservation and restoration techniques;
- cultural landscapes;
- cultural routes;
- cultural tourism;
- earthen architecture;
- historic gardens and parks;
- historic towns and villages;
- industrial heritage;
- inventories;
- legislation;
- monuments in seismic areas
- photogrammetry
- risk preparedness and heritage at risk
- rock art

- stone and other building materials
- town planning
- training
- underwater heritage
- vernacular architecture
- wooden architecture
- world heritage monuments and sites
- etc

1. The characteristics of the collections

- a) **Specificity:** the collection's special field was set out in the ICOMOS Statutes, which provide for a collection concerning the "principles, techniques and policies for the conservation of monuments."
- b) **International Character:** the collection is made up of donations coming from the more than one hundred National Committees and twenty International Scientific Committees of ICOMOS, whose 6600 individual and institutional members represent all the continents.

At the same time the expansion of the collection is aided by ICOMOS ties with UNESCO, with regional organizations such as the Council of Europe, and also with numerous national organizations. Thanks to the diversity of these sources, the Centre has a genuinely international character.

- c) **Originality:** because of the diversity of the sources and the particular relationship that ICOMOS has with specialists in conservation, and thanks to the exchanges with specialized institutions, the Documentation Centre contains many works that otherwise are not easy to come by: expert mission reports, proceedings of symposia, conservation laws, cultural heritage inventories, etc.

All the documents are included on the ICOMOS database.

2. The original archives of the World Heritage sites and monuments

The UNESCO-ICOMOS Documentation Centre is the primary repository for the original documentation of the cultural properties and mixed (natural and cultural) properties that have been inscribed on the World Heritage List since 1978. These documents constitute its most important collection.

ICOMOS is named in the 1972 UNESCO *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (the World Heritage Convention) as one of the three advisory bodies, with IUCN and ICCROM, to the World Heritage Committee. It is the professional and scientific advisor to the Committee on all aspects of the cultural heritage.

As such, ICOMOS is responsible for the evaluation of all nominations made to the World Heritage List by States Parties to the Convention against the criteria of outstanding universal value, authenticity, management, and conservation laid down by the World Heritage Committee. This involves consultation of the wide range of expertise represented by its membership and its National and International Committees, as well as the many other specialist networks with which it is linked. Expert missions are also sent to carry out on-site evaluations. This extensive consultation results in the preparation of detailed recommendations that are submitted to the World Heritage Committee at its annual meetings.

Once a cultural property has been included on the World Heritage List, the UNESCO-ICOMOS Documentation Centre keeps the files and makes them available for consultation *in situ* and on the database. All these nomination files and the associated documentation, which is in many cases very comprehensive, constitute by themselves **the most important collection of the Centre**.

Each nomination file contains the following items:

Documentation and information provided by the States Parties:

- Description and identification of the property
- Justification for inscription
- Management: legal status, protective measures, site management plan, visitor facilities, etc.

- Factors affecting the site
- Monitoring: key indicators for measuring state of conservation, administrative arrangements for monitoring property
- Documentation:
 - photographs, slides and, where available, film/video/CD-ROM;
 - copies of site management plans, legislation, and other legal instruments;
 - cartographic material, measured drawings, etc;
 - bibliography.

And the ICOMOS evaluation reports (The ICOMOS expert's reports are not available)

At the present time, the UNESCO-ICOMOS Documentation Centre keeps the files on 502 cultural and mixed sites inscribed on the World Heritage List, and every year this collection grows with the dossiers of the newly inscribed sites (around 30-40).

ICOMOS DATABASE: CDS/ISIS

The UNESCO-ICOMOS Documentation Centre was formerly part of the UNESCO-ICOM-ICOMOS Network. In 1997 UNESCO changed its computer system and the two bibliographical databases of ICOM and ICOMOS, which had been merged on UNESCO's mainframe computer in the ICOMOS database, have since been split into two databases, one for each documentation centre. The transfer of the bibliographical database from UNESCO's mainframe system to ICOMOS's own micro system was completed in June 1999.

Micro CDS/ISIS is an advanced non-numerical information storage and retrieval system developed by UNESCO since 1985 to satisfy the need expressed by many institutions, especially in developing countries, to be able to streamline their information processing activities by using modern (and relatively inexpensive) technologies.

CDS/ISIS has an information retrieval component using a powerful search language and a powerful sort and report generation facility allowing the user to easily create any desired printed product, such as catalogues, indexes, directories, etc.

The database contains:

- 19.000 bibliographical references concerning the subjects of the ICOMOS International Scientific Committees (see above for list of specialized bibliographical collections);
- A very rich collection on built heritage, its conservation, and preservation;
- Articles from the most important magazines and periodicals available at the Documentation Centre;
- The original files of the World Heritage List.

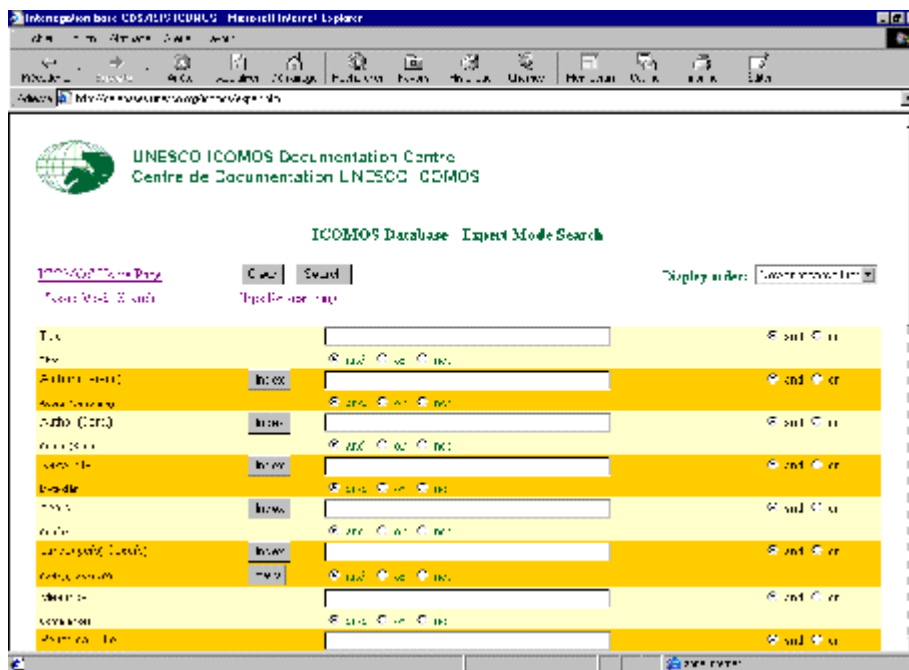
ICOMOS Bibliographical Database on the web:

Since June 2002 the Database can be searched on the internet at the following address:

<http://databases.unesco.org/icomos/expert.htm>

or at http://www.international.icomos.org/centre_documentation/database.htm

It is also available on the **Conservation Information Network (CIN)** web site (<http://www.bcin.ca>) of which ICOMOS is a partner.



<http://databases.unesco.org/icomos/expert.htm>
DOCUMENTATION CENTRE SERVICES

Opening Hours:

Monday: 14h00 - 20h00;
Tuesday-Thursday: 14h00 - 17h00

Searching the database:

Database available on CD-ROM at the Documentation Centre and on the internet at <http://databases.unesco.org/icomos>

Copying service:

Visitors can photocopy articles from journals and chapters from books, subject to the limits of copyright legislation

Photocopying charges:

0,10 Euros (ICOMOS members)
 0,20 Euros (non-members)

Documents not available for loan, only consultation at the Centre

Sale of publications:

All the ICOMOS publications are on sale at the Documentation Centre.
 Prepayment required by Credit Card, by international money order or by cheque (made out to "ICOMOS")
 Postage will be charged according to the weight, distance and specific requests (air mail, etc)