

# Manual

## How to contextualize an Object

### (incl. Requirements for grading)

An object can be an actual thing, a picture of a thing, a photo, or (audio) visual material.

In exhibitions, and thus in the exhibition tours that you find in the *Inventing Europe: Digital Museum for Science & Technology*, objects are NOT an illustration to a story. Objects can mean different things in a different context, and thus can be interpreted differently depending on the place where you find it (for instance on the internet or in a museum collection). Therefore, it is important to ask critical questions to objects.

Objects learn you as much about history as written primary and secondary sources. Questions that you can ask an object are: "What is it?," "How does it work?," "Where is this event that I see taking place?," "Where is this made?," "What material is it made of?," "What does this tell about European integration, or what can I ask about European integration on the basis of what I see?," "Why is there a woman or child in the picture?," "Who donated this object to the museum?," and "Why does the museum find this an interesting item?" etc.

An extensive explanation on how to "read" objects is given in the Object of History Guide that can be found at: <http://objectofhistory.org/guide/>

An important part of an object is its metadata. The metadata give you basic information on an object itself. This course uses the Dublin Core standards, a standard that is often used by big object databases online. The fields according to the Dublin core standards include:

1. Title: The official title, as according to where you have found it
2. Creator: This can be two things: The person or organization who has created the object; the person who has taken the picture of the object
3. Subject: Set of keywords given to an object, either telling what the object is about or how the object is categorized, for instance in a museum collection (you could also say that the keywords give an impression of the way in which the object was contextualized)
4. Description: (Often) short information about the object
5. Publisher: Person or institute who has published the object (online database, or museum)
6. Contributor: Person or organization that has participated in the object (i.e. the name of the person who does the presentation of an audiovisual news reel)
7. Date: Can contain two things: date of production of the object; date of creation of the picture of the object.
8. Type: Image, Moving image, Object
9. Format: Details on the size of the object
10. Identifier: (Often a) number of location of the object/image within a collection
11. Source: Location in a collection or database (this can i.e. be a reference of a newspaper)
12. Language: If there are words on the object or image, this field shows what language it concerns. Language in two letters, ie: NO, PL, NL, EN, DL

13. Rights: One of the most important fields. Shows: who holds the rights of the object and/or the image of the object. This field gives information if you can use an object freely, if you have to ask permission, and if so, to whom.

An explanation of the various fields can be found at: <http://dublincore.org/documents/dces/>

### **Find interesting Objects**

To find interesting objects, you can explore the objects in the Tours on the Inventing Europe website, or explore the web further via “Explore our partners’ collections” and “Explore Europeana”.

### **Other interesting cultural heritage collections can be found at:**

Norsk Teknisk Museum	<a href="http://digitaltmuseum.no/">http://digitaltmuseum.no/</a>
Museum Boerhaave	<a href="http://www.museumboerhaave.nl/collectie/zoeken/">http://www.museumboerhaave.nl/collectie/zoeken/</a>
Science Center NEMO	<a href="http://www.culturalheritage.cc/md/search/nemo.vm">http://www.culturalheritage.cc/md/search/nemo.vm</a>
Science Museum London	<a href="http://www.scienceandsociety.co.uk/">http://www.scienceandsociety.co.uk/</a>
Deutsches Museum	<a href="http://www.deutsches-museum.de/sammlungen">http://www.deutsches-museum.de/sammlungen</a>
Tropical Research Institute of Portugal	<a href="http://actd.iict.pt/">http://actd.iict.pt/</a>
Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision	<a href="http://www.openimages.eu">www.openimages.eu</a>
European Digital Portal Europeana	<a href="http://www.europeana.eu/">http://www.europeana.eu/</a>

### **Requirements objects and metadata**

- Metadata according to the Dublin Core standards
- Relevant for tour and story
- Show good object criticism by mobilizing the objects in the stories

### **A NOTE on Copyright and plagiarism**

You might be used to finding and copying nice objects or pictures from the web and use them as you wish. The odds are quite high that you do so without being allowed to. Bluntly put: if you use images or objects that you find online or elsewhere and upload them to your website or use them in an essay without showing and addressing the copyright question, you could be accused of plagiarism. This is a serious offence.

Make sure to find out about copyrights when you select the objects for your assignments or tours and to address the copyright question in the “Rights” field in the metadata.

### **Requirements copyright**

- We need to see that you know and have examined the copyright question for each of the 6 objects in your tour. This means that you have to tell us 1) if you can use it freely; 2) who holds the copyrights; 3) if you have to ask for permission to use it, and if so: whom you have to ask. We do not need you to actually ask permission. That is not necessary for this course.
- Preferably we want you to select objects that are available for free use. If the exhibition is of a very good quality, we might consider adding the exhibition to the Inventing Europe website. TIP: objects that you find via the Inventing Europe website are not necessarily free from copyrights.