

Condition reports and the web: Opportunities for interactive documentation

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Besides providing a record in line with existing public ones, ConditionReport.it (www.conditionreport.it) allows the drafting and completion online of an actual “condition report” to be managed – at the operating level – thanks to a flexible and interactive software that can be adjusted according to the different public or private requirements, creating personalized documents with the user’s own logo or heading. These condition reports contain data regarding material, creation processes and the meaning of the work, and must also provide administrative data and technical support for those who, in different ways, have to manage conservation and project fulfillment, like art historians, permanent and/or temporary exhibition organizers, or supervisors who are in charge of the restoration intervention. They also work as cloud storage: through a simple Internet connection, the compiler has permanent access from anywhere to all past (closed) and ongoing (open) documentation. The security of the system is guaranteed by HTTPS-protected connections to certified servers. A condition report is also an important document for insurance purposes. In fact, if sufficiently clear and exhaustive, it prevents the possibility of a dispute over liabilities for possible damage or deterioration. Each report consists of more than 1300 pre-set technical formats – in five languages – for different objects, constitutive materials, and relative and specific means of deterioration, to be combined in the case of complex works of art: frames, leather, paintings on canvas, gilding, plasters, installations, polymeric works, kinetic works, latex rubber, paper materials, wax materials, glassy and ceramic materials, plastic materials, sculptures and wooden boards, textiles, and stretchers. It is also possible to add or make changes to the structure of the database and to customize it as needed. Users can attach digital standard documentation (PDF, JPG), print out all or just selected entries in a standard PDF document – automatically generated – and publish a standard HTML document with private or public access (each in one or several languages). By using the “collaborative” feature of the software, the person in charge of the condition report can identify “collaborators” and “guests,” the former able to gain access to the condition report assigned for the compilation of the information, the latter allowed access for consultation only. It is possible to define what information each collaborator/guest is able to access. The condition report, converted into a standard HTML document, can be viewed via a mobile device through free applications that are able to read QR codes, which are also useful for exhibitions.