

Issue 530: Bias

<http://www.cidoc-crm.org/Issue/ID-530-bias-in-data-structure>

Worlding Public Cultures (WPC)

- Prof. Paul Goodwin
 - PI and Chair of Contemporary Art and Urbanism, University of the Arts London
- Dr. Maribel Hidalgo Urbaneja
 - Post-Doctoral Research Fellow (WPC), University of the Arts London

What is often done

- Discussion around terminology and labelling
- Identify the provenance and biases of “innocent” tools and expose them
- Databases remain as basic systems of documentation

Re-thinking the cultural codes of new media: The question concerning ontology

"Turnbull (n.d) has explained that trying to preserve such knowledge according to **a single common standard that emerges is a trap of Western thinking** that ironically obliterates the diversity of the traditions from which these practices of knowledge emerge."

Srinivasan, R. (2013) 'Re-thinking the cultural codes of new media: The question concerning ontology', *New Media & Society*, 15(2), pp. 203–223. doi: [10.1177/1461444812450686](https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444812450686).

Re-thinking the cultural codes of new media: The question concerning ontology

Turnbull (1993) points out that the discrete demarcations and divisions that underpin the CIDOC CRM diagram are absent in indigenous ontologies. The ontology illustrated in Figure 4 privileges hierarchy, interoperability, mobility, and scientific abstraction and immutability (Boast et al., 2007), muting other non-Western ways of speaking, describing, and classifying. **An indigenous, local knowledge-based ontology in contrast describes, performs, names, and classifies based on ontological concepts excluded from the CIDOC CRM model.** While both Western and indigenous ontologies speak to narrating the world, they do so in very different manners that cannot be reconciled into a single ontology (Verran, 2002)

Srinivasan, R. (2013) 'Re-thinking the cultural codes of new media: The question concerning ontology', *New Media & Society*, 15(2), pp. 203–223. doi: [10.1177/1461444812450686](https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444812450686).

Re-thinking the cultural codes of new media: The question concerning ontology

No time or season ends in totality, nor could either be described as following a simple mathematical probability density-type function. Multiple states exist at once, and all states are present as continuous variables at all times and places.

Srinivasan, R. (2013) 'Re-thinking the cultural codes of new media: The question concerning ontology', *New Media & Society*, 15(2), pp. 203–223. doi: [10.1177/1461444812450686](https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444812450686).

Decolonising knowledge here and now

- Assigning epistemic authority to **marginalised knowers and knowledge systems**
- Abandon epistemic hierarchy of race
- Recentring knowledge to where the subject is
- Decolonisation does not happen once but it is ongoing

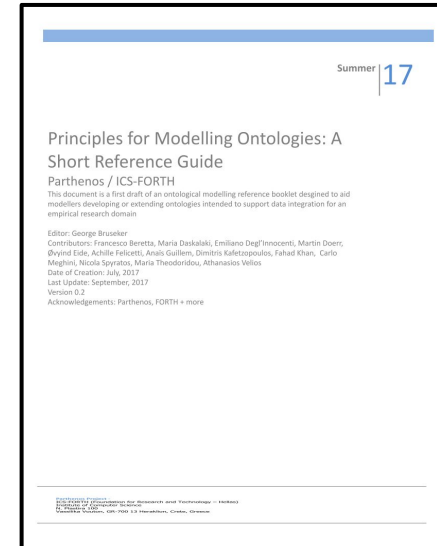
Mitova, V. (2020) 'Decolonising Knowledge Here and Now', *Philosophical Papers*, 49(2), pp. 191–212.
doi: [10.1080/05568641.2020.1779606](https://doi.org/10.1080/05568641.2020.1779606).

Bottom-up development

- CRM based on real data
- Data contested in memory organisations
- What in the CRM needs fixing?

CRM scope

- Issue is known to the SIG and inherent in many SIG discussions
- Use of structured data is a documentation bias
 - essential for information integration
- Remain at material level
 - avoid judgements, causality
- Principles for modelling ontologies
 - classes from neutral point of view (“transfer of custody” as opposed to “giving” or “taking”)



What issue 530 is

- Previous discussions on bias not consolidated
- Partial understanding of what the concerns are
- Representation of countries outside Europe and North America is limited
 - Understanding of non-Western epistemologies may be limited

How to process the issue - proposal:

- Form a working group
 - WPC is a potential partner/forum
- Discuss and understand what the concerns are
 - Which forms of bias in data structures can interfere with cultural points of view, and what empirical or theoretical means we have to detect them?
 - Should documenting concepts of one's culture as an empirical fact be regarded as bias?
 - Find common denominator or maximise diversity?
- Produce a statement on bias for the CRM specification document
- Establish criteria for examining classes and properties
- Create new issues for improving the model

Action to be taken

Discuss the proposal, improve and approve