Illustrated Iconclass

Extensions and Applications

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proposed by the
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Extension 1: Iconclass Bibliography

Iconclass concepts are metadata, linked to images in databases. Many of those images are also referenced in scholarly literature. Hence many Iconclass concepts are - indirectly - linked to articles and books.

The original Iconclass Bibliography files consisted of circa 50,000 references, which are now waiting to be added to the Iconclass Browser.

The Foundation aims to expand the original Bibliography by importing new references, submitted by heritage institutions with Iconclass concepts linked to items in their collections.
Extension 2: Pattern Recognition and Batch Indexing Module

The manual assignment of Iconclass concepts to image files is a labour-intensive process.

To seriously speed up this process - and perhaps even automate it in part - a module for pattern recognition could be added to the Iconclass browser. Visually similar images could then be filtered from large corpora, and batches could be tagged simultaneously.

That is a long-cherished wish, which could be realized with broader support from a consortium.
Extension 3: LOD support

Expand the Linked Open Data support.

Adding a SPARQL query endpoint exposing all Iconclass data as a semantically searchable knowledge base. This will enable integration with initiatives like the Dutch NDE Termennetwerk [https://netwerkdigitaalerfgoed.nl/activiteiten/termennetwerk/] and open the gateway to standard integration with Museum management systems internationally.
Extension 4: Expanded corpus of illustrations

The Rijksmuseum, the Bildindex, the Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek, Europeana: at many levels of aggregation images tagged with Iconclass concepts, are published in Open Access.

Many other libraries and museums also make their data sources available without restrictions, often indexed with their own vocabulary systems.

Both types of resources are eligible for batch import in the Illustrated Iconclass, either with their own ready-made encoding, or after their proprietary vocabularies are brought in synch with Iconclass terminology.
Extension 5: Add your own images, annotate those of others

Both institutional users and individual researchers should be able to tag their own image collections, using IIIF functionality.

They should be able to tag their images in the Iconclass environment and enrich the Iconclass encoding done by others by annotating them with supplemental codes.
Extension 6: expanded Clipboard function

When working with Iconclass, it is very practical to embed the image you are indexing in the browser window and be able to transfer notations to a specialized clipboard.

It should also be possible to return the content of the clipboard to the host database.

Interfaces for consortium member database formats should be made available. IIIF functionality should support this type of exchanges.
Datasets with Iconclass codes are potential treasure troves of information about co-occurrences.

The images found by a search through one concept are almost always also described with the help of other concepts. Those "co-occurring concepts" can contain a lot of useful information and are a potentially rich source for "knowledge discovery" for researchers.

Experience has already been gained in offering co-occurrences, but there is a lot of room for experimentation and improvement, also through visualisation.
Extension 8: Locally installed Browser

Many heritage institutions use Iconclass to unlock the contents of their image collections, but do not make optimal use of the retrieval power that Iconclass offers.

They may have invested a lot in indexing their collections, but do not offer the collected information in an optimized manner - for example via the multilingual keywords - to their end users.

An optimized retrieval module, based on the existing Harvester of Iconclass Metadata application, would therefore be a welcome addition to the Iconclass tool box.
Extension 9: Building a community

Add a forum section to the Iconclass Browser website where registered users may discuss aspects of the Iconclass system, discuss iconographic and terminological issues, start collaborative projects, and build a community.