

The British Museum

Mellon Pilot Project on Conservation and Science Documentation

This pilot project has recently been launched. Sam Wood, the Technical Support Officer in the Documentation Group, has been appointed project manager and he is at present gathering information about how data are recorded and used in the Science and Conservation Groups with a view to adapting the present system, or identifying a new system. Sam Wood is working closely with a team of conservators and scientists to ensure:

- that the system is integrated into the current Collections Management System;
- that the system allows all data recorded to be compatible across the collections, conservation and science databases;
- compatibility with current systems in use at the Museum (the Merlin, Digital Assets DataBase (DADB) and Loans) and future upgrades to the Collection Management System;
- efficient, accurate and comprehensive recording of incoming and outgoing objects and the data generated;
- that the conservation and science information can be published on the Web as part of the Merlin plan.

As some conservation data are already recorded on the Merlin system, while no science data are stored digitally, two options are being considered:

- to amend the data structure for the conservation records to be more relevant and more useful and to produce a new standalone science database that is compatible with current and future British Museum database systems;
- to develop a new standalone conservation and science database that is compatible with current and future British Museum database systems and to migrate existing conservation records to the new system.

Once the first phase of the project is complete, a plan for the implementation of the next phase will be produced and staff engaged to work on the development of the databases and the transfer of some records to the new system(s). Staff recruitment is expected in the second quarter of 2007, with the next phase beginning in the third quarter.