The Collectus Classification System (CCS)

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The 10-step scale is something that I came up with to classify data recorded during an investigation to help avoid the oversimplification of calling something either paranormal or explainable. These are all subject to interpretation of the investigators and the clients and often the investigators will not agree with the clients when classifying evidence. Even different investigators will classify pieces of evidence differently from one another.

10: Decisively Conclusive

9: Strongly Conclusive

8: Moderately Conclusive

7: Fairly Conclusive

6: Vaguely Conclusive

5: Borderline

4: Vaguely Inconclusive

3: Moderately Inconclusive

2: Strongly Inconclusive

1: Decisively Inconclusive

Before “1” we should mention “0” which would be explainable phenomenon which have been debunked by the team. Only data that can’t be definitively debunked or explained should be classified on this scale.

1: Decisively Inconclusive: Evidence that is likely to be explainable but has passed all attempts to be debunked will fall into this category. We find it interesting but isn’t supported by any other evidence or witnessed phenomena. A motion sensor activating unexplainably (without anything else happening) would be an example of this type of “evidence”. In this example, there are a few reasons why a sensor might activate that are not paranormal, even if we can’t isolate a reason.

2: Strongly Inconclusive: Strongly Inconclusive evidence is similar to Decisively Inconclusive evidence however is supported by questionable personal experience(s). If a person is witness to the events that are “decisively inconclusive” and then report “odd feelings” or something like that, the team can elevate the data to “strongly inconclusive”. Personal experiences can’t be verified and are subject to a plethora of psychological and perceptual elements that can, at some point, be evaluated and potentially explained. Trusted members of a team can be taken more seriously but beware of people with either no connection to the team or a vested interest in the outcome of an investigation (people that will make money from a haunting for example).

3: Moderately Inconclusive: In this category we have events that illicit strong personal experiences but lack objective documentation. Despite anyone’s feelings that something paranormal has occurred, the team must present this as Moderately Inconclusive.

4: Vaguely Inconclusive: This level of evidence will exhibit some paranormal phenomena but still be “missing something”. For example, an EVP captured in a room full of people. Was it someone whispering? Well, despite it not sounding like anyone that was present, without video data showing all people present were silent, then it can’t be conclusive. Missing pieces are bound to happen; however, it is imperative that there is always video running during all experiment (even then, you aren’t guaranteed to get all necessary elements in frame).

5: Borderline: This level of evidence is a good compromise between disagreeing investigators. It’s a good, presentable, piece of evidence, however, there still could be some doubt held by some people (usually by people who did not witness the event).

6: Vaguely Conclusive: Evidence falling into this category will meet the approval of all investigators present for the event. The documentation of the event may still cause some people to question its authenticity.

7: Fairly Conclusive: These bits of evidence present strong experiences and comprehensive documentation. Skeptics will still refute some of the evidence based on possible explanations that the investigators have already ruled out.

8: Moderately Conclusive: Evidence that is well documented (all angles covered by camera, sensors reacting to the events, audio recorders running) and is well supported by everyone resent (this includes investigators, clients, and onlookers).

9: Strongly Conclusive: This type of evidence is rare. Here we have multiple devices reacting to and recording the event(s) and personal experiences by reputable investigators. The recorded evidence should have skeptics stumped (but don’t expect them to accept it as paranormal).

10: Decisively Conclusive: This designation should rarely be used. Any Decisively Conclusive evidence will have skeptics on the verge of believing they are witnessing paranormal events. These events are so compelling that people reviewing the evidence can’t come up with any explanation (other than claiming that it is the work of CGI hoaxers).

Using this system, a team should be able to agree on what has been documented but more importantly how to present it to the clients and to the public.