The Netherlands

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General Introduction

In 2005 *i2010, A European Information Society for Growth and Employment* was introduced by the European Commission. *I2010* is a European strategy on Information Society Technology for 2010. The strategy includes the development of a European Digital Library, a virtual library in which cultural heritage is made accessible in an easy way. This initiative has relations with the *Dynamic Action Plan* (DAP) that was successfully introduced by Mr. Lamey, Minister of Culture of the United Kingdom, October 15, 2005 in Bristol. The presentation of DAP was as promised in the Workplan for Culture 2005-2006.

During the Council of Ministers for Culture November 14, 2005, the ministers were asked to react on *i2010*. Medy C. van der Laan, the secretary of state for culture and media, made clear in her reaction that access as well as avoiding duplication is very important. Therefore Van der Laan made clear that activities developed within the framework of European Digital Libraries should be connected with other initiatives developed within the former Lund process and its ancestor the DAP.

In this report general introductions on the five action areas mentioned in the DAP are given and new developments, results and examples are presented. This report should be read having in mind the content of the report on 2004. The report is not a repetition on last year; however, compared to 2004 similarities might be distinguished.

A. Users and content

Without users it is of no use to digitise. However, without content it is of no use to digitise either. Users and content legitimise digitisation of cultural heritage. Digitisation policy in the Netherlands still aims at more efficient and effective (public) investments in digitising cultural and scientific collections, measured in their long-term contribution to the knowledge society. This has implications for national heritage institutions, mainly referring to conditions concerning standards. Knowledge transfer and professionalism play a central role in digitisation and standardisation and require considerable investments. To improve the back-log in the field of basic registration, which is often still regarded as a precondition for knowledge transfer, the embedding of information in an open knowledge infrastructure with two-way traffic of knowledge and information must be guaranteed. Besides a substantial investment in tools and a physical infrastructure, this requires an almost equally substantial investment in human capital, a larger focus on a hypermedia approach to heritage in education, dismantlement of strongholds within institutions, a change of behaviour and mentality of the middle management of the institutions and, in particular, growing professionalism, continuing education, training and intellectual support. Investments have taken place in the Netherlands. For example € 13 million will be invested to digitise newspapers from its existence in the 1618 till 1995. The Koninklijke Bibliotheek (KB), the national library, executes this project. Furthermore, the KB, digitises 2.5 million pages of proceedings of the Dutch Lower House of the States-General and the Senate. For this project € 10.5 is available. The KB also coordinates national programme *Memory of the Netherlands* <http://www.geheugenvannederland.nl> that grew into a national resource of great substance, and offers not only pictures of art collections, but also more ephemeral material and audiovisual heritage. Memory of the Netherlands is a programme that aims to digitise cultural heritage and make it accessible in an easy way. The KB participates in The European Library (TEL) <http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org>. De KB hosts the office of TEL and develops and coordinates the Web service under the authority of Conference of European National Librarians (CENL). TEL takes care of an integrated approach concerning accessibility and searching of both digital as well as paper collections of European national libraries. Furthermore, TEL

implements results of projects financial supported by the fifth framework programme of the European Commission. The TEL Website embrace information out of more than hundred different collections. Besides the KB eight national libraries are its founding members. The KB will also become a partner in MICHAEL plus that stimulate multilingual access to digital cultural heritage in Europe. Furthermore, the Cultural Heritage Institute coordinates a project on digitised museum collections. This project contributes to mobilisation of collections throughout the Netherlands and aims to stimulate this on a European level as well.

In 2005 a letter is sent to parliament on creative industries *Ons Creative Vermogen* (Our creative wealth). Among other relations in the letter connections are made between digitisation and IPR. On the one hand digitisation creates new opportunities; however at the other hand digitisation might result in dilemmas in relation to IPR as well. Concerning the IPR the Netherlands government would like to work together with *Creative Commons* to figure out the opportunities of IPR as well as gaps and hindrances of IPR in this respect. In 2005 the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) commissioned a study that will be conducted on the use of digitised material and gaps concerning digitised material. This study will be aimed at cultural heritage, performances, libraries and arts sector. Based on the results of the study the ministry might change its focus concerning digitisation.

B. Technologies for digitisation

In 2005 two significant research and development networks continued. The first, *Continuous Access To Cultural Heritage* (CATCH) <http://www.nwo.nl/nwohome.nsf/pages/NWOP_5XSKYG>, has a strong academic flavour. It is funded by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) and aims to organise scientific research around three themes that are important to the heritage sectors: interoperability through metadata, knowledge enrichment, and finally navigation & presentation. Research is distributed over several research groups in Dutch universities, however situated in cultural heritage institutions. The second project is the *Reference Networks Project* <http://www.referentiecollectie.nl>, which is a more heterogenic collaboration between universities, heritage institutions and small specialised

businesses. Its aim is to develop tools and strategies to improve the integration of a multitude of reference structures (thesauri, ontologies, vocabularies) in knowledge networking infrastructures. This project is sponsored by the Ministry of Economic Affairs for a period of three years, and supported by the Ministry of OCW.

C. Sustainability of content

Having in mind creative industries and vast developments concerning digitisation sustainability of content is important. Focus of the digitisation policy in The Netherlands is on standardisation and durable digitisation. This will only be realized when institutions are willing and stimulated to adhere to the norm because it has proven its worth. Therefore, self-management of sectors in terms of development and distribution of stipulated standards and procedures will be supported. As a result, when setting targets and deciding on grants, government authorities and culture funds will be able to invoke clear procedures and standards composed by the sectors themselves. These standards and procedures come together in an ICT register that is hosted by the Digital Heritage Netherlands foundation (DEN) <http://www.den.nl>.

The future of Dutch digitisation policy and its ensuing initiatives can be described as focused and financially secured.

By assuring financial support for digitisation of cultural collections the government acknowledges the cultural sector as an important pillar to the knowledge infrastructure. Since 2004 a secured yearly budget of € 9 million (2007) is appointed to the improvement of the entire digitisation spectrum, from capturing to enrichment and making accessible.

During the last few years the cultural heritage sectors in the Netherlands witness a significant increase in the formation and creation of national networks. This development evolves with the acceptance that the creation of a meaningful and nationally interconnected repository of digitised cultural heritage information can only be achieved with a wide variety of partners because the necessary disciplines, knowledge, and know-how are widely distributed.

The dimensions of these networks, their composition, their geographical location, and their institutional stratification differ greatly; there is no apparent ordering or formative principle that predicts the features and composition of

these networks. Together these networks form an infrastructure. However, this in not yet 'the' infrastructure which is needed, development of a national infrastructure on digitisation should get attention for the coming years. Since 2005 a task force concerning archives discusses digital accessibility of archives. Furthermore, a platform ICT is set up by the Netherlands Museums Association and a task force on digitisation on audio visual material will be set up.

The Netherlands government installed a special regulation, which makes it possible for heritage institutions to ask for grants regarding policy development and projects concerning development of new tools and services, cooperation, concerning digitisation. Furthermore, the regulation stimulates the national infrastructure regarding digitisation of cultural heritage. At the moment the national infrastructure embrace the Cultural Heritage Institute <http: //www. icn. nl >, the Knowledge Infrastructure Cultural History <http: //www. kich. nl >, the National Archive <http: //www. nationaalarchief. nl >, the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision <http: //www. beeldengeluid. nl >, public libraries <http: //www. bibliotheken. nl > and the KB <http: //www. kb. nl >.

D. Digital preservation

«Safeguarding digital resources for the future is a vital part of a sustainable Knowledge Society» (DAP, 2005). Related to grants standardisation concerning the ICT register is compulsory. In this way preservation of material might be safeguarded. Furthermore, sustainability is important. A programme concerning preservation of paper of the Royal Library has a spin off effect regarding sustainability due to the fact that paper is digitised. Digitisation of cultural heritage material becomes more and more prominent for the case of digitisation but also in relation to preservation programmes.

The KB took the initiative to start a project to investigate the possibilities for the long-term storage of tiff-files from cultural institutions. The KB investigated the possibility and desirability of a sustainable storage of master files of projects concerning digitisation. It is proposed that this system build on the functional possibilities and technical infrastructure of an e-depot that might become part of the service related to Memory

of the Netherlands. Together with five heritage institutions specifications are written, a test bed is developed and tests have taken place. Finally, a business plan is written that gives insight into costs and profits of this system on a national basis. At the end of 2005 the KB had a clear insight into the technological problems and possibilities of a tiff-archive. Based on the outcome of the pilot the KB transfers the pilot into full operation.

E. Monitoring

The efforts of the NRG are interpreted by a working group, consisting of those organisations, which together form the national infrastructure, presided by the ministry of OCW, and used to define the intermediate and more distant perspectives of digitisation in The Netherlands and Europe. Notions of co-operation and the sharing of resources, knowledge, and infrastructures are developing a clear presence in the consciousness of decision makers in the heritage sectors. Indirectly, NRG results reach the activities of the heritage communities through the refinement of policy, criteria, and new national funding opportunities. Research and quality issues take a more prominent position in the landscape. The study that will be conducted by the Ministry of OCW should give information on the progress on digitisation of culture in The Netherlands.

The money reserved for digitisation of cultural heritage is aimed at professionalisation and gaining expertise concerning digitisation so that all material is digitised according to the benchmarks. In 2005 this happened via sector organisations as the Netherlands Museums Association <http: //www. museumvereniging. nl >, the association on information and archives <http: //www. divakoepel. nl > and DEN. These organisations present projects in relation to digitisation of cultural heritage to a 'bank of projects' in such a manner that it will be used as a tool for evaluation to monitor progress.

The new composition of NRG and new working rules adopted in Bristol last October should have a positive effect on monitoring digitisation of cultural heritage in Europe. Due to the fact that NRG members should be policy officers of ministries of culture of the 25 member states should result in easier coordination of policy lines concerning digitisation and implementation of the results of the five working groups that will work on the action areas.