

Belgium

Debbie Esmans
NRG Representative
for the Flemish Community

Isabelle Dujacquier
NRG Representative
and coordinator of the MINERVA project
for the French Community

Alfred Belleflamme
Cultural Affairs Department of the Ministry
of the German-speaking Community

Jean Moulin
Director of the Scientific and Technical
Information Service
for the Federal Science Policy

This Progress Report is the result of continuous consultations of the *ad hoc* Consultation Group for the follow-up of the Lund process.

As a reminder, with a view to allow a co-ordinated approach to NRG related activities, this group was set up on the proposal of the General Secretary of the French Community, Henry Ingberg, in regards of the role of the French Community in the MINERVA project (Ministerial Network for valorising activities in digitization).

This group is composed of the Flemish Community's Representative in the NRG, Debbie Esmans, the French Community's Representative in the NRG, Isabelle Dujacquier, a German-Speaking Community's Representative, Alfred Belleflamme and the Director of the Scientific and Technical Information Service (STIS), a department of the Federal Science Policy, Jean Moulin.

The present report is the continuation of the NRG Progress Report 2005 published in March 2006 and should be read as such.

FRENCH COMMUNITY

In the French Community of Belgium: Creation of a Co-ordination Organ

In the French Community of Belgium, the main action for 2006-2007, as part of the numerous initiatives in the field of digitisation announced and projected in previous reports, is the creation of a pole of digital valorisation, the objective of which will be to ensure the co-ordination of the various initiatives and projects at the level of the French Community of Belgium to avoid redundancy and energy or financial waste. This pole of digital valorisation, accompanied by an increasing budget for digitisation initiatives developed within the French Community of Belgium, will be set up as for autumn 2007.

That pole will be entrusted, in co-operation with the private sector, with the drawing-up of lists

of priority projects and their adequation with European policies taking into account criteria for the access to our heritage by the greatest possible number of people. It will, furthermore, be entrusted with the definition of norms and standards to ensure the interoperability and the perennality of digitised documents. So, its objective will be twofold: on the one hand, the determination of priorities by public authorities and, on the other hand, the definition of norms. That pole, constituted of representatives from public authorities, will co-ordinate the activities of two committees, a strategic one and a committee in charge of norm determination. The secretariat will be taken care of by the administration and more specifically by the "digitisation" cell of the General Secretariat.

The first objective will be achieved through the drawing-up of a yearbook of institutions practising digitisation and an inventory of the current progress of the digitisation of our heritage. Launching a call for digitisation projects in 2007 should allow us to make it better known and to prepare a schedule for 2008.

The steering committee will be in charge of defining the priorities to be implemented through digitisation projects.

The "Norms" committee will, for its part, have to define international norms of usage and to check their respect, in function of the various cultural sectors and technical media, to ensure the interoperability and the perennality of the digitised material. Projects meeting those norms will bear the "French Community of Belgium" label.

GERMAN-SPEAKING COMMUNITY

The German-speaking Community is planning to create a CH portal.

This portal will contain the following themes:

- the art collection owned by the Community herself;
- the description of architectural monuments, sites and archaeological records.

The purpose of this portal will mainly consist in two functions:

- systematic archiving of scientific data;
- information for the population about the mentioned themes.

The presentation will be geo referenced.

In mid-terms, it is planned to involve the museums in the German-speaking Community in this project.

Like the French Community, the German-speaking Community is also participating in the project <http://www.plurio.net>, official launched in December 2006.

FLEMISH COMMUNITY

A. Users and content

What are the main materials/categories of objects being digitised?

In Flanders we do not yet have a statistic overview on the main categories that are being digitised. We do have practise based information on these issues. In museums the main categories are the digital registration of metadata of objects (see for instance the Antwerp based project on collection registration and mobility that ran from October 2003 until September 2006) and the objects themselves, mostly images. For heritage libraries these are mainly newspapers. The Short-Title Catalogue Flanders <http://www.stcv.be> is preoccupied with digitising a specific set of standardised metadata (also including the titlepage) of seventeenth century printed books. For archives the main material that is being digitised are photographs.

The main categories/materials of objects being digitised in sites and monuments protection are the following:

- The *object facts* of valuable historic buildings (and the interiors if possible) are included in a digital "Architectural heritage inventory" <http://paola.erfgoed.net/sdx/inventaris/> (Buildings of Flanders through the Centuries)). In the case of complex buildings, location and orientation

of the different elements deserve particular notice. The objective of this inventory is threefold: an instrument for the protection of monuments, city and town sites, an architectural guide for the area concerned, a starting point for further scientific research. The *accompanying texts* have been scanned and imported into an inventory database on the basis of a free-text search system called Basic-plus. You can search by every meaningful word from the descriptive text of all inventories. In addition to this, you can search through a thesaurus more specifically for building or restoration periods, styles, typology or building materials. Some *photos* of the buildings are yet included in the database.

- The "Central Archaeological Inventory" is an inventory of *text-information* (finds, bibliography, location, etc) about all archaeological sites known in Flanders <http://cai.erfgoed.net/>. There is online-information available about the inventory-project but to guarantee an optimal protection of the vulnerable archaeological sites the database itself is password-protected (for archaeologists and administrators only).
- The development, per province, of a digital atlas (scale 1/50.000) called the "Landscape inventory" begun at the end of 1995. The project was finished by mid-2000 and updated in 2006 <http://geo-vlaanderen.agiv.be/geo-vlaanderen/landschapsatlas>. This "landscape atlas" shows where the historic landscape structure has been retained to the present day (*maps, text*). The most intact landscapes on the cultural-historical and abiotic level, have been marked as "anchorage places", and are given priority within conservation policies.
- Provisionally and definitively protected properties (monuments/ landscapes and city and town sites/ archaeological sites) are integrated in a database of an externally developed programme called MELANIE. An automatic by-product is a list of all the provisionally and definitively protected properties, published on the Web http://www.onroerenderfgoed.be/nl/index.cgi?s_id=461&id=495&basis=|461|495. The protected landscapes and city and town sites and their borders are marked out on a 1/10.000 scale *map*, also available online. The intention is to eventually situate all heritage protected as yet (also monuments) on a cadastral map and to make it accessible for the public via the Internet.
- The *library* houses more than 66,000 books and subscribes to about 150 national and international

magazines. A considerable part of the collection is antiquarian, with illustrated works on architecture dating from the 17th to the 20th century. The rest of the collection mainly consists of national publications on architecture dating from the 19th and 20th century. The database of the collection is online available <<http://bib.vioe.be>>.

- The *photographic records* cover tens of thousands of high resolution pictures which have been collected since the early protection of monuments and landscapes for use in files, inventories and specialist literature. Some 15,000 pictures are already digitised. A public database of this *photographic material* is currently under preparation. The archaeological photo collection is not yet digitised.

The Flemish Heritage Institute is also developing for the moment an all-covering database (MALVIN-project) where the currently available information (files, inventorial information and images) will be linked.

How is the digitised CH content being distributed (national inventories, portals, Internet services, other)?

We do have some portals such as the Archives Bank <<http://www.archiefbank.be>>, the Flemish Art Collection <<http://www.vlaamsekunstcollectie.be>>, MovE <<http://www.musea.oost-vlaanderen.be>> and the heritage site <<http://www.erfgoed-site.be>> (see for more information the previous editions of 2004 and 2005). The Short-Title Catalogue Flanders is an on-line bibliography of books printed in 17th-century Flanders. We would also like to mention the following services: <<http://zoeken.bibliotheek.be>> en <<http://muziek.bibliotheek.be>>. Zoeken.bibliotheek.be is the common cornerstone in two larger programs: a new library user oriented website and the project to renew the central cataloguing software. Aquabrowser is selected because of its inventive and unique capability to answer a simple search on the various structured data in the classic library catalog with best fit results. Results are presented ranked on relevance and with suggestions for further associative queries or refinements.

Are there any eLearning or creative industry uses for the digitised CH material?

There are different e-learning initiatives, often European projects, at the Maerlantcentre <<http://www.maerlant.be>>.

In a broader sense digitised cultural heritage material and digital media are being used in a number of educational projects. In that perspective we would like to mention the Webkwesties of the the Zilvermuseum Sterckshof <<http://www.studycool.be/liaisonsdargent/>> and the site of Villa Futura <<http://www.villafutura.be>>. Also the ARCHIE-project is worth mentioning, a collaboration between the Gallo-Romeins Museum and the University of Hasselt, which explores the possibilities of pda in situ <<http://www.edm.uhasselt.be/archie>>.

Are there any special issues that deal with the general accessibility of the digitised cultural content?

eDAVID <<http://www.eDAVID.be>> was established to explore the issues surrounding archiving born-digital cultural heritage, such as weblogs, email, and wiki's. The extremely rapid rate of technological evolution results in the regular emergence of new forms of digital cultural heritage. Each new technology poses its own challenges for long-term preservation. As a result of prior research in the DAVID project (2000 – 2003), practical guidelines, advice, tools for archiving email and websites have already been formulated and developed.

The Digital Depot project wants to expand on the areas covered during the DAVID project research by exploring the archival and legal challenges in establishing and maintaining a digital depot and by formulating solutions to these challenges. Also recent and new projects of the IBBT deal with accessibility of content through innovative research on for instance hands-on devices and legal issues <<http://www.ibbt.be>>. The Departement of Culture, Youth, Sport and Media recently ordered a study on the needs and models on broadband for culture. Results are expected in 2007.

B. Technologies for digitisation

How is interoperability ensured?

At this point there is no legal instrument that ensures the interoperability. Nevertheless, there is an impact due to the professionalization of the sectors

and the qualitative evaluation through the commissions and the administration.

Have any research needs emerged?

In Flanders research needs have emerged in the fields such as monitoring, interoperability, ontologies, funding mechanisms such as public-private funding and broadband. As mentioned above, the Departement of Culture, Youth, Sport and Media recently ordered a study on the needs and models on broadband for culture. Results are expected in 2007. The monitoring issue is being looked at in relation to the recent Council Conclusions on the Digitisation and Online Accessibility of Cultural Material, and Digital Preservation.

C. Sustainability of content

What funding models and funding sources are most commonly used in digitisation?

In Flanders funding for digitisation mainly comes from the Flemish Act on Cultural Heritage, through project funding.

Have you any examples of national competence centres in digitisation of cultural content?

Some centres such as eDavid and PACKED do have high-level expertise on digitisation and provide services to other players in the field.

D. Digital preservation

Are there national policies for digital preservation?

In Flanders there is currently no national policy for digital preservation of cultural material. Some aspects are being researched, such as the possibility of an e-depot.

E. Monitoring progress

As mentioned above, the monitoring issue is being looked at in relation to the recent Council Conclusions on the Digitisation and Online Accessibility of Cultural Material, and Digital Preservation.

FEDERAL SCIENCE POLICY

A. Users and content

What are the main materials/categories of objects being digitised?

The priorities of the digitisation plan (first phase 2005-2008) of the Federal Scientific Institutions are:

- Royal Library: old library catalogs (retroconversion); newspapers
- State Archives: unique historical documents
- Centre for Historical Research and Documentation on War and Contemporary Society: newspapers; unique historical documents; photos
- Museums of Fine Arts: catalogs of the collections
- Museums of Art and History: databases of objects from various art and historical collections; drawings and posters from unique collections; visiting cards
- Institute of Artistic Heritage: photographic plates; film negatives
- Institute of Natural Sciences: historical library and archives of malacology; printed / written results (data) of specific observations; catalog of type material of zoological collections; catalog of the Belgian collections (zoology, palaeontology, geology, mineralogy)
- Museum of Central Africa: photographic plates; film negatives; photos (history, ethnology, iconography of art objects); drawings (zoology); observation data (zoology); audio material (ethnomusicology; history)
- Royal Observatory: photographic plates
- Meteorological Institute: databank of written climatological observations
- Institute of Space Aeronomy: written observation data; photographic plates
- Royal Film Archives: printed documents.

Rem. they all will also complete the digitisation of their main library catalogs.

The budget is rawly distributed as follows:

- library catalogs: 16%
- catalogs and databases of scientific collections: 9%
- catalogs and databases of art and history collections: 5%
- digitisation of newspapers: 29%
- digitisation of archives (documents and monographies): 25%

- digitisation of photographic plates, film negatives, photos, drawings: 14.5%
- digitisation of audio material: 1.5%.

How is the digitised CH content being distributed?

The digitised CH is distributed through:

- portals: eg the common catalogue of the libraries of the federal public services and of the libraries of the federal scientific institutions is accessible on the portal site of the Belgian Government
<<http://www.bib.belgium.be>>
- Internet services: the websites of the institutions; gateways to these websites on the website of the Federal Science Policy Office
<http://www.belspo.be/belspo/res/institut/esf_en.stm> and of its Scientific and Technical Information Service
<http://digipat.stis.fgov.be/en/digipat_fsi.asp>.

B. Technologies for digitisation

How is interoperability ensured?

The issue of interoperability is managed by the coordinating committee of the digitisation plan of the Federal Scientific Institutions, composed of representatives of all institutions and of the Federal Science Policy Office. A global and collective approach to a large-scale digitisation of the collections is to be followed, taking into account the individual constraints and priorities, and the specificities of each institution.

Have any research needs emerged?

The long-term digital preservation is undoubtedly a crucial issue.

C. Sustainability of content

What funding models and funding sources are most commonly used in digitisation?

For the time being (2005-2008), the funding is mainly supported by the Federal Science Policy Office and also by the institutions themselves. A loan could also

possibly be asked to the European Investment Bank. Public private partnerships is being sought.

D. Digital preservation

Are there national policies for digital preservation?

The Royal Library stores all publications printed in Belgium since 1965. In the framework of a new law adopted on the 19th of December 2006, the Royal Library will now begin to collect and store also microfilms as well as off-line electronic publications such as CD-ROM's, CD-I's, DVD's, etc in the Legal Deposit of Belgium. On-line publications are not yet included. BELNET, the Belgian national research network, is currently preparing a project for the physical preservation of the digitised collections of the federal institutions.

E. Monitoring progress

A broad study was performed a few years ago by an external consultant with the active collaboration of the institutions in order to prepare the digitisation plan of the Federal Scientific Institutions. An inventory was set up (2003). The main conclusions were, for ca 200 collections (the State Archives were not included) containing more than 60 millions objects (books, journals, printed documents = 11.5% / newspapers, maps, posters = 1% / photos, slides, microfilms = 3% / archives = 0.5% / audiovisual: films and audio records = 0.2% / drawings, pictures, paintings = 2.4% / sculptures, music instruments = 1% / 2-dimension scientific objects = 80.5%): 1/8th of the objects are referenced in a computerised catalog and 1/300th of the objects are already digitised. For the State Archives: ca 200 km of documents (mainly archives) + ca 1 million books, journals, etc + 0.8 million other objects. Only 1/6th of the archives have been registered with ABS-Archeion and 1/4th of the libraries have a computerised catalog.

