

The DEN Foundation



ICT Knowledge Center for Cultural Heritage The Netherlands

The DEN Foundation is the Dutch national ICT knowledge center for cultural heritage.

DEN supports archives, museums and other heritage institutions to improve their digital strategies and services. The sharing of knowledge of and experiences with ICT is a core mission of DEN. Furthermore, DEN encourages the institutions to invest in open technology, to implement ICT-standards and to make use of other tools that contribute to sustainable information services.

DEN maintains a quality assurance system on digital heritage to promote relevant ICT standards and share information on basic and best practices. DEN monitors the achievements of the Dutch heritage institutions and encourages them to participate in innovative projects. DEN organises expert meetings, workshops and conferences to support cross-sectoral co-operation.

DEN is an active partner in national and international heritage and research communities. DEN is a member of the core committee for the technical development of Europeana. DEN also coordinates an EU Special Interest Group on digital heritage statistics.

DEN is sponsored by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Cultural Affairs and Science.

Meet the DEN People

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QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR THE DIGITISATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

DEN maintains an open source information system to assess the quality of digitisation of cultural heritage. This information system aims at achieving a more effective and efficient application of ICT, for instance by supporting the exchange of knowledge and by promoting open solutions. This information system is continuously updated by field experts and by DEN. Currently, some 300 Dutch heritage institutions have contributed to the information system. It consists of three main components:

1. ICT registry of standards

The ICT registry provides up to date information about ICT standards, including links to important documentation, the authoritative parties that maintain the standards and the status of the standards within the Dutch national infrastructure. A wiki is used to discuss standards requirements with ICT professionals from the heritage sector. With this information, it is easier for institutions to invest in solutions that improve access to the data they produce and achieve interoperability with other heritage information services.

2. Cultural Heritage Projects bank

The Cultural Heritage Projects bank contains examples of good ICT practice by Dutch cultural heritage institutions. The ICT registry and projects bank are linked, in order to show the implementation of ICT-standards in running projects. With the Projects bank, it is easy to monitor the growth of a national Digital Heritage Collection.

3. ICT-profiles of Cultural Heritage Institutions

DEN's information system also contains ICT-'fingerprints' of all participating heritage institutions. Included in this 'fingerprint' are their most important digitisation activities, the vocabularies used in their online services, and the availability of their policy plans for digitisation.



THE BASICS ('DE BASIS')

Minimal requirements for digital heritage

The goal of the project THE BASICS is to define a set of minimal requirements for digitisation activities within the context of the national infrastructure for digital heritage. Application of THE BASICS guarantees quality, interoperability and efficiency during the entire digitisation life cycle.

Experts from heritage institutions can propose standards and discuss them on a wiki. They are then evaluated with stakeholders during site visits and plugfests. So far, THE BASICS for findability of digital data, for digital preservation and for the creation of digital objects have been determined. The basic requirements for description and presentation of digital heritage are currently under discussion. All basic requirements established so far will be evaluated as a whole in 2010.

<http://wiki.den.nl>



Monitoring

Monitoring and validation are essential to assess the quality of digitisation activities. DEN commissions various types of research on the digitisation of cultural heritage. On the DEN website various reports can be found, e.g. on the size of current digital collections in the Netherlands, costs of digitisation, the use of ICT in museums, the use of online vocabularies and trends in web services.

Digital Heritage Conferences

Since 2004 DEN has organised national conferences on the latest developments in digital heritage. Through a partnership with the Dutch Sector Institute for Cultural Heritage, these conferences have led to a new international conference, Digital Strategies for Heritage (DISH). DISH is a bi-annual conference and will be held in December 2009 for the first time. Over 400 participants from 15 countries will participate in DISH2009.

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

DEN is involved in various international activities and seeks co-operation with institutions with a similar mission.

The Digital Facts / Numeric

DEN coordinates the research project The Digital Facts. This project has developed a methodology for the structural gathering of information about production output and costs of digitisation. Special attention has been paid to methodologies for measuring born digital collections and the use of digital services. Based on these methodologies, DEN collects statistical data on the production of digital heritage and the costs involved. The results of this project were published in 2009. The data gathered are the Dutch contribution to the European project Numeric (www.numeric.ws).

SIG-STATS

From November 2009, DEN coordinates a Special Interest Group, supported by the European Commission, for the collection of digitization statistics of cultural materials and content in Europe.

Report on Quality Assurance in Digitisation of Cultural Heritage in Europe

In 2007 DEN commissioned a research project to map current activities for the quality assurance of digitisation of cultural heritage in several European countries. All investigated countries acknowledge the importance of the issue of quality assurance although the level in which it is followed up with action still differs.

Europeana

DEN is a member of EuropeanaNET and is a member of the core group for the technical development of Europeana 1.0. DEN promotes the standards chosen for Europeana in the Netherlands.

Contact DEN

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