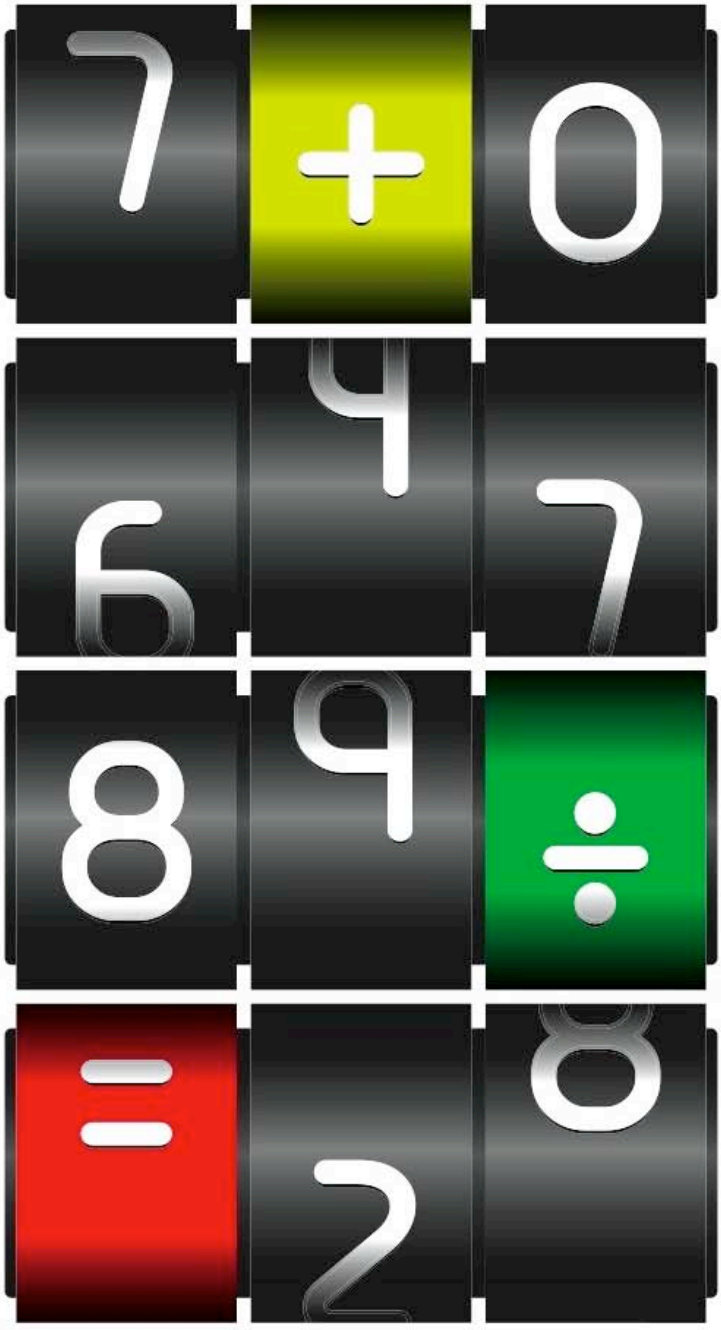

economies of the commons 2

November 11-13, 2010
Hilversum and Amsterdam, the Netherlands
www.ecommons.eu

Inhoudelijk en financiële verantwoording Economies of the Commons 2, november 2010

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1 Economies of the Commons 2

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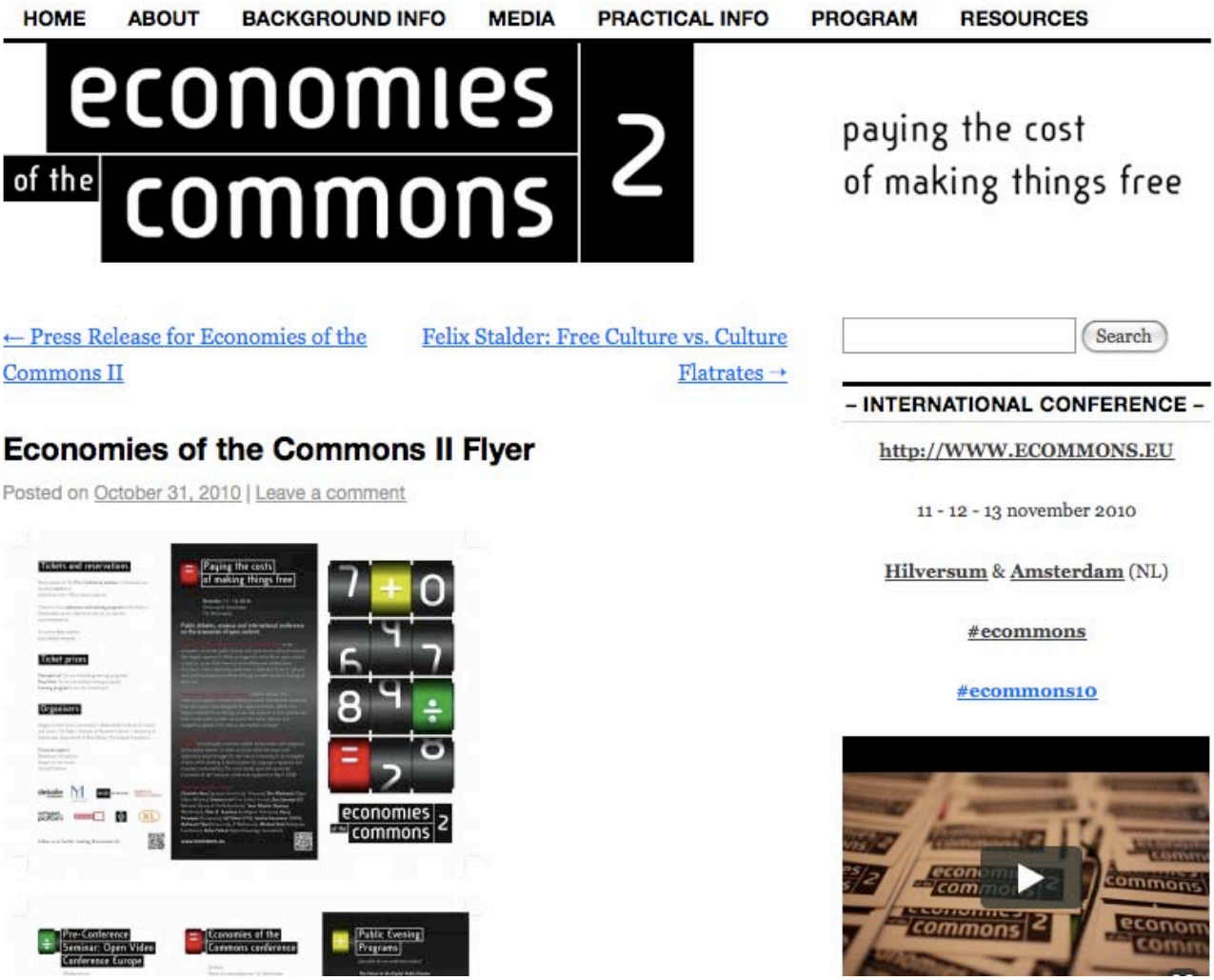
Production : Ian Van Riel (De Balie)
Design en ontwerp : Jeroen Joosse

1.1 Belangrijkste opgeleverde resultaten

- Economies of the Commons flyer >> een omschrijving per sessie. Dit event is gehouden 11, 12 en 13 november 2010.
- http://www.ecommons.eu/>> de website/weblog van het event. Het idée achter deze blog is het hebben van een vaste plek waar materiaal kan worden verzameld en geactualiseerd rondom dit thema.
- Opnames van alle presentaties >> alle presentaties zijn terug te vinden op http://www.debalie.nl/terugkijken.jsp.
- 225 tot 250 bezoekers, verdeeld over 3 dagen.
- Blogposts in relatie tot presentaties, zie volgende pagina's.
- Nieuwe contacten onderling binnen de sprekers. Netwerkuitbreiding en kenniscirculatie.
- Zeer uitgebreide lijst van bronnen zie hiervoor ook http://ecommons.tuxic.nl/?page_id=19. Deze lijst geeft een uitgebreid overzicht van al het Commons onderzoeksmateriaal.
- Documentatie online media archief, en foto's.
- Publiek bezoekers programma.
- Verdere theorievorming met concepten als commons, public domain, en digital cultural archives.
- Intervierws voorafgaand aan het event door Morgan Currie.

1.2 http://www.ecommons.eu/

De blog is gedurende het project heel erg goed bezocht, dit mede door de vooraf afgenomen interviews met onder andere Paul Keller van Kennisland, Maarten Brinkerink van Beelden Geluid, etc. Dit is de mainportal richting de doelgroep. Alle uitingen omtrent het event zijn hier gecommuniceerd. Deze blog zal bestaan blijven. Hier is divers archief materiaal van video interviews tot foto's terug te vinden.



1.3 Program

Pre-Conference Seminar: Open Video Conference Europe

Mediacentrum, Sumatralaan 45 (Media Park), Hilversum, 11 November

On November 11, 2010 The Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision and Knowledgeland host a one-day pre-conference seminar on open video in relation to public broadcasting, co-organised with the Open Video Alliance. This pre-conference gathers representatives from public broadcasting, the creative industries, civil rights organisations, cultural heritage organisations and government to discuss the future of public broadcasting in relation to open video.

Program

Plenary keynotes (10:00-11:00)
Ben Moskowitz (Open Video Alliance)
Peter B. Kaufman (Intelligent Television)

Plenary Presentations of Relevant Projects (11:15-13:00)
Michael Dale (Wikimedia Foundation) – Video on Wikipedia
Jamie King (VODO) – Promoting and Distributing Creative Works Using P2P
Dolf Veenvliet (Blender Foundation) – Open Movie Projects and Software
Frans Ward (Surfnet) – Open Video in Education
Bram Tullemans (NPO) – Online Video for Dutch Public Broadcasting

Three Parallel Working Groups (14:00-16:00):

1. Video on Wikipedia (step-by-step instructions on adding video content to Wikipedia, focus is both on the decision making process and the actual upload procedure)
Moderators: Ben Moskowitz & Michael Dale
2. Open Distribution Models for Broadcasting (working out possible models that broadcasters can pursue to open up their content)
Moderator: Peter B. Kaufman & Paul Keller
3. HTML5 Video 101 (exploring the possibilities of the HTML5 video element)
Moderator: Hay Kranen

Economies of the Commons 2

De Balie, Kleine-Gartmanplantsoen 10, Amsterdam, 12 & 13 November

The Economies of the Commons II conference critically examines the economics of on-line public domain and open access cultural resources, also known as the digital commons. While proponents praise these resources for their low-cost barriers, accessibility and collaborative structures, critics claim they undermine established (proprietary) production without offering a viable business strategy of their own.

Because the sustainability of open content resources remains unclear, this conference explores alternative revenue models and novel institutional structures that can fund and safeguard these materials. What new hybrid solutions for archiving, preserving and retrieval can both create viable markets and serve the public interest in a competitive global 21st century information economy? How should we restructure the economic frameworks in which content producers and cultural archives operate?

This event seeks to connect researchers, theorists, economists and activists in order to analyze the political economy of open content and its consequences for the cultural sector.

Program

Conference Keynote Address
Charlotte Hess, Syracuse University. *Constructing a Commons-Based Digital Infrastructure*. With Invited Respondent Joost Poort, SEO Economic Researcher on the market structure and regulation of infrastructures http://www.seo.nl/

Critique of the 'Free and Open'
"Content for all, revenues for some." For this session we explore the theory behind terms and terminologies. What do the terms 'free' and 'open' mean in their current contexts? How are they used and in what new political condition do they gain resonance? What is open, how open is it, and for whom? Can anything be learned by reconsidering the work of the grand master of openness as a political concept, Karl Popper? Or are there historical examples of open societies and the commons we can draw from to answer these questions? How do we situate unpaid, crowd-sourced content made profitable by companies such as Google in relation to freedom and openness? We should nuance the definition of data or information, asking whether it comes from open archives versus audiovisual material from emerging artists, established reporters or other cultural producers. Is a resource still open if a user's attention to it is then sold to advertisers? Indeed, is openness an absolute (either/or) concept, is does it make sense to think of openness as a scale? Alternatively, is it possible to develop an ethics of closure? There is no way back to the old intellectual property rights regimes. But how then are cultural producers going to make a living? How can we create sustainable sources of income for the 'digital natives'? How can we reconcile the now diverging interests of professionals and amateurs?

Pro-Active Archives
Creating an open repository of digital cultural artifacts is a valuable start, but then the question remains, what will users do with this content? This panel seeks to answer how an active audience can be involved in online cultural material. How can institutions involve audiences in sharing describing, reviewing, tagging, and especially reusing the digital commons? How can audience make use of these resources in a meaningful way? What kinds of licenses should institutions require, and how might the artists themselves feel about having their materials available online? This panel will be part show-and-tell, part discussion of best practices, as curators, scholars and directors of cultural institutions explain how they promote engagement and creative re-use of online collections.

Book launch, Telecommunist Manifesto by Dymitri Kleiner
In the age of international telecommunications, global migration and the emergence of the information economy, how can class conflict and property be understood? Drawing from political economy and concepts related to intellectual property, The Telekommunist Manifesto is a key contribution to commons-based, collaborative and shared forms of cultural production and economic distribution. Proposing 'venture communism' as a new model for workers' self-organization, Kleiner spins Marx and Engels' seminal Manifesto of the Communist Party into the age of the internet. As a peer-to-peer model, venture communism allocates capital that is critically needed to accomplish what capitalism cannot: the ongoing proliferation of free culture and free networks. In developing the concept of venture communism, Kleiner provides a critique of copyright regimes, and current liberal views of free software and free culture which seek to trap culture within capitalism. Kleiner proposes copyfarleft, and provides a usable model of a Peer Production License. Encouraging hackers and artists to embrace the revolutionary potential of the internet for a truly free society, The Telekommunist Manifesto is a political-conceptual call to arms in the fight against capitalism.

Public Debate: Future of the Public Domain in Europe
A public debate about the future of the public domain in Europe and the role of evolving media and information infrastructures. The public domain can best be understood as the space of shared information, knowledge and communication resources that allow citizens free access to knowledge, ideas, and cultural expressions, as well as the means for discussing and sharing them. A thriving public domain is of vital importance for the democratic development of society, the free exchange of ideas and opinions, and thereby for the innovative power of society to find new solutions for emerging challenges.
The public domain is always a contested area, where different social actors assume their role in shaping its future. Public institutions have traditionally understood their role as central to the constitution of the public domain, alongside civic initiatives and interests, as the public domain offers the space for common and shared insights, ideas and expressions that create the cultural and social context, the 'glue' of society.
It is curious that while an ever increasing percentage of the European population gets their access to information, cultural expressions, and communication resources via networked media / the internet, public institutions perform only a marginal role in providing this access. While the public domain should be considered as complementary to that of the market the responsibility for digital and on-line access to information, expression and communication is left almost entirely to private actors.
In pluralist societies public institutions, including governments, have a clear responsibility for the public domain. In the view of Dutch media and cultural sociologist Wim Knulst these public institutions should 'guarantee the diversity and quality of the public offering of information, expression and communication' [1]

This succinct formula, drafted in 1990 in view of an ever changing media and demographic context for cultural policies, is still perfectly apt today. Recent initiatives such as the Manifesto for the Public Domain have addressed this responsibility anew [2]. Our question is how this responsibility for the digital public domain will be filled in the immediate future?

Revenue Models
In order for the public domain to be sustainable in the long run, appropriate revenue models are needed. Such models should support both the preservation of online repositories and the injection of newly created content into those repositories. In this session our aim is to construct the roles of stakeholders and protocols of a sustainable digital public domain. This will enable us to ask questions like: which revenue models can balance the growing costs of preserving digital cultural heritage, while unlocking it for a large audience? How can consumers participate in the distribution of culture while the integrity of the cultural products is somehow preserved? How to define the boundaries of a cultural product? Who retains the intellectual property of a collective work? Do interfaces like iTunes support the production or distribution of culture in the public domain? How can public/private partnerships bolster the digital commons?

Open Content, Tools and Technology
What infrastructures and institutions create and safeguard open access resources? 'Open' content can be seen as a spectrum that ranges from audiovisual data to art, texts, and code, made available by individuals and open access archives for hands-on use. These are resources preserved and created by libraries, newspapers, magazine publishers, video producers, the general public, Wikipedia, YouTube, science and education communities, cultural organizations, professional creators, and youth. How do national and transnational initiatives paid for and accessible by the public, such as the UK and Dutch data commons and Europeana, push the agenda? Does their licensing framework set open standards? What other protocols, such as those being developed for the semantic web, can these projects set? How are these projects hampered by legislation that does not exist in different national agendas, or are Balkanized by national interests? Topics include open codecs, open source tools, open publishing, and open government data.

Materiality and Sustainability of Culture
While digital reproduction is often touted as free, there are very real material and labor costs associated with the sustainability of digital objects beyond the first copy, including the hosting institutions and servers that manage artifacts. What are the critical costs behind the infrastructure of a digital cultural commons, and how does this differ from 20th century public broadcasting or archival models? How are we going to pay for continual distribution, preservation, and hosting of digital archives? This session will investigate these economic questions along with theoretical concerns for the reliability and authenticity of fragile digital data requiring refreshing and migration to new platforms over time.

Best of the oXcars
From Spain, the "first international culture Awards in the digital age." Conservas and EXGAE (a play on the Spanish collectors society SGAE, which it so much opposes) organise the OXCARS free culture event to reclaim our cultural works.
Times have changed. The Internet allows information and culture to be exchanged horizontally among all citizens, and now our means of cultural production have to adapt to this new democracy – not the other way around. Because free and collaborative culture is the Culture of our time, because it's a fact, because there's no turning back….
EXGAE & Conservas present: The awards that will sweep the Grammys, the Goyas, the Max…The 1st non-competitive awards in the history of Culture…The 1st international Culture awards in the digital society…

2 Blogposts

Gedurende Economies of the Commons 2 is er net als op voorgaande events een team van bloggers actief geweest. Dit team heeft alle presentaties bijgewoond en hier verslag van gedaan. Achtereenvolgens treft u alle blogpost aan die geschreven zijn tijdens de conferentie.
Een prachtig verslag van alles wat er zich ontwikkeld heeft gedurende 11-13 november. Over het algemeen zijn de blogposts in het Engels.

Op 11, 12 en 13 november vond in Media Park in Hilversum and DeBalie in Amsterdam de Economies of the Commons 2 plaats. Tijdens dit evenement werd door verschillende mensen gekeken naar de economische aspecten van het online publieke domein en publiek toegankelijke informatiebronnen, kennis en media (de

zogenoemde ‘digital commons’). Er waren zes sessies tijdens deze drie dagen en elk onderdeel bestond uit drie of vier sprekers. De onderdelen waren: Pre-conference Seminar Open Video Europe, Keynote speech by Charlotte Hess, Critique of the Free and Open, (Pro)Active Archives, Future of the Public Domain in Europe, Revenue Models, Open Content, Tools, and Technology, and Materiality and Sustainability of Culture.

Een team van studenten die verbonden zijn aan de opleiding New Media and Digital Culture in Amsterdam hebben een verslag van een aantal sessie van de twee conferentiedagen gemaakt: Serena Westra, Geert Faber, Elias van Hees, Stijnie Thuijs, Lisa van Pappelendam, Fenneke Mink, Caroline Goralczyk, Ilektra Pavlaki, Emima Sendijarevic, Simon Marshall, Catalina Iorga, Sjoerd Tuinema, Nicola Bozzi, Olga Paraskevopoulou, Carlos García Moreno-Torres, Dido Rijntjes.

Interviews

Towards a Radical Archive: De Balie’s Eric Kluitenberg

Posted on September 9, 2010 by morgancurriel

Eric Kluitenberg is a well-traveled theorist, writer, and lecturer who has produced media events in The Netherlands, Moscow, and Estonia, and also currently heads the media program at De Balie, a cultural and political hotbed in Amsterdam. I’ve had to the luck to attend some of Eric’s events, such as 2010′s Electrosmog fest, and witness Eric speak eloquently about the digital commons in a lecture inspired by his 2008′s Economies of the Commons conference. That event’s essential question – how will we support our cultural archives in the digital age? – seems largely unanswered, or at least in an unfolding state, and Eric has taken an active role to see that the cultural heritage sector is represented in the fall out.

When I approached him for an interview, Eric asked to focus the discussion on the Living Archive project at De Balie, an work-in-progress that neatly exposes the role played by theory in the technical design of online archives. The Living Archive, in its very architecture, stresses the importance of ephemera, dissenting messages and mutable, collaborative scaffolds to produce conversations around the objects we transmit into the future.

MC: What is the Living Archive? Does it exist yet?

EK: The Living Archive is a really a theory, founded on the problem that most traditional archives are organized through selection, inclusion and exclusion. There is a strong tendency in these traditional models to leave out what is called *ephemera*, for instance flyers or temporary productions, like the Prelinger Archive’s industrial films that’s made for one particular purpose then expected to disappear. Ephemera are considered noise, irrelevant, and as a result, a large aspect of living culture is often excluded.

This is the topic of *The Order of Things* by Foucault, who says that dominant powers ultimately determine the structures of discourse and consequently what should be preserved in the archive. Everything that falls out is automatically irrelevant. This classical notion of archiving excludes too much, a problem increasingly recognized within the archiving world itself and even more pressing now that digital media allows countless people to put weird stuff online. The official archiving world doesn’t have an effective way to deal with all this ephemera. Foucault also critiques the archive as a static collection of dead phrases no longer a part of living culture, because it’s already enshrined in a system of power. You have to dig out the power structures underneath, figure out who created the rules, the political motives and material conditions behind it all. That’s why he calls it archeology. A static archive is a completely closed thing, in contrast to the multiple, dispersed discourses of present, living culture. To Foucault there are dominant forces that try to control this dispersal and order it in a particular way, making the archive immutable.

The Living Archive, then, is a theoretical model that makes discursive practice its active component. It refuses the canon of collected statements that Foucault critiqued and doesn’t accept any kind of necessary outcome. It emphasizes active discursive production, a continuous discussion and debate about everything in the archive, using the archive as a material for the discussion itself. Wikipedia is an example of this, maybe the best at it so far.

Obviously you can’t store everything. Discrepancy operates on many levels. An artist found this wonderful quote of Nietzsche: “in order to imagine it is necessary to forget.” It’s a classical archival problem: if you store everything, you lose the space for imagination or thinking or reflection, or active, living culture. So there is a healthy tension all the time.

The digital nature of archives has unique potential to challenge older ideas of the repository. Can you talk about how the material properties of digital media make this the case?
If you store things in a digital format, you can always reprocess them. They remain in an unclear state – is the text ever finished? You could see this as a threat or a chance to make materials publicly available to be worked upon. That's why Wikipedia is important – not only can you work on the documents stored in the system, you can also track the document history. In that sense Wikipedia, with all its shortcomings, is the most sophisticated model of the living archive. The process is revealed as open-ended, rather than left to a professional clan of archivists who have their established systems and abhor the idea of public participation.
What specific archiving projects are you working on at De Balie?
When I first came to work here, there was no archive whatsoever, only a huge pile of flyers and announcements stored in big folders in the basement. We introduced a database driven website in '99 to kick start a digital archive. Around that time we also began streaming live events, and when the technology became available, we created the online video archive.
The real aim is to capture live discussion and debate as it unfolds over the years. So we created a web-based annotation system allowing you to annotate who is speaking in the videos and link the videos to web resources or to articles in De Balie's site. As a theme runs over years, the results cluster around dossiers. There's still an editorial hand that makes certain selections, but this whole process started a living archive trajectory.
Another project is the Tactical Media Files, a documentation resource for tactical media practices worldwide. Today we do not have active discussion deciding what to include and exclude, but we want to open it up to a collaborative editorial model. Many people can be invited to edit, creating a collective editing open forum. If you can fuse a documentation resource combined with an active, open discussion extended in time, a form that Wikipedia allows, then you would get closer to a living archive.
As these archives challenge traditional notions of authorship and hence copyright and power structures, do you think the economic structures of traditional institutions will evolve as well?
That's not for certain. It's important to look at this from an historical perspective. Consider the history of radio. Technically any radio receiver can be turned into a signal; Brecht recognized the enormous potential of decentralizing and distributing two-way space, later echoed in Howard Rheingold's early euphoric description of the Internet as a distributed structure and virtual community. But legislation turned radio into one a one-way medium, and it became an authoritarian instrument, like in Rwanda, where violence was largely organized by radio. In the same way, copyright legislation can very easily and effectively be turned into a tool of extreme censorship, used to push the Internet the way of radio. This open space could be shut down by regulation, and the Internet becomes the next mass medium with some paraphernalia on the edges for people to play around with. Dissident, sub-cultural, and political messages would be without a decent audience.
On the other hand, the question of sustainability isn't immediately addressed by open access and copyleft practices. If you want to move this discussion forward, even beyond less restrictive copyright policy, it becomes inevitable to consider the economic sustainability of these resources. But for the most part, we're completely without a clear solution. State funding is not in all cases forthcoming or desirable. Donation models only work for famous projects, but even Wikipedia has trouble sustaining itself. The advertisement model still doesn't go far. Becoming another commercial media operator is not good for the independence of a message.
One exciting model is the open source area where, because of their self-motivated activity, people move into well-paid jobs or become supported by institutions. So there is derivative economy. But this for me is the main problem: one the one hand, copyright turning into the ultimate censorship instrument, and on the other, the absence of a clear sustainable revenue model to support our digital archives.

When Libraries Embrace the Digital Future: Interview with KB's Irmgard Bomers

Posted on September 2, 2010 by morgancurriel

There was once a time, it seems so long ago now, when libraries were the place to go to find out how to train your dog, where your family lineage came from, the history of your neighborhood dive bar, and so on. Now, we simply plug in and rummage through the Web's stunning panoply of digital archives, personal ephemera, bit torrents, blogs and social networks – and never mind the legality of all our downloading. Even as a student, I was more likely to turn to squarely 2.0 resources – Google Search, Google Books, Amazon – before visiting my school's online card catalog. And I'm in the majority. By 2006, 89 percent of undergraduates in the United States began their research on the Web. [1] So what role can libraries now play in the congested online space?
Librarians are acutely aware of the Internet's competitive environment, and in reaction are tailoring their services to suit all of us who use it. The picture isn't so bleak; most librarians describe a relationship with the

Web that is mutually beneficial. Basically, the Internet does a fantastic job of fulfilling one of libraries' most crucial goals: making information more accessible. Libraries are happy to offer their digitized collections for indexing by major search engines; they're also simplifying their electronic catalogs so they can be harvested and linked to contexts outside their own websites, for instance sharing bibliographic data with the Internet Archive's Open Library. In return, libraries offer degrees of constancy and control so often lacking in the chaotic flux and ephemerality of the Web. Major libraries are positioning themselves as conservators of digital information, creating impressive and resource-intensive digital archiving programs, and their bibliographic metadata has become a critical resource for scholars verifying and authenticating online documents.

The Koninklijke Bibliotheek in the Netherlands is particularly unsentimental in its embrace of digital technologies. A 2009 report predicts its digital resources will be increasing much fast than print, in order to offer "everyone everywhere access to everything published in and about the Netherlands." [2] This summer I spoke to the KB's Irmgard Bomers, Head of Users Services, about some of its current projects including web archiving, copyright negotiation, and semantic web.

Digitization is radically changing the role of the library. How do you frame your services in relation to all the other resources the Internet can offer?

Digital information is a competitive environment, and libraries' position in this field currently is uncertain. We have legacy as a physical space, and our digital services have traditionally operated in a closed environment. Now we must adapt our position to the Internet. Digitization can offer the KB a position into this future, so digitized information of digital objects will become our standard instead of physical books.

A primary theme for us is access. In the future if there is both a physical book and an ebook, we'll acquire the ebook. That's why we have a big digital preservation program running, to assure that if we choose not to keep the physical object, we can give access to the digital version forever.

Beyond digitizing works ourselves, we can coordinate the digitizing output of several Dutch and national libraries within Europe and projects like Europeana. There will be better results if more of us work on these initiatives together. At this moment, for example, Google Books digitized 300,000 volumes of Dutch books from other collections, so we'll negotiate with them to reuse this content and bring it into a Dutch context. We don't see ourselves as competitors of Google, because we can use the output they provide, and its search platform makes our services apparent. But libraries can also build a platform that brings a wider audience to digitized content and help customers navigate it. There's much more interesting content than you can find instantly on Google.

The KB seems to be particularly open to digital technologies. How many books total do you have in your collection, and how many total have become digitized? What other digital services are you now offering?

We have 4.2 million total books, and we want to have 10% digitized in 2013. We think that 80% will be done here and with our collaborators and 20% by other initiatives. Just last weeks we introduced the first million pages of newspapers in Netherlands, and we're planning another 7 million pages in the next year. We want to offer digitization-on-demand next year.

We're collaborating with a national program called Metamorphosa that restores and preserves digitized materials from cultural heritage organizations in the Netherlands. And we're experimenting with web archiving as well; we've harvested 1000 Dutch-based websites to see if it can be preserved forever. Like the Internet Archive, this will be an interesting resource to let us chart the development of the Web over a century.

We've also worked over the last two years to structure our data architecture, and it's now open and harvestable. We're moving towards the semantic web, to standards for an open environment, and we'll collaborate with other public and scholarly libraries in Netherlands as they reuse this data. We have plans to build standards for a digital publication platform that makes visible all digitized published content for reuse in multiple environments, such as audiovisual archives like Sound and Vision and image archives like Memory of the Netherlands. This project is similar to Europeana's role for Europe's cultural heritage, though we'll work at a national level.

Preserving this data is a unique selling point. Libraries have a long history, and we can offer the insurance that this data will be available within two hundred years. Whereas we don't know if Google's will exist in 100 years

What about the library as a physical space? Do you see its role diminishing?

Libraries do have a footprint in society, and they should combine both hard and soft channels. Apple didn't have its Apple store at first, but now they see the importance of a visible existence in society. The physical library is still a valuable meeting place. Usage is going up in all aspects, both at the physical stacks and with our digital services. We have 5 million visits online per year, and we want to quarter it to 20 million in four years. We now have longer opening hours at our building, seven days a week from 10am. Since then the number of visitors is growing with 10% per year.

Ideally, what would your digital library look like if there were infinite resources to make anything possible? How does copyright, for instance, make a dent in your goals?
Our vision is in the end to have everything digitized and available 24 hours a day, but it's an imaginary goal. From a market perspective we should mostly digitize where the demand is, but then we have to deal with DRM. That's one of the changes within libraries, because historically you want to offer everything for free. If governments give you money to offer items for free, you can only digitize old material. But demand is for newer information, so we digitize both.
And then we have to think about how we can charge for it and redirect money to the rights holder. We're negotiating for example with newspapers for this, and we'll talk to publishers and rights holders. It is never a problem to show any material on-site. We have 15 million digitized articles in our electronic depot, but most aren't online the public Internet. In order to make it available, we've invested in an identity management infrastructure, so in the future we are able to see the background of a user and then differentiate in prices – that's new for libraries. Though the service wouldn't force you to identify yourself. It's the customer's choice.
What do you feel is lost for a reader when translating from analogue to digital? What can be gained?
What can be gained by digitization is that it's much easier to access texts and make combinations. What you see with digitization are more channels and opportunities to use information. With digital newspapers it's so much easier to search in text and make combinations. But some people love the smell of books. This will be available for anyone who takes the effort to visit the library. It will never come that far that we won't store books anymore.
[1] Koninklijke Bibliotheek. "Strategic Plan 2010-2010." The Hague, 2009. PDF
[2] Spiro, Lisa and Geneva Henry. "Can a New Research Library Be All Digital?" The Idea of Order: Transforming Research Collections for 21st Century Scholarship. Washington D.C.: Council on Library and Information Resources, 2010: p 22.

Archiving in Convergence: Europeana's Dynamic Portal

Posted on August 20, 2010 by morgancurriel Leave a comment

What will be Europeana? A digital portal, a universalizing library, a gateway to Europe's largest archives? Recently I visited Europeana's office in Den Haag, at the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, to ask for definitions from the source. Europeana is perhaps set to become Europe's uber-aggregator of digital culture, a centralized, catholic platform that links through to millions of objects, from postage stamps to Vermeers to old newsreels, organizing the convergence of once-disparate domains for the internet era. The site connects hundreds of content providers and digital archives across Europe and is set to showcase up to 10 million objects by 2011. Europeana itself doesn't digitize or host any content; instead it trades in resource discovery. "A traditional archive would have analogue material and cater to a limited and professional audiences who would come to the physical building knowing what they wanted," said Harry Verwayen, Europeana's director of Business Development. "With digitization, the veritable costs of distribution have gone to zero, so you reach new audiences." Currently the funding for the project comes from the European Union.
Vanessa Proudman, Europeana's General Project Manager explained that to amass this collection, the content, say digitized reels of WWII documentation, usually comes from a local or national archive such as the Dutch Film Museum, who passes it through a middle-tier aggregator of specific formats, for instance the European Film Gateway, which then delivers these along with media from several other film archives in digital formats that can be ingested by Europeana. The bottleneck typically happens as aggregators work to tailor their collective institutions' bibliographic data to Europeana's specific data model. Once the synchronicity occurs, objects become a visible part of the Europeana network. In a future update of the platform, users will be able to add to the mix as well, adding annotations and tags.
The sum total of these collections is larger than its parts, as Europeana builds an enormous archive of the archive, in the form of metadata for each individual item contained within. Bibliographic metadata is key – it harmonizes links between the partner databases and also provides essential descriptive and contextualizing information about the objects' provenance (or origin). But even more than this, metadata is set to become Europeana's other primary service. If content providers agree to license full re-use rights, Europeana will release this information into the public domain, where it can accumulate semantic enrichment that, they hope, feeds back to the original providers. The archive becomes a collective, dynamic project.
"It's a virtuous circle," Verwayen explained. "This is cultural and historical material, and there's an obvious need for enriching it with geo-data and time elements. You could for instance walk around with a mobile phone and ipad throughout a city or museum, look up information about what you're seeing, add back to it, such as GPS coordinates from another database, and look at it evolve over time." They hope to release open semantic data next year through a search API – a move that the New York Times also recently made – and eventually link it with Wikipedia and DBpedia. These steps could positively change the cultural sector's

attitude towards opening linked data for public reuse and research, and, since databases in Europe fall under copyright law, operate as a catalyst for database licensing reform in general.
Context becomes the new content, and like other web 2.0 platforms such as flickr or facbeook, value-creating services may provide Europeana with a future business model. Since it has no repository of its own, "you have to be able to make money around services, and the service could be enriching the metadata. If we open it up to commercial providers and get money for it, part of the money could flow back to the Victorian Albert Museum, for instance." But very much unlike commercial platforms, Europeana's data would be open to everyone else for non-commercial use – anyone could harvest it into another website, or create mash-ups with other information.
Perhaps most importantly, Europeana aims to build a living, breathing digital commons. "Europe needs an independent non-exclusive space that supports the digital public domain," Verwayen told me. "We call it a portal. It's a new possibility to organize data outside silos. We're not a museum, we have more than paintings. We're not a library, we have more than books. Archives have the connotations that they are a vault or a walled garden. This is discovering content and connecting different media related to one topic, and getting communities to talk to one another and address issues together." The Europeana commons is so much more than a repository – it's set to become a space for creative, hybrid production, the archive as a potent, creative tool.

The Networked Vault: interview with Maarten Brinkerink of The Netherlands' Institute of Sound and Vision

Posted on July 21, 2010 by morgancurriel

What struck me about visiting the Beeld en Geluid Instituut (the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision) in Hilversum, was how tidily the country has consolidated one of the largest audiovisual collections in Europe – 700,000 hours of national radio, television, film and music. Because the Netherlands' broadcasting stations reside a few kilometers from the vault that ingests their content on a daily basis, preserving much of the Dutch media heritage becomes a streamlined process in one neat location.
Three years ago, Sound and Vision made the case to the Dutch government that the archive could increase its accessibility to researchers, artists, and the public by digitizing its collection, and that it had to, given the deteriorating conditions of some of its celluloid holdings. In 2007 the Institute secured 154 million euros to launch Images for the Future, a massive project that generates pixels out of its celluloid and tape holdings.
I interviewed Maarten Brinkerink at Sound and Vision in May, touring the impressive cube-shaped glass enclosure that houses its vault, the digitization projects, offices, and Broadcasting Museum. Maarten works in the R&D department, the branch that brainstorms projects encouraging broad public reuse and access to the digital materials, and he told me more about the endeavor.
What case did Sound and Vision make to secure this public funding for Images for the Future?
If we don't digitize material within ten years, according to the research, a large proportion of the collection will vanish. Our analogue assets are literally decaying, for instance some produce an acid that eats the film material. So a proposal was made for a mass digitization project along with the Nationaal Archief (Dutch National Archive) and EYE Film Institute Netherlands to preserve and digitize a core collection of the Dutch audiovisual heritage. We argued that if we preserve the material now, we'll be able to continue to provide access to it in the future – an investment repaid through future societal and economic benefits. As a result a large portion of Sound and Vision, Nationaal Archief and EYE will be digitized within seven years. We're halfway through the project, with three and a half years to go.
How is digitizing so much material changing the role of archival institutions such as Sound and Vision?
I think the future mission for institutions like an archive is not only using expert knowledge to safeguard material, or to provide the most accurate descriptions, but to also construct meaningful networks out of our shared cultural heritage. We need to leave behind the idea that we as an institute are an isolated node of expertise. Material is way more interesting and meaningful for our audiences if its viewed in relation to other sources, if we offer content and contexts that can be combined in many ways to give a more complete story. These different contextual layers will happen as we combine collections – you can't do it within one single institution, because then you have only one perspective on a topic. This is happening on a national and European level, and both with content and metadata exchange such as a semantic web approach and Linked Open Data. Metadata is rich if it's elaborate, and meaningful if it contextualizes, if it presents an object in a variety of historical or topical contexts.

Europeana Connect, for instance, specifies Europeana's standard data model for harvesting all the data available on the platform. A project like EUScreen must implement this data model to be harvested by Europeana. On a national level major Dutch heritage institutions, such as Sound and Vision and the Dutch Royal Library, are collaborating on a research project called CATCHPlus to implement an interoperable infrastructure for metadata harvesting and exchange (based on OAI-PMH).
And of course we can also now benefit from all the different points of view that were historically kept out of institutions. If we can give contextualized access to our archive, then we can also get more information in return about the items we hold, and this can be extremely valuable. A great example of added value that is being produced outside of heritage institutions is, for instance, the knowledge gathered on Wikipedia.
One thing hasn't changed: we still hold a great value in historical perspectives, with the information and beauty that lies within the vault, and our expert knowledge about our collections. But to get people really interested, to reach your potential audience, you have to be where they consume material, and provide access to the material in a networked fashion.
Tell me about some of the projects Images for the Future is involved in.
One project is the Open Images Platform, an open media platform that offers online access to audiovisual archival material from various sources to stimulate creative reuse. Footage from audiovisual collections can be downloaded and remixed into new works. Users also have the opportunity to add their own material to the Open Images to expand the collection. Open Images provides an API, making it easy to develop mash-ups. The platform currently offers access to over 750 items from the Sound and Vision archives, notably from the newsreel collection. To allow users to reuse the material, we grant Creative Commons licenses to material we own copyright to, though this is only a fraction of our total collection. Sadly we can't make the decision to open up material for other copyright holders, but we hope to show them the advantages of it and persuade them to join in building an Audiovisual Commons.
We're also looking at how mobile phone applications can offer contextual information at certain locations. Our first pilot testing this concept focuses on war monuments. So if people visit one, they can access material from us, Nationaal Archief, and EYE that provides information on its meaning and events related to it. They can also view historical footage of the monument's site.
Another objective is to revise our current catalog by using speech recognition, image recognition, and crowd-sourced metadata. Currently the catalog only gives the title and basic descriptions at an item level, such as an entire episode, a movie, or a reel of amateur film footage. But broadcast professionals and documentary filmmakers typically look for imagery of a certain event or item or location not listed in the description. People have to review a lot of material they only have a hunch they're interested in. To fix this, we're trying to create detailed metadata listed in relation to the video's timeline, so people who say, "I want imagery of a cow in the 1960s," get only those clips.
For instance we created a pilot project of a crowd-sourced video labeling game called Waisda? (which translates to "What's That?") that asked people to describe the archive's material with keywords in relation to the timeline. We're also collaborating with several National Technical Universities to explore how automated speech and image recognition can transcribe material, for instance, to identify a boat. The downside is you have to first train computers and then review the results for accuracy. Computers can transcribe news anchor voices with great precision because they have a standard way of pronouncing – it's very clear and no background noise. But everyday recordings contain a lot of noise; people make mistakes and mumble. None of these techniques are perfect yet, but if you combine them, we hope to extract a lot of meaningful information in the future.
One of our goals, finally, is to disseminate the knowledge and expertise we gather from these services we're developing, for instance on our Research Blog. A lot of the technology is open source, so people can implement and build upon the projects themselves.
It all sounds like an innovative, useful public service. So what could be a possible pitfall to prevent countries around the world from doing this?
As with many cultural heritage institutions, we are responsible for generating income, for example through commercial services. This a welcome addition to the base-funding provided by the government. The success of these services relies on charging for the small part of the collections for which we own the rights, but on the other hand we also want to make as much material freely available as possible. So there's a clash of interests, the archive dilemma.

Images for the Future received substantial but one-time funding. And with the current political environment, we probably won't receive a similar grant in a near future. In the original project proposal, one of the arguments for digitization was that it would cut maintenance costs. But at the scale we are operating on now, this isn't the case at all. Now that we have big petabyte robots working for us, not regular hard drives that grow more inexpensive by the second, it's hugely expensive. Digitizing is only the first step; managing all the digital materials for into the future will be another costly project in itself.

WHEN THE COPY'S NO EXCEPTION: Interview with Kennisland's Paul Keller

Posted on June 10, 2010 by morgancurriel

Interview with Kennisland's Paul Keller on Creative Commons, Mick Jagger, and the changing role of the archive.

Go here to listen to the original interview of May 18, 2010

Paul Keller, one of the founders of Creative Commons Nederlands, recently sat down with me to talk about freeing society's creative silos, a conversation ranging from how we might circumvent stale copyright law to the surprisingly robust underground of p2p networks innovating in the margins.

Keller hails from Kennisland, a future-oriented Dutch think tank that puts its stake in an economy driven less by the production and circulation of 3-D goods than by creative knowledge flows. An overarching goal is to bolster society's cultural commons and improve access as far as possible to these resources. Their partners include Creative Commons, Images for the Future, Communia, and Wikimedia.

Kennisland is working with several cultural heritage institutions on copyright issues. What have you found to be so deficient about the current copyright system?

Our aim at Kennisland has been to improve access as far as possible to digital cultural resources, to make them available under free licenses or without restrictions. Now if you decide to license something, you need to know who was involved in producing something, then you must find them and negotiate with them, and that's usually when it ends. Because with large diverse collections, it can be very difficult to find the people who own copyrights in your archive. So we're looking to find practical solutions for existing projects, but also shaping policies and practices on the national level to overcome these hurdles. How can you align stakeholders so that material becomes available? All the talk about innovations taking place in the shadows, in an unregulated sphere that ignores copyright and the interest of authors – it's simply not an option for organizations funded by public money and run by boards with respectable retired ladies and gentleman. You need to negotiate these problems in a way that doesn't put too much burden on archives and respects the rights of the producers and authors involved.

For instance, copyright still is organized around national boundaries. Organizations may have permission to display something on the internet in France but not in Belgium. From the perspective of an internet user that is absurd, but if you don't have right to do so, and you risk being held liable, you probably won't make it available.

So how does Creative Commons then nuance the law to address the way digital technologies are changing cultural production and circulation?

Copyright law usually makes the distinction between private and public. Private is what I show in my own house, legally defined as people I have personal bonds with, in a close community. A public performance requires permission from the copyright holder, while with a private doesn't. The internet has of course dramatically enlarged the range of our public. If I look at my flickr collection of pictures, hundreds of thousands of people have looked at them, while it it is still essentially the same collection that started its life in a shoe box on my shelf that maybe 5 people looked at back in the days. You can argue that the private has become global, and as a consequence this public-private distinction doesn't work well for triggering copyright anymore.

In place of this public/private distinction, the difference between commercial and non-commercial uses might be a much more relevant. In a way Creative Commons introduced this idea. The non-commercial sphere needs much less regulation and restrictions, and it is probably a good thing if copyright holders focus on generating income from commercial uses of their works. These days not making a copy of something is damn difficult to do. The unique is the exception and copies are the new normal. There needs to be some kind of acknowledgement of this, or the rules that govern copying will stop functioning.

You were one of the founders of Creative Commons Nederlands seven years ago. Can you talk to me about what effects its licenses may have had on the public domain since? What are some of your successes?

I don't see the main value of Creative Commons in licensing individual works, someone's blog that isn't that interesting to use in the first place. What's more substantial is when a large platform like Flickr becomes tightly integrated with Creative Commons. Flickr is an amazing resource for freely licensed imagery that can be very useful in educational settings, and the cc licensed imagery there provides value to a large group of

people. It's becoming a real threat to professional photographers because you find so much freely licensed stock imagery there.
Another recent case was the decision of the Dutch government to release information published on government websites under CC0, a statement that the government doesn't assert copyright at all. Here we see Creative Commons as a tool to support government policies about how we can best structure access to information in the networked environment. So we are trying to spread this idea that what's important isn't if it's 3 or 17 videos become available, but that sharing information is beneficial to entire organizations, so that they start integrating these instruments into their platforms and procedures.
We see this happening more and more. One of the most signifficant projects we've done is with Buma/Stemera, the collective rights management organization for authors of musical works in the Netherlands, exploring if it is possible to combine collective rights management and individual rights management. When we started talking to them, they had the perception that we were working against them: you want to make stuff available for free, and we're in the business of extracting money from people who want to use music, so you should get out of our way. Instead, we've come up with an understanding of how one approach can drive the other, the free availability of material can actually drive your ability to extract money.
So with the aid of Creative Commons, large amounts of digital objects are being released by massive silos, such as Flickr, Youtube, and the Dutch government, as you mentioned. How do you see this changing the role of the public archive?
We see a transformation of archives away from being the central place where we store stuff that no one uses, into resources that people actually want to use. In this process the real innovation probably isn't happening at the central archiving nodes, but at the fringes of the network, in the distributive archive and metadata systems, where you make sure that I have access to what you archive, and you have access to what I archive. Peer-to-peer networks are a natural way of selecting what's worthy of being preserved and what's not. If there's at least one person assigning enough value to one object to keep it, then it's available to the entire community. There's no policy that says we can only conserve more of our glorious history. Underground bittorent communities that specialize in specific genres of film, for instance, are surprisingly responsible archives, operating outside the realm of copyright permission. It's fan driven, distributed and very responsive. One would expect those networks to do a lousy job of preserving, but in the end they can be far more complete than centralized systems that have to stick to the rules.
Copyright in this sense is like a one way mirror: one the one side you have this institutional world of archiving, and on the other side, you have these informal activities that are doing very interesting things but are invisible to the institutional players who can't look back through the mirror. From the perspective of these informal communities, institutions are still operating in structures based on a time when the main characteristic of the archives were thick walls, controlled temperatures and enough space to have everything in one place. The current copyright model does not enable them to fundamentally transform the way they grant access, and as a result a lot of material that could be available to society is hidden away.
There's a criticism of Creative Commons floating around that claims these licenses don't address how artists will make money once their content is offered up for free, and that it doesn't prevent companies from exploiting all this open content created by unpaid labor. How do you answer these complaints?
The criticism you refer to argues against this idea that free availability can be a good thing, because if something is given away free, how will the artist be paid? That's a relevant question, but Creative Commons isn't necessarily the organization with an answer to this. We are not making a claim that the Creative Commons licenses are the tool to use if your primary objective is to earn a living from producing artistic works. Creative Commons has always been careful to say we don't oblige people to use our licenses. Our licenses are tools that you can use if you have come to the conclusion that you want to share something.
Right now there is a much more fundamental problem with generating income from artistic production. In a recent interview with the BBC Mick Jagger stated that he is rather skeptical of the current discussion about how musicians can earn money from selling recordings of their music. He observes that in the history of modern music, the period from 1970 to 1997 is about the only period that a substantial group of musicians managed to earn a living by selling music as a recorded good. This period probably needs to be seen as an exception, while we are currently treating it as the rule. So How do you value the production of cultural goods in society of resource abundance, and what economic mechanisms can reimburse people who do that? How do we regulate it or not? What's the point of value creation when everyone has access to everything? Creative Commons, copyright – neither are the final answer to that question. We need to rethink this not from a rights-based perspective, but from an economical perspective. So far we haven't found the business model that will solve these discussions.
Earning money by selling cultural goods, where I give you a cultural good and you give me money, and this ends up being a good deal for the artist, is the absolute exception. So it's probably more productive to look at what's wrong with copyright as an underlying system. Copyright currently justifies a simple binary transaction. I have cultural goods, you have money, and we do a proper exchange, or otherwise I'm in

violation of copyright. Given that everybody can make copies of pretty much anything, this is clearly not the smartest system for organizing knowledge transfer or the distribution of cultural goods. Creative Commons is built on top of the existing copyright system to offer ways to escape these effects.

Pre-Conference Seminar: Open Video Europe, 11 November:

Peter Kaufman on appreciating audiovisual value

Posted on November 14, 2010 by Carlosl

In the "open content, tools and technology" panel, right after Ben Moskowitz and Michael Dale, it came the turn for Peter Kaufman to talk about appreciating audiovisual value, and do his bit to *"achieve some positive social change within our lifetimes"*, as he saw the ultimate goal of the Economies of the Commons conference was.

The path to follow to achieve that social improvement, and the challenges we face are, in his own words, *"to make more good audiovisual material and tools more freely available for everyone"*, making it possible for everybody to speak in the language of video.

He continued to remind the audience that *"Wikipedia is the largest public educational commons"* (at least until the Smithsonian gigantic project finally takes off), as a starting point to bring an important point on the table: how the commons, the public domain and the market are wrongfully pitted against each other and how we stand to lose a lot if we isolate ourselves from business, from those building the infrastructure of the web. The counterpoint he proposes is a commitment from education, culture, justice…to not stand in isolated, but seek collective arrangements for true openness.

Luckily, he didn't stay in the shoulds and general ideas, but he dared giving five bullet points to consider in order to make them real:

1. Content needs to be more smart and self-aware. After all, we are in a scenario where all video material is archival material and online video will be, no doubt about it a big part of the future of our video.

So in order to make this content easy to share, reuse, remix across borders and languages, and so that it can break the ultimate barrier: making it readable not only by people, but also by machines, we have to make it also smart and self aware.

Machines will be reading, sorting, ranking…the video, and "if we spend attention in machine readability the assets discussed will become apropiately hyper valuable".

The good news at this point is that the big companies that control the market seem to be aware of it and seems like "intelligent" or "smart" are words we are going to see more and more in TV devices: you only need to have a look at the new products flooding all the gadget blogs and stores like GoogleTV ("Your TV just got smarter"), Intel's Smart TV, Youview (BBC's project Canvas), Samsung Smart TVs…

2. Search: Google & Google Images can search images by liscence type (so does flickr) and Wikimedia can suck in images from flickr liscenced with creative commons.

In order to achieve true openness and generate a good and complete educational open platform, video needs the same: searchability from google and aceessibility from wikipedia, and by video, I mean of course, open video.

3. Peter's third point is really interesting. He introduced how the Pandora project in America succeeds with its model of a very powerful recommendation engine based on the "music genome", that classifies each song with around 400 parameters/characteristics. He suggested creating a workgroup to start a similar system that can work with video.

4. Number for is (and had to be) money, as, afterall, the conference was about money. Today in the world, money from government funds, fundraisers, the Mozilla Foundation, philanthropy and many other sources is injected into de development and expansion of open video tools, standards, promotion and distribution…but it's still too small compared to the huge budgets of mainstream media and Hollywood. We are in a critical moment where, if the open video community is unable to incentivise the corporate world to get involved in open video, we will fall short in the attempt to build an open web.

5. In relation with that, we have to consider something that might give us the key to that connection with the corporate world: the web is a commercial universe, filled with ads in every corner of our browser, and that doesn't change because the video is open. The only problem is that all that revenue, produced out of our time and information, doesn't go to our bank accounts, or to the content creator's, but to Google.

But is there a way to take control over this market, that is, as Kaufman said, built over our stuff without us? The answer, guessing there is one, is maybe, but for that, we have to start appreciating the ecosystem of value that our material represents and we have to be more aware about what rights we want to give away before we go broke giving our culture away for free.

Peter B.Kaufman is the president and founder of Intelligent Television.
You can listen to the whole talk here.Part1Part2

The Open Video Alliance for an 'open' video ecosystem on the web

Posted on November 14, 2010 by Geertl

During the pre-conference about open video held at the media park in Hilversum, Ben Moskowitz, the general coordinator of the Open Video Alliance, presented his thoughts for an "open" video ecosystem by bringing technology, institutions and databases of video's together to make video on the web accessible, distributable, searchable and exchangeable. The open video alliance is a coalition of organizations and individuals devoted to creating and promoting free and open technologies, policies, and practices in online video.

Ben Moskowitz argues that we need an alternative for the video-on-demand technology we have today. These technologies are often proprietary, such as Realplayer in the early days of the web or the Flash video nowadays. Also, videos are not connected to the rest of the web. For example, you can link and embed YouTube videos but the content is disconnected, it's a Flash element in a website as a static black box. Furthermore, these technologies don't allow the audience to get really involved or engage with the content, much like on you tube where there's no real option for conversations in the comments. His primary complaint about current web video technology is that there's now the ability to extend the content within the video to the rest of the web.
Open technologies are critical for continuous innovation, especially with web video. The combination of open technology and best practices allows distributors to create a configurable space on which the content of videos is connected to sources outside of the video. The web allows for such technology by reconfiguring and reshaping traditional analog technologies, remediating them, and enhancing their functionality as they are freed form packaging, video containers, and channels. With the arrival of HTML-5, technologies such as JavaScript, the use of open standards, and open API's allow for new designs, which can be exploited to the ends of the distributor.
The arrival of HTML5 is an especially important development for Moskowitz since it makes video a first-class citizen on websites. He refers to the Mozilla Drumbeat project which supports open web initiatives. As described on their website the open web is participatory, transparent, decentralized and generative. Existing content and software can easily be spun into something new. A great example of this belief and web video is the Popcorn.js project, which allows a mash up of video and open API technology, which essentially connects content from around the web with the content inside the video. The Popcorn JavaScript can show and connect multiple elements from websites such as Wikipedia, Twitter, and Flickr. It triggers these elements based on the content in the video, which makes it much more dynamic as it extends the range and reach of video and allows the public to engage on different paths. As Moskovitz describes it "It's a webpage and not a crappy flash video, the potential for weaving video into the web is going to be amazing".
Another tool to make online video more accessible and searchable is the Universal Subtitles project which offers a tool to transcribe a video and connect to a larger community allowing translations of multiple languages. By doing so the content becomes searchable by the transcript. Another option for making video more searchable is the use of extensive metadata about the video. As an example, Moskovitz shows Metavid.org that contains a database of US Congress videos, which are searchable by the speakers name, the spoken text, the date, and metadata from outside sources.
To conclude, Ben Moskovitz advocates an open web standard for video so that the video weaves into the web pages just as images and text. Open technology is more flexible and adaptable, and by using open licensed media the content becomes more fluid. By combining these two, the web content can be, distributed, reused, adapted, and shared more effectively. For public broadcasters he advices to "embrace the commons" as he quotes Eirik Solheim from NRK (Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation) "you can't be the only provider of your content but you can be the best provider of your content".

Collaborative tools for videos on Wikipedia

Posted on November 14, 2010 by Geertl

Michael Dale is an advocate for open standard and free video formats for the web. The past two years he has lead open source development for video on Wikipedia. To realize open web video Dale has worked closely with the Mozilla Foundation, Kaltura, and the Open Video Alliance. During the open video pre-conference Michael provided the audience a first technical insight into the possibilities of open video and collaborative video editing tools for Wikipedia.
The traditional problem and struggle with online video on the web are the closed or licensed codec's and platforms such as the H.264 codec and Flash players. HTML5 provides the possibility to create open video platforms which is license free and is more open and adaptable compared to traditional flash websites. Flash can support a rich experience on websites and allows complex web design but the websites forms a closed system which doesn't allow others to use or reuse content. Another important aspect is the content itself, more content should be released under the Creative Commons license, especially videos in the public domain so they can be uses, re-used, and distributed more easily.
The Video on Wikipedia project aims for HTML players embedded on the Wikipedia pages to enhance the information with the moving image. In order to achieve this the Wikimedia foundation is working on tools which support users to collaborate on video editing, transcribing content in multiple languages, and to allow for more complex search queries by connecting related videos and metadata. As an example he uses Metavid.org, of which he is a co-founder, that contains a database of US Congress videos, which are searchable by the speaker's name, the spoken text, the date, and metadata from outside sources.
Recently the foundations released an early version of a HTML-5 sequencer which allows users to edit and render video in their browser by searching for public video sources. An example of an edited video for Wikipedia he showed a video which involves the cat (click *sequence editor*).
The presentation provided a technical insight in the new possibilities on the web when using the commons. The tools showed allowed the user to edit and add metadata to videos and reuse existing material into new community created videos. The projects of Wikimedia use open technologies and codec's, and license free content making it a practical case for the pre-conference attendees.

Video on Wikipedia – Ben Moskowitz and Michael Dale

Posted on November 14, 2010 by Serenal

Thursday 11 November, Hilversum

by Serena Westra

After the lunch, the pre-conference seminar continues with three parallel working groups. I joined the working group 'Video on Wikipedia', which was moderated by Ben Moskowitz and Michael Dale. This working group was held in a smaller room where all the attenders, about 14, sat around a table. Ben and Michael introduce themselves. Before starting the discussion on video on Wikipedia, they ask us to introduce ourselves and explain our interest in this workshop. There is a big variety of people in the room, from video journalists to hackers and from students to researchers.
Ben starts the discussion. He wants to get rid of the top-down structure of video and broadcasting, and spread video. But how can you do this? Open source software can play a significant role in the solution. 'We don't need the entire community to use open source software, as long as a part does.' There needs to be a standard system and browsers need to support it. The structures needs to be collaborative. Video is already used in Wikipedia. It is working, but can we go beyond it? There are three questions Ben Moskovitz and Michael Dale want to address in the discussion about video on Wikipedia.
First, how do we get content and where does it come from?
Some people in the room try to give an answer to this question, but it is hard to find one that fits. For example, the content can come from the users, like in YouTube, but as Ben says: 'Wikipedia will never be YouTube.' How can we convince the mass to spend time on video for Wikipedia? This is incredibly difficult, the tools are immature and there are some technical complications and Wikimedia cultural implications. 'The people [of Wikimedia Foundation] are very consistent, could be good or bad.' Another problem is that the best users who contribute to Wikipedia, are a bit resistant about video coming on Wikipedia. Some think it should be purely text based. Geert Lovink disagrees with this point: 'It was never purely texted based, there has always been use of images and maps'.
There are some other solutions, like Geert Lovink suggests: 'Maybe we can start with some experts as an example, like TED does only in a slightly different way. It needs to be open.' Some one else agrees that there

are some good examples that work already, like Open Images and Beeld en Geluid. Maybe we can work with them?
Another problem is that if you want to build on this software, you need a really solid base. Wikipedia doesn't really have this. Do you want to change this too? As Michael Dale points out, Wikipedia is experimenting with software to solve this problem. This is more valuable that something perfect planned to him. Video should be accessible for people all over the world.
The second question of the addressed in the workshop is: What should/will be the relationship between the encyclopaedia and video?
Wikipedia is a genre, it is relatively fixt. Video is going to blow this away. It has to be verified, but how do you use the Wikipedia policy on video? Is it own research? You filmed it. How can you use NPOV [natural point of view] on video? Maybe the existing rules need to be set a side for video. For example, the users could decide if something is neutral. Or, the video can be seen as an artefact. They have a specific point of view, but are a part of a certain context.
What the role of video on Wikipedia will be is a difficult question. The video can be an illustration, supplanting the article or be something else? The people in the workshop can't come to a perfect answer to this question. I guess we have to wait and see how it will turn out in a few years.
The last question addressed in the workshop was: Can the collaborative editing model work with video?
Michael wonders if the open, collaborative editing model of Wikipedia can really work on video. Ben answering this question: 'no, I'm sorry Michael but I don't think so.' But Michael is not so sure about this: 'the tools can change as well.' For example, the collaborative model can be realised through editing the basic time line. Everybody can provide a time line; maybe an user can choose the best one. Another example, suggested by Michael, is to create subsections. When you divide the video in smaller bits, which people can own, it is easier to use a collaborative model.
Beside that, according to Geert Lovink, tv, radio and film has always been collaborative. That is what the credits is all about: to see who collaborated.
Another attender of the workshop suggests the sandbox idea: person A has an idea and makes a raw version, person B has a the right technical equipment and can make the movie thanks to the creativity of person A.
However, the problem is not a technical one, as Michael discovered, but a social one. Will the users come? And how will they use it? According to Ben, video will be based on conflict. The video whit the most time and effort invested in it will win.
To find out how video on Wikipedia really works, the group is divided in two parts. The first group is taking a look at the technical elements of Wikipedia, the second group wants to post a video on Wikipedia. By the end of the workshop, they have uploaded two videos. One of them replaced an existing article on the online encyclopaedia, as a small experiment how it works and how long it stands. The second video addresses a new subject on Wikipedia where no article existed about yet.
As Ben and Michael concluded in their workshop, the direction of video on Wikipedia is not clear yet and will show in one and a half or two years. I think we just have to wait and see!
example of video on wikipedia: Polar bear

Why HTML 5? The Possibilities of HTML 5 Video

Posted on November 14, 2010 by Elias|

Hay Kranen gave an introduction of HTML 5 and the possibilities this new language introduces. In short, why HTML 5 video use?
There are several benefits when it comes to the use of video via HTML 5:

- Simple, just like HTML
- Nu plugin hell
- One codebase for everything
- Multiple competing implementation
- Performance
- Ready for mobile future
- Works on iPad (iPhone, Ipod Touch)

Maybe interesting to mention is that browser Google Chrome supports all codex concerning video, like: OGG Theora, H264 / MPEG 4, WebM.
JavaScript on HTML 5 video elements give a simple, cross-browser possibility to make a video interactive.

For universal video interfacing we need a generatic API for online material which will be universal supported very easy. One generatic jQuery plugin: jquery.htmlplayer could be the solution for the future.
For more information follow @Huskyr on Twitter or visit Github for the presentation.

Author: Elias van Hees

Working Group: Open Distribution Models for Broadcasting

Posted on November 14, 2010 by Stijniel

People are slowly coming back into the room after the lunch break. The most popular workgroup, called Open Distribution Models for Broadcasting, caught the attention of about twenty people. A video call with Bregtje van der Haak live from Hong Kong is set up, as she is joining us in the discussion the first half hour or so.
Bregtje introduces the project she worked on with the VPRO. It included making three documentaries (about urbanization) and distributing them via the web. Users can download the content for whatever purpose they liked, but preferably for educational purpose (as is the nature of the content). The project was an experiment to see how people react to free content from a broadcasting company, and also to see if dvd sales would be affected by it. And in fact, sales were not affected. The reactions were very positive. The first documentary about Johannesburg was downloaded 45.000 times, the second 8.000, and the third one was more popular again, downloaded 43.000 times. All in all, the project was a great success. Bregtje feels like this content is for the people, for common use, and their mission is to get it out to them. There is only one downside to this way of distribution: you don't know how people are using the content and where in the world your material ends up. The 'nachleben' of the material is not (yet) recorded, although it would be most interesting!
What is very important to Bregtje van der Haak is that people should embrace new ways of distributing and even living in this changing world. Teaching at the City University in Hong Kong, the difference between China/Asia and the Netherlands/Europe is striking. In China, people are adapting to the new technologies in their benefit, while in Holland people are afraid to use it, feeling threatened or nostalgic. Bregtje emphasizes that the world is changing and that we can't turn our backs to it, for that will never change the fact that the world is, in fact, changing.
Also, Bregtje feels that the licensing problems are an issue, just like Bram Tullemans. For a program about Californian Dreaming under a Creative Commons license, the producers wanted to use the official song. However, the music company was not pleased. I paraphrase: "It's kind of like being held hostage by the music industries… There should be a more rational deal available where everybody gains and music is widely available."
Bregtje stays with us for another bit during the discussion, while Paul Keller and Peter Kaufman take over the session. Jamie King from VODO is called to the seat behind the webcam and he and Bregtje discuss licensing issues. Jamie says that one could never live up to every license agreement in the entire world. You have to own something to distribute it freely. If you don't own it, you practically can't spread it on the global web. Bregtje agrees. She says it's unfair that we are allowed to quote words, but not video material. The whole purpose of culture is to be able to be moved by it and to use and spread it as you like, in order to bring it to the attention of others.
Paul Keller asks what Bregtje thinks is the best place to start this discussion of open (video) licensing. Bregtje says the time is now, as companies struggle with loss in budget. She says the Raad voor Cultuur, commissariaat voor de media (Media Authority) is a good place to start; as high as possible.
After a few more thoughts the video call was disconnected and the floor is given to Peter Kaufman, president and founder of Intelligent Television. He likes to encourage us to explore new possibilities at different levels. He shows us the closing credits of a short film: "Knowledge Is – a short film about opening up access to archives",(skip to 10.06 min.) a JISC Film & Sound Think Tank production. What is special about the film is that it consists of material from different sources, under different licenses, which are shown at the end of the film. This way, in the future, people can disassemble the video and use the clips that have the proper license for their distribution purpose and method. Kaufman thinks that in the future, most users will be able to remix

the content they encounter, and that it will become a common use of interaction. By labeling the content from now on, this manner of using material will be stimulated.
Then the discussion takes a different turn, addressing the question of who are going to set open video spreading into motion. From the audience comes the suggestion it should start with young filmmakers. Paul Keller explores the possibilities in having a dedicated master class. Peter Kaufman suggests the opening of a new studio working in a whole new way: open and available. This resulted in the idea of a collaboration between old type and new type studio's, which will eventually merge and evolve into a desirable form. The discussion is closed with the remark that not every bit of material is suitable for open licensing. Think of documentaries featuring witnesses or other privacy concerns. Also, the Olympic Games sports material isn't likely to every be released under a Creative Commons license, according to Paul Keller. There are just too many rules and limits and licenses and rights to be taken into account.
The discussion is closed and idea's are exchanged during another break, after which the final closing discussion will take place. Satisfied and full of fresh information, the participants of the working group leave the room for some coffee where they joyfully reunite with the other conference participants.

Bram Tullemans from NPO: License issues complicate open video exhibition

Posted on November 13, 2010 by Stijniel

As policy adviser of distribution technologies for the NPO, 'Nederlandse Publieke Omroep' (Dutch Public Broadcasting), Bram Tullemans finds himself situated at the heart of the debate on open video distribution. He has been occupied with Uitzending Gemist, a Dutch service website which provides television programs from the public channels online short after they were broadcasted on tv. After YouTube, Tullemans points out, Uitzendinggemist.nl is the biggest video platform for the Dutch, receiving thirteen million views each month. Bram Tullemans is also exploring new possibilities for distributing video through other platforms and formats such as DivX TV, Bombykol and interactive tv.
Being the last speaker of the session and assuming that people are eager to get to lunch, Bram announces not to rattle about too long. He introduces to his audience the way the Dutch broadcasting system works. When an emerging channel has a certain amount of subscribers, they can start their own broadcasting company. This way, public channels broadcast a wide range of programs about different kinds subjects with different points of view. The umbrella instance of all those loose companies is the NPO. It's goal, according to Tullemans, is "to maximize our audience with diverse content. We don't want people to only see the blockbusters, but also give alternatives". While this diverse content is the strong point of the NPO, it is also its weakness when it comes to publishing on the web.

Because, as Tullemans points out, the main issue for content distribution is licensing. Agreements, distribution rights, licenses. They complicate the open exhibition of streamed or downloadable video's. Producers will charge far more if their content is being placed on the web, because it counts as an extra, very large distribution platform.
NPO doesn't program the used software itself. It judges the quality of the Open Source Software (OSS) it wants to use according to four properties. First, according to the available rights and possibilities the software includes. Second, the ease of use. Third is manageability and adaptation possibilities, and fourth is the cost of use in context. When an OSS is picked, it will have to be changed and adapted to fit the needs and purposes of the NPO. At this point NPO hires people to solve those problems. Bram Tullemans explains the workflow further: first is the content production, mostly by external (and/or foreign) producers. Then the production environment is established. Next is the content management by the NPO and the people they hired for adaptation solutions. Then comes the distribution of the end result: the audiovisual product. In this step, the old fashioned ways as well as the new ones are taken in account. Lastly, the audiovisual webplayers are designed to fit the concerning content. This can mean adding extra layers of information, which will be important in the future, or imposing limits on the availability of the player, for example from different countries.
In the past, a lot of effort has been put into MMbase software. Also, they use the engine behind popular websites such as YouTube and Wikipedia: Lighttpd. Now the technical department of the NPO is

experimenting with Tribler Software (known for its collaboration with the Blender Foundation) and is looking forward to using HTML5. With the latter, no player has to be downloaded for a user to be able to see the video's, for it has a built-in browser player. However, the at the NPO, they don't want to be portrayed as "leechers of open source software". It is only resourceful and wonderful that the hard work of the communities is being put to use. If you keep in mind that communities can dissolve unexpectedly.
The message I feel Bram Tullemans wants to get across is that through the sharp-witted use of (open source) software, as much content can be delivered to as much people as possible. However, legal issues at every level (form the production of the content to the embedding of the resulting video by a user) can stand in the way of this distribution. It is not only necessary to shape the software into a suitable form for large scale video distribution, but also to outsmart and solve the licensing problems.

Vodo and the Sintel Project: The Commons and the Community

Posted on November 14, 2010 by Geertl

The pre-conference in Hilversum provided a stage for Dolf Veenvliet as member of the Blender Organization, and Jamie King of the P2P sharing platform VODO to talk about the commons, crowdfunding, and the community. The two presentations provided a perfect showcase of how open standards can provide a platform for creating and distributing content.
The Blender Organization used the free open source 3D content creation suite Blender for creating a 3D animation. Sintel is a independently produced short film, initiated by the Blender Foundation as a means to further improve and validate the Blender application. The project was funded by donations from the community and several financial film funds in The Netherlands.
The Blender community is really involved and are eager to contribute to the application, the community itself, and the ongoing projects. Not only in a financial sense by funding the production, but also by providing models when the team didn't had the resources to create them themselves. Dolf Veenvliet is confident that people are willing to invest in cool projects and are willing to get involved; crowdfunding is the new way for creating a production.
The Sintel team involved the community by giving away stuff for free, such as models used in the movie, and by keeping the community updated about the progress. In exchange they asked the community to create models to use in the film. Although the quality of the models varied, the community got really involved by having a change to make it into the final credits. Another important aspect of the Sintel project was the fact that everything was done for free. As Veenvliet notes, when you do things for free, people give you free stuff as well.
A community is needed before you can ask for investments and crowdfunding, and not the other way around. By doing so the community is willing to contribute in the form of funds, models, and more importantly promotion. Sintel is distributed over the Internet using different channels of which some are initiated by the community. You can watch the movie on YouTube (over 1 million views), but to download the file the Blender Foundation reached out to the BitTorrent network. BitTorrent is the perfect P2P technology for the free distribution of large files.
This is where VODO comes in. VODO.net is a platform which allows users to make donations for a film in exchange for extra access and material. The concept deviates from the traditional distribution system by offering the movie for free using the BitTorrent protocol and asking the community for donations. For example the movie The Yes Man Fix the World made 33.000 thousand dollars in 6 weeks and 1 million people downloaded the movie. This was after its initial success in theaters and festivals around the world.
Jamie King gives several reasons for the success of the concept. First of all it involves social distribution. Bandwith bills are none because it is using domestic internet connections by using the BitTorrent protocol so the distribution costs are zero. Secondly, the concept of crowdfunding asks for donations but offers the movie for free. And finally, the crowd is being reached by using the same channels such as PirateBay and IsoHunt. By rewarding the community on VODO if they promote a production it creates value for both the producer and the consumers.
There are however some remarks. At the moment crowdsourcing or crowdfunding is still too small for full-length animation movies. Also, crowd sourcing usually only provides you an income after completion. Although Sintel was able to raise money beforehand, it's difficult to create a community who's is willing to fund a project which still has to be made. Both presenters acknowledge this is easier after your first success and you created a community. For this reason VODO is creating an auction function on their website which allows producers to get funding in exchange for a stake in the work. A concept which is successfully applied by SellaBand.Jamie King sees VODO as an alternative for traditional movie production and video distribution which taps right into the core of the other presentation during the pre-conference.

Closing discussion and closing remarks – Pre-Conference Seminar

Posted on November 11, 2010 by Serenal

By Serena Westra

Before the Pre-conference Seminar in Hilversum of the Economies of the Commons ended, a closing discussion with closing remarks and a short summary of the workshops was held. Ben Moskowitz was the first speaker who showed the results of the workshop.

Ben Moskowitz gave a workshop with Michale Dale on Video on Wikipedia. According to Ben, they didn't achieve anything tangible, but they did talk a lot about the possibilities and the future of video on Wikipedia. Three questions were addressed:

1. How do you build that pool of content?

There are some problems in the relationship with video and Wikipedia. Where does the content come from? Open archives have been discussed and open images. One of the problems is that 'stuff just gets deleted by users'.

2. What should/will be the relationship between the encyclopaedia and video?

In the workshop we discussed the role of video on Wikipedia. Will it be illustrating, supplanting or something else?

Can the collaborative editing model of Wikipedia work with video?

> The existing model of Wikipedia is based on a collaborative model in which users can add information, react to it and change it. But is that possible with video? And what would the social structures of that look like?

After a discussion, the group tried to work with video on Wikipedia. A part of the group uploaded two videos on Wikipedia. One of them replaced an existing article on the online encyclopaedia, as a small experiment how it works and how long it stands. The second video addressed a new subject on Wikipedia where no article existed yet, there is only a video now on the subject.

As you can see, there are a lot of questions when it comes to video on Wikipedia. Ben Moskowitz thinks that video can encourage visual learning, 'that is the most exiting thing'. It can encourage education by having a pool of researchers. Video has to be free to use, free to share and able to give something back.

Ben finishes his presentation with a request: 'Let us know what you want to see.'

The second workshop was about open distribution models for broadcasting. Peter Kaufman and Paul Keller moderated this session, but Bregtje van der Haak joined them through Skype.

Bregtje is a film maker who made a lot of documentaries about the Arabic World. In the Skype talk she talked about documentaries that are entirely unencumbered by right restrictions. These videos had thousands of downloads, California Dreaming even broke down the server because it was so popular. The re-use online and the free content did not affect the sales. She explored the possibilities of a new studio and allowing people to create there own video.

After the Skype interview, there were some questions addressed like: are there benefits when videos aren't completely open? Why do we need to own things, own images? Who are our targets, a whole country or just movie makers? Paul Keller posed questions about a sort of master class, or perhaps even a studio.

The third workshop of the pre-conference was about HTML5 Video 101: exploring the possibilities of the HTML5 video element. Hay Kranen was the moderator and gave a small summary.

In the workshop they talked about the technical things on how you can use HTML5 for video. The problem with most existing software is that they all use different interface. HTML5 is simple and can be used on different media with one codebase for everything.

Paul Keller, the moderator of the closing session continues. 'As you can see, it is not easy to get a discussion started about this three subjects and workshops, maybe we could instead have a discussion on the relevance of this event.' With this event, the producers and speakers really tried to bring this discussion about open video. If you look at the American contributors, open video is really an American thing. The pre-conference was held in Hilversum to look how the people who come from the broadcasting environment react to it. It is more important than ever to combine the ideas of open video and traditional broadcasting video and come up with a good system in order to get the message out. It is a shame not too much Dutch broadcasters attended at the conference. Hopefully will the people who are here take this information back to their workplace instead.

He ends the day with a request: 'I hope we can discuss some of the questions during this conference, or maybe even with drinks.'

Conference Panels 12 November

"Our common mission" – Charlotte Hess as keynote speaker

Posted on November 14, 2010 by Lisal

What is scholarly communication? Should higher education be considered a public good? How will we be able to structure the zettabytes of the digital universe? What is the trend in open access and public depositing? Scholar Charlotte Hess addresses her main concerns regarding digital commons, and knowledge commons in particular. As an Associate Dean for Research, Collections, and Scholarly Communication Administration at Syracuse University Library, Hess talks the audience through the path she endeavoured upon in coming to understand the issues of digital sources and to her hands-on experiences with *constructing a commons.*

It all started in 1989, when Hess attended a workshop held by Elinor and Vincent Ostrom at Indiana University. The Ostroms elaborated on their breakthrough activities concerning *commons*, which appparently had no political agenda. Both were much more interested in trying to understand what works within the *commons.* How is it that complete strangers can come together to make and share knowledge? 1990 saw the evolution of collective action, where property rights no longer seemed to be about ownership but about access and harvesting.

However, there was no precedent for handling today's amounts of data. The digital universe had become incomprehensible. Hess believes we should therefore not feel ashamed for not having come up with the perfect system of infrastructure (yet). She explains how new technologies, and in this case information technology in the early 19990s, disrupt existing systems, for example the ecology. Reordering of things becomes essential, because the technology has changed the way we think, work, live..

As her case study, Hess takes on research libraries, which should be based on open access, *commons* and suitable infrastructures for digital information. To start with, it is important to define their purpose: "To collect, organize, preserve and make available the scholarly and cultural records on earth." In the digital age, however, libraries continue to engage in analogue-based systems and are not tending to the present needs of researchers and culture. While there are now various digital packages available, all based on different systems, browsers etc., libraries are primarily spending their time helping people find things within their collections. Hess notes that this situation is true for all kinds of media: film, television and so on. Thus, the focus should no longer be on "producing" the databases themselves, but on making the data findable.

Hess zooms in on the collection, preservation and distribution of scholarly sources. Who is responsible for them? Are there global and local *commons*? Her definition of these sources supports her argument: "Any piece of knowledge needed for the creation of new knowledge." Doesn't that make higher education and research a public good? They are a responsibility of all stakeholders, especially the government. How can we engage the public? However, it is extremely difficult to think of higher education and knowledge-making in these terms, considering library "goods" are still "closed".

Knowledge should be openly accessible. In a way, Hess believes, we are adapting to the "new normal". For instance, with regards to higher education, this means that we accept the fact that college tuitions are increasing. As an alternative, she posits, universities should be engaged in continuous fundraising and need to operate more like businesses. They should be seeking corporate partnerships. The challenge lies in how we can measure the impact of research, on the public, on policies, on local economies and so on.

Hess goes on to question the nature of scholarly communication. An example is peer-review publications, which are not needed to make a living. Universities buy up the dissertations and abstracts coming out of their own (partly) funded research, simply to be allowed to submit them to their databases. A system which Hess feels is very much skewed. How can we ever talk of open access within this context, because again the focus lies on ownership? Libraries remain to lag behind the developments of the growing digital universe.

Starting in 1991 and going live in 2001, Hess and the Olstroms set up the Digital Library of the Commons, which entails full text *commons*. The most interesting questions popped up and were addressed: Who are our users? What binds them as a community? How are we going to continue to organize, disseminate and sustain the digital network/*commons*? How will we be able to select what we need out of all the digital information that is on offer? Especially, what does the world need to know?

There are issues that will lead to success: Innergenerational equity and intellectual property, in addition to a feeling of responsibility towards the future. However, the problem remains in how are we going to grasp the digital universe. We don't have a system for it (yet). Can we build a repository library to systematize all the electronic data? Hess has been talking mostly about text, but she notes that we should also take into consideration the vast amounts of data in the form of video, images etc.

The trend is open access and public depositing, Hess claims. And it will definitely be okay if our work herein is a work-in-progress. As long as we all work together, because this is "our common mission".

Charlotte Hess concludes her talk by addressing the audience in her gratitude to be surrounded by people who are just as enthusiastic and committed to (the benefits of) open access. She leaves off with a few suggestions for further reading: the Olstroms' work on *polycentricity* and *metropolitan government.*
Written by Lisa van Pappelendam

Joost Poort: Conference Keynote Address – Invited Respondents

Posted on November 13, 2010 by Fennekel

Joost Poort responses on the key note presentation of Charlotte Hess from an economic perspective. Poort is Economic Researcher at SEO on the market structure and regulation of infrastructures. He explains that economist have a very strict definitions of public goods and that digitization turned many culture goods into public goods. The easy answer on the question of ownership that arises is to ask cultural finance, but it is not just about shifting money, it is also on welfare deduction. The consequence of deduction can easily be explained by the light house as an easy example of a public good. You can't exclude people to use it. But even then, the people of the harbor has to fund it.
There are some other problems we see nowadays in the cultural sector. There is hope for a more or less voluntary contribution to a public good, when the users value it enough to give a contribution or donation. In addition Poort says that public information should be freely available.
To Poort the idea of the commons are changing trough technology. This change is notable in the cultural industry where a lot is happening at the same time while sharing and cost redundant go hand in hand. According to Poort the definition of a public good is non rival and non exclusive in economic terms. Digitalization turned information sources into public goods. Traditional public goods are in the domain of public finance, the transformation from commercial goods to public goods does not mean the goods have to be under public funding. A public good is never for free, a lot of money is involved of often hidden costs. Although this debate is not about equity, it is about public funding not solving the issue of public goods if all else fails. The example of the light house is given here. If the harbor stops funding the light house, who will lead the way for the ships to come and make use of the provided services the whole community benefits from? And when funding stops, different incomes should be explores just like the music business does not urn their income on selling CD's, the money is earned nowadays with music concerts and performances.
To Poort a commons is an essence, rival but not exclusive therefore it is according to Poort probably not possible to give a closed definition in an economic perspective of the commons. The more good is shared, the more good is available while the value increases. But even if a public good is free, people are willing to pay if they can see ad value in it. A large percentage of people still buy CD's after downloading, therefore a public good does not have to be for free. A suggested model can be of sponsoring or subscription such as the case with online music service Spotify. Or in the case user terms a trusted, save and easy payment structure such as the Apple app store can bring about payment for common goods. For Poort, public information should be free of use, including all information which is already paid for. But what happens if a common good is partly funded?
A wider perspective on the commons of public information Poort mentions the costs of privacy in accessing this information and protection of surveillance. When information is free of use and aces, it can also be used for different, including negative purposes. A unwanted effect of free information for Poort is the car number plate mobile text massages request for car prices. Everyone who is interested can find out the price of a random car. The debate of privacy and additional costs is slightly mentioned with this example.
Poort responses on the question that key note speaker Charlotte Hass raises of the role and goal for the library in this digital era. He states that the public libraries in the age of the E-Books technology will change and replace the old model for traditional library models do not work in the digital age as he says, *'I wanted to rent an e-book but it was out of stock*'. Bas Savenije, Director General of the Dutch Royal Library in the Netherlands KB, responses to this comment by stating that the duty of the library should not only be to make E-Books available, but also to support the community in providing information. Public libraries should be more of a platform and service provider than finding place. Libraries should answer to the new need of the public to show their value to the commons.

Sustainability of the Free and Open: From Terra Nullius to the New Commons

Posted on November 14, 2010 by Carolinel 1 Comment

by Caroline Goralczyk

In his talk on the challenges of sustaining common goods in the digital era, Yann Moulier-Boutang, editor of the Quarterly French Review MULTITUDES and professor at the University of Technology of Compiègne, discussed the fate of digital commons by comparing them to the ancient commons of pre-colonial primitive accumulation, such as fishing, hunting and trade.

In reference to Elinor Ostrom and her studies, Moulier-Boutang pointed out that the absence of private property or state allocation of goods does not automatically mean that bundles of collective rights cannot ensure the sustainability of common goods. As cases of traditional American tribes have shown, this kind of common rights system (based on collective usus, fructus, access and harvesting) has in the past been clearly more efficient and sustainable than any kind of state or private ownership. Once the colonizational era ushered in, the principle of 'terra nullius', in other words the idea of a 'land that belongs to no one' was introduced in order to expropriate aboriginial groups and exploit available resources on this land that from then on seemingly had no owner.

When taking the leap to today's digital commons, Moulier-Boutang refers to the importance of the Gutenberg revolution and its effects on making knowledge goods abundant and scarcity dwingling. Starting from this point on, immaterial goods such as science and knowledge in books where part of the public domain and thus, patenting and copyrighting were introduced for the sake of finding a compromise between state interests and the private interest of the author and creator.

However, economic sustainability for producers of knowledge was not easy to be ensured in the long run, as state subventions for authors, scientists and artists could not simply be generalized and the market provided the same chance of revenue for everyone of these creators. The solution introduced for this was hybrid: big infrastructures were funded by the state to ensure fundamental art and educational culture, whereas applied science and entertainment culture was handed over to the economics of the market.

With the introduction of Intellectual Property Rights, which included various forms of branding like copyrighting, the designation of origin and patenting, a first attempt was made to commodify knowledge and ensure revenue based on legal protection. However, as Moulier-Boutang points out, only 5-15% of these patents were really producing revenue and only one tenth of authors and creators could make a living with that.

So, how does the notion of Intellectual Property Rights survive in a digital environment were it is all about making things open and free? According to Moulier-Boutang, the digitalization of content has lead to a major crisis for IPR and cultural industries that are being challenged by new technical possibilities of cheating on property rights. The digital revolution obviously made the reproduction of images, sounds, words (photography, TV, magnetophone, video) easier – combined with the possibility of storing data on a personal computer, at last, the digital era created an unfeasible environment for the concept of IPR.

According to Moulier-Boutang, the de-materialization of goods through going digital could have lead to the collapse of capitalism as the share of public goods such as knowledge became gigantic. However, this was not the case. What applies to the digital techniques and the survival of its economy is the discovery of externalities. This new kind of capitalism promoted by digitalization is living through positive externalities whose emblems are search engines like Google, social networks and prosumer goods such as the Ipod and the Ipad.

In the field of knowledge production, informational effects are then achieved through an economy of contribution and P2P – this model, referred to as "cognitive capitalism" by Moulier-Boutang, captures these network externalities to build up various kinds of audiences in order to sell anything as a derivative product or service, amongst others personal data and information on real networks.

As for the sustainability of the open and free in the digital era, Moulier-Boutang assumes that Copyleft and Creative Commons are the only solution as the radical 'terra nullius' approach to open source is facing two essentially major problems: the system of a 'land that belongs to no one' is based on spoiling, wasting, and it does not provide substantial revenue for the true creative class. In Moulier-Boutang's words "we exchange the sterile class of the intermediaries such as cultural industries for the bling bling class of publicity and mass audience" (which is provided by Google and Facebook for instance).

In conclusion, the digital era is based on the importance and re-evaluation of externalities that have to be achieved through new ways of managing the domain of goods and services that were formerly protected by IPR and have now fallen into the public domain or open source. The main preoccupation is sustainability which means avoiding the predatory use of the new digital commons. According to Moulier-Boutang, the two ways of ensuring revenue are then either obtained through an open source approach as for instance Google

accessing our data freely or through Creative Commons and copyleft, which means sharing all liberties within the community.

A contribution to a critique of free culture: From Anti-Copyright to the Creative Anti-Commons

Posted on November 14, 2010 by Ilektral 2 Comments
Dymitri Kleiner is a software developer working on projects that investigate the political economy of the internet, and the ideal of workers' self-organization of production as a form of class struggle. Born in the USSR, Dmytri grew up in Toronto and now lives in Berlin. He is a founder of the Telekommunisten Collective, which provides internet and telephone services, as well as undertakes artistic projects that explore the way communications technologies have social relations embedded within them, such as deadSwap (2009) and Thimbl (2010). Kleiner's latest project however was the writing of "The Telekommunist Manifesto", a book published by the Institute of Network Cultures of Amsterdam and launched in the Economies of Commons 2 conference at De Balie, Amsterdam, on Friday the 12th of November, 2010. Even though, Dmytri Kleiner introduced himself as a hacker or an amateur writer and not as an academic, his work stimulated an interesting and rather intense discussion.
In his talk in the session "Critique of the "Free and Open", Kleiner follows the track from Anti-Copyright to the Creative Anti-Commons and presented it to the audience as a tragedy in three parts, which are described below.
Kleiner opened his talk claiming that copyright was not created to empower artists. Instead, it was created by the bourgeoisie to embed cultural production in an economic system that encourages the theft of the surplus value. In this context, the notion of "author" was invented just to justify the making of property out of cultural works.
Further on, he presented the three parts of the "tragedy":
ACT 1: ANTI-COPYRIGHT- A proletarian movement
Anti-copyright is a proletarian or anti- capitalist movement, embraced by labor struggles, that opposes mightily to the existence of the individual author. It is based on the ideal of a common culture with no distinction between producers and consumers. An ideal that makes it incompatible with the needs of dominant Capitalism. Consequently, Anti-copyright could never be seen as nothing more than a threatening, radical fringe.
ACT 2: COPYLEFT – Invasion of the Bourgeoisie
Copyleft on the other hand, an alternative form of dissent to copyright that emerged with the development of Free Software, is fully compatible both to the contemporary economic system and to Bourgeois capitalism. The reason is simple: Software is capital. Producers depend on it so that they can produce and make profit out of the circulation of the generated consumer goods. Free software's sustainability is based on the fact that it is largely funded by corporations, since it's cheaper and more flexible compared to software developed from scratch.
ACT 3: THE CREATIVE COMMONS –The author reborn as Useful Idiot
Both Anti-copyright and Copyleft celebrated the death of the author. In the *Creative Commons* model however, that was boosted by the success of the Free Software Movement "the author is reborn as useful idiot". He can't reserve "all rights" as copyright suggested, but only "some rights", including the options of "Non Derivative" and "Non Commercial". The paradox of the Creative Commons, as presented by Dmytri Kleiner, is that the consumer is deprived from his right to become a producer and that the "Free Works" are not actually free, but private. Thus, the "Commons" turns into an "*Anti-Commons*", where free sharing encounters constantly the barrier of incompatible licenses.
COPY-JUST-RIGHT
Developing his thought on the Creative Commons, Dmytri Kleiner claims that it is not an example of Anti-copyright or of Copyleft but a case of *Copy-just-right*: the model is based on content distribution but the "mechanical royalties" are being eliminated. However, he comes up with the antidote: *Copy-far-left*.
COPY-FAR-LEFT: THE ANTIDOTE
Copy-far-left, acknowledging that neither Anti-Copyright not Copyleft can provide a sustainable solution for economic support of cultural producers, brings a new perspective: the Non-Commercial clause used by some creative commons license can be sustained but with limitations. Copy-far-left suggests that commons based commercial use should be allowed explicitly to Co-operatives, Collectives, Non-profits and

independent producers and not to profit seeking organizations. That way, free licensing remains a source of funding, while consumers regain the right to become producers, as long as they don't become exploiters.
In his epilogue, Dmytri Kleiner points out that in order to have a free culture we have to assert a free society. Cultural workers have to work in solidarity with other workers on that big idea.
By Ilektra Pavlaki

Death Knell for Open Politics

Posted on November 14, 2010 by Caroline 1 Comment
Open source, open government, open culture – as Nate Tkacz, PhD at the University of Melbourne points out in his talk, the ubiquity of 'openness' as a master category of politics in network cultures turns into a multidimensional, and even more into a political term in the debate on the free and open. With referring to historical notions of openness, Tkacz makes some critical statements on the function of the open with particularly discussing it on the basis of Karl Popper's work on 'The Open Society and its Enemies".
Nate Tkacz's research interest lies in investigating the political dynamic of Open Projects, which are projects influenced by the principles and production models of Free and Open Source Software, but translated into different domains. When making the reference to Popper, he introduces the thought of the 'open' being connected to politics and mass understanding. Karl Popper, who referred to the open society as an entity contrary to totalitarianism, finds a close relation to the economics of Friedrich Hayek, who claimed that a decentralisation of markets was crucial as the inability to be certain of knowledge required openness as opposed to planned economy.
While 'openness' became a political term and open source the model of making things and grounding ideas, there is a problematic distinction between the concept of the open and lived open society. As neoliberalism ushered in with the 1980s and the ideas of open competition, open standards and open markets were more than ever on the fore, the concept of this openness also applied to the Internet which finally turned this hype of liberalism against the model of intellectual property that would close down environments and be contradictory to the 'open'.
When outlining different types of 'open', Nate Tkacz asks the question which is central to his talk: How is it even possible to criticize the 'open'? When thinking of open being oppositional to totalitarianism and connected to open systems of life, this question seems paradoxical when trying to criticize it. However, the term can be used in different ways and by different movements. To illustrate the political nature of the open, Tkacz portrays several groupings that are all based on transparency and the idea of the free and open: Google, Mark Zuckerberg, Barack Obama, Lawrence Lessig with the idea of free culture, Hardt and Begri and the Tea Party as an Open Source Movement. In conclusion, the paradoxical nature of the open is that the open society is not open anyway, but it is also a side of politics and conflicts.
by Caroline Goralczyk

Simona Levi: "Power is always using the name of freedom to do the nasty thing"

Posted on November 15, 2010 by Emina
Last, but surely not least in the session of "Critique of the Free and Open" is Simona Levi, multidisciplinary artist, director of Conservas and arts festival INn MOTION. She is also co-founder of EXGAE and organiser of the Free Culture Forum Barcelona.

Earlier, professor Yann Moulier-Boutang, Nate Tkacz and Dymitri Kleiner talked about the (Creative) commons, the capitalist industry behind it and the public domain in trying to define 'free and open'. Simona agrees with that 'the open and free' have to be discussed, but she also, being a profound activist, stresses that we have to fight for our civil right in a digital era.

Propaganda and fear

Simona addresses the politics behind legislation that prohibits or limits sharing: Laws that are against piracy. The propaganda that is accompanying these laws install and provocate fear for not being free, while paradoxically at the same time taking the freedom to create, share and innovate away. Simona explains that we shouldn't therefor be surprised to see the (ab)use of the word freedom by the Tea Party (in an earlier presentation by Nate Tkacz) or by Berlusconi and his 'People of Liberty'-party, these are the politics behind freedom.

The new role of the artist

One of the main arguments of the capitalist industry is that free means free in the sense that no money will be earned by the artist. "Artists will starve and everything will become a mess." However, Simona explains that this is simply not true. Free doesn't mean that you don't have to pay the value of the thing. During the INn MOTION festival, for example, every artist was paid.

So, the discussion isn't really about money, it's about cultural consumption. We shouldn't discuss what we can do to feed the artist, but how the artists can capture the core of the problem and attribute to the revolution. Artist will have to go back to their roots and away from the multinational. They have to understand that they are the base of "cleaning the consciousness". Meaning that they should fulfill their duty in transforming the brain and reclaim this privilege that is taken over by propaganda. "That's why artists are there. If not, fuck the artist".

"We can not fuck around with the free and open"

Once more Simona stresses the importance of defending the Internet from the hands of those that are trying to limit our liberty. Action needs to be taken to define our own definition of free and open. Sharing in this sense is very important, according to Simona, because it lies at the base of all innovation, creation and education. "How else can we build a common imaginary that will lead us to victory? We ourselves have to force the government, Microsoft and others to enable us to share, create and truly be free."

Simona wraps up with the words "Power is always using the name of freedom to do the nasty thing."

Toghether we can change this if we're prepared to fight.

Take a look at the various projects Simona Levi is involved with to see the practical and critical side of fighting for freedom and openness:

- FC Forum's Charter: For innovation, creativity and access to knowledge. Also citizen's and artist's rights in the digital era are discussed.
- EXGAE organizes the biggest Free/Libre culture event ever that is against the commercialisation of culture: OXCARS.
- Simona speech at the Forum for Creative Europe.

Michael Edson on the Smithsonian Commons

Posted on November 14, 2010 by Eminal

Michael Edson, director of Web and New Media Strategy for the Smithsonian Institution and Smithsonian Commons, opens with the goals and virtues of the Smithsonian Institution. The Smithsonian institution is the world's largest museum complex and research organization composed of 19 museums, 9 research centers, and the National Zoo. Toghether these museums, research centers and other initiatives have a database of over 137 million resources. The Smithsonian Institution tries to accomplish four grand challenges: To unlock the mysteries of the universe, understand and sustain a biodiverse planet, value world cultures and understand the American experience. In doing so, they completed a Smithsonian Web and New Media Strategy in 2009 "that describes an updated digital experience and a new learning model."

Michael continues "Our job in this era is to make people outside succesful in what they do". The Smithsonian resources should therefor not only be available for experts and people inside the community. This idea resonates through the Smithsonian Commons: an online platform dedicated to free and unrestricted sharing of Smithsonian resources that encourages new kinds of learning and creation through interaction with Smithsonian research, collections, and communities.

Attempting to directly monetize access to, and use of, museum content does not appear to be a sustainable business model, according to Michael. Instead the resources should be vast, findable, sharable and free. Michael recognises that in a web 2.0. environment the best you can do is to create a large and ongoing communication in engaging enthousiasts. "Many positive things flow out from that." Examples of those positive things are increased donations, purchases, and sponsorship revenue.

In an attempt to visualize the Smithsonian Commons, Michael shows a video of an amateur astronomer who, with the use of the Smithsonian resources gets more engaged in astronomy, the community around it while broadening the reach and impact of the Smithsonian's primary resources.

Still a new revenue model is needed and even Michael doesn't know yet what that is going to be. The budget for the project is 20 million to fulfill the vision of the Smithsonian Commons for the first five years, and fundraising has just begun. These years will be those of trial and error in trying to understand the entire user experience. The focus will therefor be on research and development with some support of e-commerce.

The Smithsonian Commons prototype is still in development. The team would very much appreciate the feedback of enthousiasts. Michael wraps up by inviting everybody to share their thoughts on new revenue models, business strategy or make suggestions in the online charter and wiki-page of the Smithsonian Commons prototype.

(Pro-) Active Archives: NIMk – Sandra Fauconnier

Posted on November 14, 2010 by Lisal

Preservation, artlab, research, collection.. all rolled up into one: the Netherlands Media Art Institute (NIMk). Starting in 1978, NIMk collects and preserves media art and electronic products, in addition to operating as a distributor to generate revenue for artists who work with new technologies. Sandra Fauconnier pinpoints one of the unique selling-points of the NIMk. The institute engages in very close contact with most of the artists they work with and that makes all the difference. Furthermore, she states how she prefers to use the term "collection" instead of "archive". The latter triggers the notion of documentation, when it is the notion of "autonomous artworks" encompassed in the first that defines the NIMk to a great extent.
More than 2000 works (video art, installations, net art and so on) and 500 artists. Primarily artists from the Netherlands or those who have an affiliation with Dutch art and culture. NIMk actively distributes the artworks and royalties are split in a surprising 30-70.
NIMk plays the part of mediator between the public and the artist. Fauconnier and her co-workers try to merge the various interests together. Her presentation at Ecommons is thus subdivided into two parts: She starts off by addressing the various perspectives that artists hold concerning availibility and shareability. Afterwards, she elaborates on what she believes are the interests of the public.
Fauconnier explains how certain artists are closed-minded when it comes to publishing their art online. Of course, NIMk is committed to protecting the artistic rights of all who work together with the institute. However, they also feel it is in the best interests of the artist to be as visible as possible. Marina Abramovic is an artist who does not wish to have her work available on the NIMk website in full length. Semiconductor, on the other hand, is an artist group, who are very much interested in the possibilites of promoting their art over the Internet. As is Oliver Laric, who dares to experiment with authorship models. He believes each artist can borrow or curate from one another. And the NIMk offers these types of artists a platform to do so and is therefore very much intrigued by the issue of re-appropriation of pop culture. What are the vast possibilities? What are the implications?
The NIMk website shows art in its documented form, as a part of the catalogue. You would have to visit an exhibition to see all or more about the artwork in question. However, the website also presents art in its original form (for instance, video art). Fauconnier mentions that there is a slight increase among artists in their realization that no harm can really come from making artworks available and shareable. An important factor herein is the expanding sources of income for the artists: professional presentations, events/ performances, grants and residencies, teaching and workshops, and of course sales (based on exclusivity, not abundance). NIMk tries to help out in any way that they can. Still, Fauconnier noticies a decrease in the role of the middlemen. Firstly, overall, there is less money to spend on art. Secondly, artists are beginning to explore new ways of promoting their work via Internet. Thirdly, institutions and buyers are increasingly contacting the artists themselves, directly.
So, what is the public interested in? Fauconnier starts off by saying that there is definitely no such thing as "the" public. However, she can list two ubiquitous needs and wishes of today's audiences: They want art online/accessible and they want to find it all in one place. This argument leads Fauconnier to question the value of *remixing.* Is it really what the public wants? There have be long-term discussions on its pro's and con's, but are audiences interested in re-using or re-appropriating art? In fact, it might only be 5% of that public. So, why turn the act of *remixing* into a core issue?
Fauconnier closes her talk by listing the NIMk's unique selling-points/perspectives. The list illustraties how all stakeholders and connaisseurs must play their part when it comes down to input and selection ("tagging for all"). Such an *open archive* can only be based on a good deal of participation.
We want to show work in a high quality context. We want to showcase artworks and not to see them in amateur surroundings such as YouTube.
We respect and accommodate a wide variety of artists' positions.

We stimulate the debate on online availability of artworks.
We provide platforms for artists who hold an experimental, open attitude.
Written by Lisa van Pappelendam

(Pro)-Active Archives: Celluloid Remix – Annelies Termeer

Posted on November 13, 2010 by Fennekel
By Fenneke Mink

Annelies Termeer presents the Celluloid Remix online video contest organized by EYE Film Institute Netherlands and Images for the Future. In this 7 years during project four public archive institutes digitize, save, preserve and share the Dutch audiovisual heritage for the future.
What comes after digitization is the question Termeer answers by presenting the practices of experimenting with new possibilities of digitized commons in the Celluloid Remix contest. For five month contesters were asked to make a remix by reusing the available video content with the theme of modern times. The content made available for the contest is a great part of the 1917 – 1932 silent film collection of the EYE Film Institute. The fact that most movement could be used without audio made the challenge manageable for remixing the motion. Celluloid Remix
Before starting the contest the EYE Film Institute had some challenges of their own to overcome. Mainly copyright and property issues of the material. After the kick off by video artist Eboman as the project ambassador the quality standard was set. And the institute launched the different platforms for communication means of a website, motion upload page Blip.tv, Facebook page and different workshops at higher art education institutes of applied science. The results were more than expected, a short list was shown at the Dutch Film Festival and the winner was awarded at the award ceremony at the festival. Movement by Jata Haan
The lessons learned as an archive are for Termeer the use full workshops held as part of the remix project. These were necessary to give the contesters the grip they needed for the project. The EYE Institute learned by this that contest involving user generated content, or user participation are in need of guidance by the instate provided to the participants. This is the first step to an open and free environment of cultural practice and sharing of content and creativity as archive of the commons. The first focus should herewith be on the aim target and communication together with the right timing matched to the audience. For future project this focus will be applied together with the infrastructure of a other archives to create an even larger sharing of the cultural commons by (open) archives.

Active Archives

Posted on November 14, 2010 by Caroline

by Caroline Goralczyk
Michael Murtaugh, writer, web designer and creator of the Active Archives, presented his project that is aiming at setting up multi-directional communication channels for cultural archives and therewith challenging its traditional uses. Founded in 2006 in Brussels, Active Archives is offering new ways of making platforms for cultural industries by questioning the notions of authorship and enthusiastically working with free software to promote new ways of instant publishing on cultural archives.
As Murtaugh points out, most of the interesting cultural archives have understood the act of instant publishing by putting up websites that mirror regular information brochures, announcements and text publishing that is based on a linear communication process where information is just passed on directly to the user without actively involving him. With understanding the web

more as a space for collaborative writing, prototyping and the development of new ideas, the goal of Active Archives is to make cultural archives go beyond their task of simply preserving culture and making it accessible to users.
To illustrate how Active Archives can be used, Murtaugh introduces the audience into the project called 'Active Archive Video Wiki' which is designed to open the 'black box' of online videos by giving users the possibility to write with video and create new compositions with online elements. By referring to the world wide web as the 'wiki wiki web', Murtaugh also draws attention to the inconvenience of reading on the Internet. With finding new ways of working with videos and making archives more readable to users, his project uses free software to improve the interactive use of online material. Also, Active Archives works like a browser that is convenient to handle as users can copy URLs and then add them to the archive instead of uploading it to the repository.

Book launch 'The Telekommunist Manifesto' by Dymitri Kleiner

Posted on November 16, 2010 by Eminal

Dymitri Kleiner is used to writing code, not books. However the texts that he was spreading around the Internet, inspired a lot of practitioners in the field of the free and open. One of those practisioners and friend of Dymitri, Matteo Pasquinelli, eventually took the effort in gathering all of Dymitri's texts that were scattered online. It took a long time to finally connect the pieces and transform the texts into a book. Now finally, *The Telekommunist Manifesto* is ready to be presented.

About the publication

The Telekommunist Manifesto is a key contribution to commons-based, collaborative and shared forms of cultural production and economic distribution. Dymitri Kleiner goes beyond understanding conflict and property in an age of international telecommunications, copyright and capitalisation of intellectual property in that he offers alternatives to truly grasp the revolutionary potential of the internet for a free society. The alternatives are reflected in the idea of 'venture communism', a new model in which workers organize themselves and buy back little sections of capitalism, step by step. Also copyfarleft is proposed as an alternative to the creative commons (or 'copy-just-right' as Dymitri coins it). Copyfarleft truly enables workers to create and produce by explicitly allowing commercial use.
In his presentation earlier that day a rather intense discussion was raised about the copyfarleft and Dymitri's critique on the creative commons. I would recommend everyone interested in free culture and copyright to read *The Telekommunist Manifesto* in order to try and understand the perspective of an activist and practitioner in the field. You can download the .pdf here.
Dymtri Kleiner, The Telekommunist. Network Notebooks 03, Institute of Network Cultures, Amsterdam, 2010. ISBN: 978-90-816021-2-9.

Public Debate: Future of the Public Domain in Europe

Posted on November 14, 2010 by Erwinl
Friday session, 20.30– 22.30
Documents and sources on the Public Domain
Paul Keller from Kennisland opened the session with a bit of historical context: the 1990 Proposal for a Hypertext Project by sir Tim Berners-Lee. From the very beginning the internet has been a place of debate about what should and what shouldn't be in the public domain – an influential text was the discussion started by Eric Kluitenberg on the nettime mailing list Frequently Asked Questions About the Public Domain.
James Boyle's influential book from 2008, The Public Domain, has been the groundwork for anyone talking, thinking and/or reflecting on the subject since.
In the framework of the Communia project, the Public Domain Manifesto was published, which led to an official charter for the European Library Project Europeana: the Public Domain Charter.
Creative commons have become the public domain mark, but meanwhile many answers prevail, such as who should take care of this public domain and what infrastructures can we revert to.

James Boyle: Problems of the Public Domain

In his Skype session, Professor of Law at Duke Law School James Boyle laid out three main problems in discussions of the Public Domain debate – and what could be a number of solutions to them:
On the conceptual level, an essential task is to make politicians, institutional bodies and citizens aware about the ecology of knowledge, whereby a key driver for creativity stems from the interaction of the free and the controlled: We get creativity by control over the realm of the free – in culture, science, politics, etc. More common, however, seems to be an understanding that takes a universal stand only for the free. Yet, one may neglect the balance between the two realms on basis of such a conceptualization. Boyle illustrates this giving the example of a lawyer who believed that every breach of copyright may be understood as a violation of Human Rights and who was shocked by the idea that some people may see this very differently.
The second problem seems to be a cultural one. In the first place, when the copyright terms were extended, we applied the most speech-restrictive set of laws on most of 20th century culture. Since there is no speech-enhancing part of copyright law that could allow access and translation, we are denying ourselves access to most cultural expressions – even to orphaned works. Currently, 90% of creative and scientific materials are commercially unavailable but their copyright is still extended – the benefit of royalties for authors applies only to a very small fraction of historically produced documents. More often, there is no benefit to anyone.
Meanwhile, with e-culture rapidly growing and researchers looking less and less at off-line sources, the pyramid of knowledge seems to have been inversed: books have become the realm of the inaccessible. While spatial distance rendered inaccessibility before, actors such as Google now redefined access as immediate and disconnected from spatial fixation of cultural expressions.
The choice of where to publish what is persistently laid in the hands of the author – and without the conscious choice of an author none of us will have access to a wok produced by a contemporary in our lifetime. Free culture, public domain culture, will not contain any work made by our contemporaries unless they actively stipulated it – it is copyrighted by default. In such a way, we have cut ourselves off from our collective heritage, while generative production was always made by remixing.
The last problem identified by Boyle is based on the realm of science. The public domain is an essential component of scientific undertakings. While there are assumptions that issues around copyrights function better in this realm due to the relevance of technological progress and the resulting shorter term for patents of 20 years (in comparison to copyright terms of lifetime + 70 years), this seems not to hold true.
Referring to Berners-Lee, Boyle points out that the web was envisioned for science. As a tool to link and share scientific material, forming sets of hypertext links: a web of connections that would enable human knowledge to flourish. What we are confronted with now however, is that it works great for consumption and personal interests, yet for science the web hasn't progressed very much: most literature is locked-up behind fire- or paying walls, which makes a dense set of connections to other online material impossible. Yet, the power of internet lies in these connections. Further, current copyright law regulates items which are not even covered by copyright law in the first place, such as footnotes. They are merely regulated by a technological accident, made exclusive by walls of payments.

Next to this, what we see is an expansion of the range of scientific subject matter. In the EU, the Database Directive had no empirical benefit to database industry while imposing economically inefficient structures on scientists and citizens. At the same time, we see an expansion of patent rights to cover new developments such as gene sequencing or synthetic biology, whereby fears exist that these expanded realms of intellectual property inhibit new scientific fields to grow. Could foundational truths established in new areas be protected under patent law?
Now what can be done to alleviate these processes? In the political sphere, orphan rights legislation could be feasible, since expansions of copyrighted material that is economically inaccessible is an embarrassment to cultural industries. Other stimuli lie in private hacks/privately created solutions such as general licenses in software, Creative Commons licenses expanding copyright by individual authors as open commons or maybe even Google books as an example for private initiatives.
Playing into the political and privately constructed commons as alternatives, there seems to be an enormous role for public education. Initiatives such as the public domain manifesto and Communia are extremely valuable and in more domains, from music sampling over software development to libraries and the sciences, people need to realise what public domain means – and what it means if it's taken away from them.

Bas Savenije: Challenges for libraries in the digital era

On basis of James Boyle's talk, Keller notes that librarians may have become the keepers and custodians of material that is generally difficult to access, opening the podium for Bas Savenije, Director General of the Dutch Royal Library, Koninklijke Bibliotheek. In his talk, Savenije reflects on the changing role and challenges that libraries are confronted with in connection to current developments regarding the public domain.

Savenije makes the observation that our current generation more and more seems to perceive that knowledge which is not digitally accessible is non-existent. Documents which are not yet digitalised may therefore be threatened to be forgotten. To counter this, libraries increasingly turn to digital content and digitalisation of their stock. Currently, about 4 mil. items are preserved by the National Library of the Netherlands which is aiming for their full digitalisation. However, Savenije points out that current calculations estimate that digitalisation until 2013 would cover approximately only 10%. What reasons hinder the digitalisation progress?

The first obstacle is the lack of financial funding for such undertakings, as grants are often made available only for specific purposes such as the digitalisation of parliamentarian papers of the Netherlands or newspapers for research purposes. On the European level, there is money available to build infrastructures or better access but when it comes to the actual digitalisation of books, there is a lack of funding.

A way of dealing with these circumstances is seeking for public-private partnerships, as recently happened with Google. This cooperation however was based on three conditions: 1) everything that is in the public domain in print, should be in the public domain digitally forever; 2) there should be no exclusivity of the documents to Google as a contractor and 3) there would be no non-disclosure agreements. On basis of this agreement, the digital material is now available for almost any educational or research purposes as long as it is not commercial. A dilemma remains: old manuscripts are not digitalised by Google due to matters of insurance for these vulnerable manuscripts. But public-private partnerships with companies that take care of these materials often run under different conditions that may create exclusivity.

A specialised company like ProQuest, taking care of such projects for example for the National Library of Denmark, grants free accessibility to the documents only per country – access from anywhere else is locked behind a paywall for 10-15 years. Yet without such commercial partnerships, it is questionable to what degree the necessary progress towards digitalisation can be accomplished.

A second obstacle of course is copyright. Solutions to legal regulations, e.g. around orphan works, are being developed in various EU-countries in the form of extended collective licensing. A case which helped to gain attention for this issue was the Google Books Settlement as it brought discussions about copyright and issues of open access for scientific information on the European agenda.

Digital born content presents another challenge to the workings of libraries, as it demands quite different approaches to collection and preservation. Is the traditional task of libraries to cover everything 'published', i.e. in an operational definition any document that is published with an ISBN number, still valid? With the Library of Congress' move towards tweet collection, should the National Library of the Netherlands collect tweets as well? Or would it rather be the task of the National Archive? How about scientific blogs? Common definitions of 'publication' do seem to fall short under the current wealth of data creation. Connected to this are the implications of the organizational diversity of heritage bodies facing these developments. Current publications sometimes work with annotated data models, integrating text and expressions of research-relevant data, audio and visual files in different media. How can the division of media over different organizations integrate multimedia? Since partial, media-based data collection would ruin the data, how does one arrange cooperation and build inclusive infrastructures?

Further, different types of libraries serving different parts of society are being funded by different sources. Being as a consequence different systems, how do the users of these libraries get access to data that is not available in 'their' specific library? An approach is needed that grants integrated access to data across territorial separation. It seems thus that the trend goes towards a National Digital Library with one common back-office where every library should provide access to their own community. While we have great examples such as Europeana, a big challenge is the envisioning of a 'Nederlandeana' that has a common infrastructure and responds to the changes across all domains induced by the Internet. Another issue remains securing the sustainability of such undertakings; however due to temporal reasons, this was not further elaborated upon.

James Boyle responds to the apparent dilemma of the increasing access to data connected to a shift towards integration of territoriality into the international public domain. How can one address these developments? According to Boyle, the first best solution would be to shorten copyright laws to about 8 to 17 years which seems to be optimal terms. However, that does essentially not remove territoriality. The second best solution then would be private or public-private initiatives, which would however also likely be territorial. An interesting case is that of Google, as the Google Booksearch Settlement may open up a market for competitors and thereby introduce new challenges for the public domain aside from territoriality. The

adoption of the second best solution to Boyle seems more reasonable due to the potential of public licensing to achieve great things.
Bas Savenije adds that on a European level, the issues such as territoriality are being addressed several times per year in meetings of different National Libraries or Research Libraries. Conditions for public-private partnerships have been translated into a draft paper that is still being worked on. Responding to a question from the audience about the libraries' access to interface and search-functions developed by private partners, Savenije mentions that own data bodies are larger that the database of scans produced by Google and thus need to be developed independently: "I hope we can be as good as Google is in that".
Lucie Guibault: The European Dimension
European directive on copyright: recent discussion on public domain – including the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).
The digital agenda plays decisive role in stimulating discussion of the public domain. The piling up of rights may be counterintuitive and counterproductive, which is why the European Union plays an important role in a new wave of public domain discussions – focused in the thematic network COMMUNIA, which discusses what the public domain means for science, for the public and for the general interest.
A working group has been working on an adaption of the public domain manifesto, which is meant to take a bold and provocative stand against copyright law. When attempting to define what copyright law is, we notice that lots of writing on the public domain is US-based (Duke University, et al.). Communia puts it on the map of the European discussions.
The manifesto proposes a split between structural public domain (both works whose protection has expired and all works that aren't copyrightable) and voluntary sharing of information (creative commons, …). It proposes the adoption and development of the public domain mark and includes a number of general principles:
We should be able to freely build upon all information that is available out there: Public domain should be the rule and copyright the exception.
Most info is not original enough or copyright protectable so should freely flow.
What is in the public domain should remain in the public domain
Copyright is a right limited in time.
Simona Levi: Citizens' and artists' rights in the digital era
Simona Levi, Director of Conservas and involved in the annual oXcars, shares her point of view on public domain issues with a stronger focus on the position of contemporary producers of cultural goods and reflects on the immediate challenges and contributions of the artist in relation the public domain. Levi is connected to the FCForum, a platform and think-tank which understands itself as an international, action-oriented space to build and coordinate tools that enable civil society to answer to urgent political changes in the cultural sector. The FCForum brings together voices from liberal culture interest groups, yet explicitly also reaches out to the general audience to prevent the absorption by institutional bodies. In 2009, the FCForum set up the first Charter for Innovation, Creativity and Access to Knowledge, a legal companion supporting work in the cultural domain by addressing copyright legislation in the digital era.
In 2010, the main focus of the forum was how to generate and defend new economic models for the digital era. Issues of the public domain are thereby especially approached from the understanding of the artists' work being seated in shared spaces. The current charter 2.0.1 'Citizens' and artists' Rights in the Digital Age' has particularly a practical focus, trying to challenge and influence political decision making on local and European level. While the points addressed in the charter are obvious and logic to those working in the artistic field, they may sadly not be to political bodies.
Some of the points mentioned by Levi are then:
Copyright terms should not exceed the minimum term set by the Berne convention (30 years), on the long term it should be shortened to about 8-17 years.
Jurisdiction should allow every publication to directly enter into the public domain.
Results of work and development funded by public money should be made accessible to everyone.
Research funded by educational institutions should be made accessible to the public.
There should be no restriction on the freedom to access, link or index any work that is already freely accessible to the public online, even if it not published under a shareable licence, an issue touching on the issue of private/non-private copying legislation.
According to Levi, another problem is posed by the legal framework around quoting, which is not allowed in many parts of Europe if the goal does not serve pedagogical or investigative reasons. Even if content creators support the quoting of their work, these limitations remain in power.
One major problem is connected to collecting societies. The problem here lies in the fact that there is few control on these bodies. They collect financial support in a public manner, yet redistribution of this money for their members works in a problematic way, since only a fraction of these members can vote on these decisions, based on royalties brought into the organization. This means that artists with a lower ability to

bring financial assets into the group are essentially excluded from decision making. As a last point, Levi notes that they restrict the application of free licensing in the cultural industries and thereby silence potential interests of the artist in engaging with the pubic domain.

Respondents
Charlotte Hess: Protection of access in knowledge – In need of a movement.
Charlotte Hess, Associate Dean for Research, Collections & Scholarly Communication at Syracuse University Library and internationally renown commons theorists, briefly reacts to the different positions that have been mapped out by the previous speakers.
While she recognizes that there is still a much to do about issues such as open access, it seems that Europe however is on a good track concerning these developments. In 2001, the first conference ever on the public domain had been organised by James Boyle and Hess points out how important and influential his contribution also through his work on the intellectual enclosure movement had been. What is needed for now seems to be a movement similar to the Environmental movement, something that could draw together all sorts of different people to protect our access to knowledge.
While much of the issues we are facing in this context are based in the realm of law, there certainly is also a general lack of awareness, neglecting negotiating and fighting any of the legal restriction. Yet, in a world where the dominance of corporations is so strong, the youth needs to be encouraged to go into the political arena instead of being swallowed by corporate entities.
Marietje Schaake is a member of the European parliament on behalf of D66, member of the committee on culture, media and education and co-founder of the Intergroup on New Media of European Parliament members**.**
In the closing part of the Public Debate, she discussed what the European Parliament can do for the public domain and what the sentiment in the parliament is towards the public domain. Overall, due to heavy lobbywork, the suggestion is raised that counterfeiting and breaches of copyright are to be the next war after terrorism. Currently, the odds are against reform of copyright law – there's a strong lobby in favor of keeping and strengthening the status quo and a severe lack of knowledge about public domain issues.
A lot can be done though, to influence the existing wave:
present facts & studies about the impact of new technologies
have artists proclaim their trust: conservative lobby currently seems to defend creativity
present data: seeming neutral helps alleviate the image of being "squatters of the internet who want to kill innovation"
We need to find a way to open up a polarized climate where it's safer to choose the establishment, if we want to secure an internet and knowledge culture that relies on principles of the public domain.

Conference Panels 13 November

How to pay the costs of keeping things free: Volker Ralf Grassmuck's proposal for license sharing

Posted on November 13, 2010 by Olgal
by Olga Paraskevopoulou

Volker Ralf Grassmuck opened the first session of the third day of the conference that aimed to address the question of "how to pay the costs of keeping things free". He presented the "The sharing license": a legal permission for online sharing of published copyright protected works, for personal non-commercial purposes, subject to a collectively managed levy.
According to Grassmuck, the sharing license will end the war on sharing, will bring freedom to re-distribution for all works, will bring money to authors, will unionize authors and will reform the basis for a new social contract between authors and audiences.
File sharing is now an unlawful act. In the discussions about the proper way to resolve the impasse, a proposal is presented: a fee to compensate the creators and legalize file sharing.
What is levy? Each customer pays a modest monthly fee (around three dollars) along with the monthly broadband access charged by the provider. The provider only collects and forwards this value to a management association conference that divides the amount collected to the creators and artists according to the consumption of each work. A levy is not a tax, is collected form broadband Internet users by ISPs.
How much is collected? The levy amount could be much bigger from what companies make for profit nowadays. The profit constitutes only one third of the levy amount and that could lead to the re-distribution of the other two thirds to authors and to the collecting society.
How will it be distributed? according to the popularity of the works – that is, the most downloaded work.

What is a collecting society? A highly automated, transparent, efficient, online- and authors- only collecting society, internally democratic and externally under public oversight.
Can existing collecting societies be reformed? No, we should restart the system
Free culture? We have to legalize sharing as we legalized copyright in the 1960s.
The models that are emerging:
Individual market transactions (selling copies – scarcity)
Indirect market transactions via advertising
Public culture funding (those who denounce levy are accepting this model?)
Public broadcasting fees
Prizes
Voluntary pre-payments (Kickstarter)
Voluntary post-payments (Flattr – new model being tested)
How can we build a new social contract between authors and audience?
How do we allocate non-proportional funding? Can be allocated through editorial decisions, curatorial decisions by experts and/or collective decisions by authors and audiences? Concluding he remarked that competition is a very important aspect against monopolies but this model is very different from the free-market model.
Volker Ralf Grassmuck is a media sociologist and author. Currently he is a researcher in the University of São Paulo (Brazil). He was project lead of the conference series Wizards-of-OS.org and of the copyright information portal iRights.info, co-founded mikro-berlin.org and privatkopie.net and has published among others: Freie Software zwischen Privat- und Gemeineigentum,Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Bonn 2002.

Revenue Models – Jaromil and Marco Sachy tell us about Cyclos and their own dyndy.net

Posted on November 13, 2010 by Nicola 1 Comment
by Nicola Bozzi

As a part of the Revenue Models panel at the Ecommons conference, the presentation by Jaromil and Marco Sachy focused on the decentralization of currencies and credit. The former began by introducing their own website, dyndy.net, an online lab providing "Tools, practices and experiences for the conceptualization, development and deployment of currency"; the latter analyzed in more detail the case of Cyclos, an open-source software providing an alternative to traditional banking systems.
As an artist and hacker, as well as a media theorist, Jaromil started off with a strong premise: capitalism is dead. In the post-capitalist era, the challenge is now for us to imagine the future of money, the most used of all media. The Italian-born activist began tracing an historical arch of capitalism, referring to Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Aedipus*, according to which pre-capitalist times were marked by certain traditional "codes" that kept people in place in society. Quoting the French duo, as well as Giorgio Agamben, Jaromil also pointed out the disappearance of people behind machines, and the shifting of university and knowledge institutions to enterprises. True to his status of programmer, Jaromil proposed a people-driven re-coding of such traditions, previously decoded and upset by capitalism and the individualism it carried. Since, as he argues, grassroots organizations are more efficient than centralized ones, and it is no use to stack new axioms on top of the capitalist ones, the management of institutions in the post-capitalist era has to be conducted with a new challenge in mind: converting the economy "from a network of quantitative axiomatic equations to systems of qualitative relations that reproduce subjectivity". For this reason, by using dyndy.net as a critical tool, Jaromil and Sachy aim to "develop further on the experience of LETS, ROCS, WIR, STRO, C3 and Bitcoin, VODO, Flattr, networking community values following the ethics of the Free Software Movement (digital) and Transition Towns (analog)".
Following Jaromil at the speaker podium, Marco Sachy started by outlining the notion of monetary rhizome, another Deleuze and Guattari-inspired concept describing a possible postmodern alternative to the capitalist paradigm of the bank-debt monopoly. He made the example of Cyclos, an open-source software developed in Brazil and Uruguay, which has been used by organizations and institutions around the world. The software offers a complete online banking system, with additional modules (such as e-commerce), permitting the decentralization of banking services.
By using Cyclos, anyone can manage integrated local currencies, providing a second line of credit where the main ones have become insufficient, due to crises or financial shenanigans. The rhizome nature derives from the possibility of connecting "parameters belonging to different domains of existence (economic, ethic, social, etc) by valuing them through different currencies".
In Uruguay, for instance, cultural associations could integrate state funding with a system of virtual, non inflactionate credits called "cultos", which such actors could use to finance their activities in a more flexible

and stable way. The system, called C3 (Commercial Credit Circuit) was developed by Bernard Lietaer and STRO, and uses “insured invoices or other payment claims as liquid payment instruments with a business to business (b2b) Clearing-Network”.
For more details and a more in-depth explanation of what I briefly summarized above you can download the presentation .pdf, kindly made available by Jaromil and Sachy themselves. If you are interested in following Jaromil and Dyne – and you happen to pass by Milan on the next 16 December – you can go hear him speak at the Always Already New conference.

Europeana – Aggregating Europe’s cultural heritage

Posted on November 15, 2010 by Sjoerd Tuinemal
Former worker at Knowledgeland, Harry Verwayen started off his presentation by mentioning what he would not cover in his talk, namely viable revenue models to apply in this day and age (since according to Verwayen, this has been greatly covered on Wired co-founder Kevin Kelly’s blog). Thereafter, Verwayen directly mentions what he finds an effective business model for publishing: dual licensing, wherein “what you sell is the legitimacy.” This is also the approach in the Europeana initiative, which was funded by the European Union, and supported by many European cultural institutions.
After the Europeana project was commissioned in 2005, five years later the portal had expanded with an developer API and with a large network of participating institutions. Also, the entire platform is published as open-source. Currently, the platform holds over 13 million digitized cultural objects, that are aggregated from the different databases. While users can freely access the content (be it images, texts, sounds or videos), the records are indirectly advertisements as they contain links to the original archives.
By opening up these archives to the public, cultural content can easily get distributed across multiple sources (via the API), or it can engage end-users to “participate and work with the material.” Working with the material would for example mean investigating a very specific topic within just one platform, like reports in newspapers in France during the first World War. With such an aggregator, we might also more easily gain insights into which archives ‘privileges’ which topic.
Thereafter, Verwayen elaborated on the cost and benefits. As the portal relies on advertising, visibility is key for getting the traffic going. Therefore, one of the approaches is to upload material to large open platforms (for example, Flickr has a cost-ratio of 1:160). Another indirect benefit is that of using open-source code, which reduces the costs for other institutions to participate in the project. Most importantly, value is generated by putting the material into the public domain, which at Knowledgeland resulted in a cost-ratio of 2:3.
But, according to Verwayen, the “problem is not funding”, it’s rather “how to sustain digitalization and rights.” Roughly, the archived content falls under three categories. The first one, ‘digitization’ is the ‘easiest’ to digitize, since the rights expired or didn’t have any license to begin with (mostly classics). Secondly, there’s ‘digitization and rights’, this category is more troublesome since the content is often protected by copyright-holders who are hard to trace. Thirdly, there’s the ‘rights’ category wherein the cultural object is already digital (or digitized) but copyrighted.
In conclusion, Verwayen raises the question of how to formulate a sharing licenses that’s more compromising towards cultural archives. Also, how to organise the collective funding (by museums, institutions and governments)? How to ensure the continuation of digital heritage by these stakeholders, and (finally) how to work on revenue models for copyrighted cultural objects with have low intrinsic value? These are a few of the open questions that will affect the sustainability of initiatives like that of Europeana.

Eelco Ferwerda Talks About Open Access in Academic Publishing

Posted on November 13, 2010 by Catalinal
*by **Catalina Iorga***

Eelco Ferwerda, the president of the recently established Association of European University Presses, has been involved in electronic publishing since 1995. Ferwerda is also the Project Manager of OAPEN and leads the work on its Open Access Publication model. He received the Dutch SURFshare Open Access award in recognition of his work for OAPEN.

Ferwerda spoke about scientific publishing and open access in an effort to demonstrate that open access improves the sustainability of academic publishing. He opened his presentation by discussing – from a macroeconomic perspective – the scholarly communication system's current state, illustrated by a graph of research library expenditures in the United States between 1986 and 2005. It seems that, in spite of digitization, the costs of serials had been going up continuously, at a rate four times higher than that of inflation. Libraries were straining to expand their acquisition budgets in order to match the constantly growing expenditure on serials. The main reason for these financial struggles is that traditional academic publishing is losing sustainability as scientific journals are commercialized instead of becoming more open.

Scholarly communication is, according to Ferwerda, a wheel moving forward, which begins its spin with *researchers*, with *authors* writing down their work, which is later *reviewed,* then *published*, thus leading to an interaction between *publishers* and *agents*, who negotiate with *libraries* that inform *researchers*. *Funders* support this massive process. An example of such funding for the Netherlands suggests that research costs 1 billion euro, with authors being paid 920 million and reviewers earning 242 million while the publishers get 18% of this total sum, namely 210 million.

Since traditional academic publishing is dependent on public spending, the research funders and universities and universities pay research authoring and reviewing, while libraries cover subscription costs. Open access would benefit all actors in the turning wheel: *researchers* gain direct access to material, which improves the discovery of useful information , *authors* get a worldwide audience, increasing their visibility and impact, *funders* improve their ROI (return on investments) ensuring publication and advancing the spread of knowledge, *publishers* create an open space for the effective dissemination of knowledge and *libraries* offer better services and answer user needs. In this win-win scenario, worldwide open access would bring the Netherlands 130 million. If only the Netherlands would adopt the system, then it would still make the not-so-shabby sum of 37 million.

While traditional monographs are also suffering from decreasing relevance and sustainability as between 1980 and 2000, sales to North American libraries, for example, dropped on average from 2000 to under 300. On the other hand, open access journals are becoming mainstream; the Directory of Open Access Journals is currently the host of 2433 such journals. The journal trend is slowly creeping into the world of monographs, as several publishing houses, like Bloomsbury Academic and the National Academies Press, are putting out open books. Most such editions consist a version that is freely available online and a sold printed one.

The Open Access Publishing in European Networks project (OAPEN), coordinated by the Amsterdam University Press and launched at this year's Frankfurt Book Fair, is based on the abovementioned hybrid model of online and print. In this model, publishers can charge a publication fee for the open access edition, but authors retain copyright of their work under a recommended CC license. Books benefit from long-term availability online, which is made possible by using the University of Amsterdam's repository infrastructures and the e-Depot of the Dutch National Library. The research funders – universities, for instance – should cover the publishing fees. As for the main goal of OAPEN, the project strives to ensure publication of peer-reviewed research results, the effective dissemination of and unrestricted access to research findings, all of which advance the spread of knowledge. Publishers can sell other editions – such as printed ones, but a crucial aspect is sharing the sale revenues with research funders.

To make the transition from traditional publishing to open access, Ferwerda advised on following a few principles, namely that research funding should include the cost of dissemination and that the policies of funders should be extended to include open access publishing. The problem encountered by OAPEN is a double-edged sword: without funding, there are no open access books, without publishers willing to embark on the transition journey, there is no funding.

Sometimes skeptics need a bit of push, so OAPEN Is proposing pilot projects to convince all parties with a stake in academic publishing of the benefits brought by open access. The first two projects of this kind are currently taking place in the Netherlands, with the support of NWO (The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research) and the United Kingdom, where JISC Collections are backing up OAPEN's ultimate goal of establishing a European framework for open access books. They're off to a solid start judging by the 700+ books they already have online.

Dolf Veenvliet: “Do something awesome (or at least, something notable)”

Posted on November 14, 2010 by Sjoerd Tuinemal

The presentation by the Dutch 3D artist Dolf Veenvliet would likely fall under the category of most pragmatic ones of the three day conference. Veenvliet started of by elaborating on the latest landmark production from the Blender Foundation (of which he is a member), namely the fantasy feature film called ‘Sintel’. After showing the trailer, Veenvliet explained the course of pre-production and production of the film. Besides the funding by the Dutch Film Fund, a substantial part of the costs were covered by the pre-orders of the DVD. What’s remarkable here is that, in this stage, the film was merely a textual synopsis posted on the Blender community web site. According to Veenvliet, the community is so willingly to donate because they know “things get done” when the money’s there.

After Sintel was released in September, the film reached an incredible amount of views and downloads. Over the months, it has been watched on YouTube over 2 million times, and downloaded over 5 million times, while previous Blender Foundation films (i.e the Pixar-esque ‘Big Buck Bunny’ (2008), or philosophic mini-epos ‘Elephant’s Dream’) stagnated at about 1 million over a whole year.

One of the common misunderstandings of film projects initiated by the Blender Foundation is that the production itself is an open-source trajectory. Instead, the director still has a leading role in what to include in terms of storytelling and visuals. In this process, a large group of content producers (ranging from amateur to professional) contributed by submitting 3d models of characters, scenery or animation, all under the Creative Commons license.

While the production of these films is not entirely democratic, Veenvliet for the remainder of the presentation, very much stressed the point of the benefits of making your work (and source files) accessible for a world-wide audience. For example, by posting a 3d-model of a humanoid robot called ‘Petunia‘, other artists took this model and started animating it. The story of the crowd-sourcing project was eventually featured by i.e the MIT newspaper and the Dutch NRC newspaper.

In conclusion, protecting one’s work as an artist is a safe, but orthodox way to go. At the same time, alternative production methods like Veenvliet’s prove to become increasingly viable as a source of income (for example, crowd-funded), as well as a platform for content exchange. Doing things in public might not pay off immediately, but by contributing work within a peer network, future productions might as well feature your carefully crafted models.

An introduction of Intelligent Television – By Peter Kaufman

Posted on November 13, 2010 by Eliasl

Peter B. Kaufman is president and founder of Intelligent Televisio0n, a research institute focussed on video developments concerning culture & education. He gave four key points for introduction which he will turn further into in the next sessions:

Force of law, technology and history is on the side of liberty and access. To quote Jean-Jacques Rousseau: “Man is born Free”. Global understanding of human property is changing rapidly and has its effects on the balance of ownership and property rights. Will liberal cultivation will take place again? “A new accommodation will need to be reached”

We have to start un-burdening with our past. Video for Wikipedia and the web. Only less than 5% is digitized and put online. Legal complexity makes it difficult to do so, because of (old) contracts and laws. So publishing online is complex, “music is the most complicated thing of all” states Kaufman.

We need new models to create an open debate in our world about how to deal with this issues in the future: The way we produce public media and go forward. New protocols, recording and producing content.

How to relate to the commercial world better. Technologies and trends of video/music – pubcasters. Open resources will be discoverable, people who customize resources. People who invest millions of dollars for development in television-technology. Trying to build a new social contract between producers, consumers of content. What’s the new norm for media makers?

To conclude: “New media productions connected to our history and the web and future! Empowered producers of the most important audiovisual content of our time!” says Kaufman. The collaboration between the old apparatus of production and the generative activity (participation, meta-data, tagging, open API culture) needs a change right now!

Author: Elias van Hees

Michael Dale Explains the Benefits of Open Video Platforms

Posted on November 13, 2010 by Catalinal

*by **Catalina Iorga***

Michael Dale is an advocate for open standard and free video formats for the web. The past two years he has lead open source development for video on Wikipedia in partnership with Kaltura, and worked closely with the Mozilla foundation and the Open Video Alliance. Dale is also the lead developer for the commercial open source Kaltura HTML5 platform recently adopted by Adobe to support HTML5 video in their desktop web authoring tools.

The road to open video platforms is one long, bumpy ride, but Michael Dale is optimistic about what's to come as HTML5video, Kaltura and Metavid are paving the way for such platforms. Compatibility issues caused by different file formats have always made a dent in people's efforts to upload video content. Content licensing is another complication, as the mainstream H.264 standard for video compression is extremely costly. Fortunately, free and open-source codecs like Firefogg – which transcodes videos to open web standards with Mozilla Firefox – are making things easier for users.

Initiatives like the Wikimedia Foundation are striving towards a standard consistent platform – with HTML5 and CS3 readiness – that offers users the possibility to engage with rich media on the Web. Standardization is not essential only for interfaces, but also for free content such as the Creative Commons; encyclopedias are good example as they make clear what can be done in terms of reuse and distribution of content.

So what are the tools currently available for open video? Michael mentioned several projects and their associated technologies, which I will list and briefly describe in what follows.

Metavid is the open video archive of the US congress, an example of the semantic Web, which allows users to make queries as specific as 'a podcast of any time a female senator mentioning health care that received more than $100,000 from the pharmaceutical industry'. Such complex queries chain together different properties of the system's elements and give people the chance to explore videos in a more meaningful targeted way.

Wikipedia uses the full **HTML5 Video Library** developed by Kaltura, which works in all major browsers. HTML5 is a set of web standards being created by the Web Hypertext Application Technology Working Group and comprises several tools including audio and video players, and a media importer.

As for subtitling and editing videos, there are some nifty little pieces of open-source software. **TimedText** takes a video out of its clichéd 'black box' format and makes it more like a complete webpage. This universal subtitling tool permits the transcription video content in a user-friendly manner, like using adding hyperlinks to subtitles. Since WordPress doesn't seem to get along with HTML5, visit this page for a demo of TimedText; check out the video of Yonchai Benkler at the bottom and click on the CC icon and then select the Universal Subs Option. Last but not least the **Sequencer**, still in its infancy, is a basic video editor good for rebuilding video sequences by combining and ordering media assets or changing the display time.

Dale left his presentation – how else? – but open. In the end he asked questions at the end about matters like the provenance of content to be uploaded on open video platforms, the competition between small free projects and large free ones and the biggest issue of them all: can video collaboration actually work?

Rufus Pollock and open data

Posted on November 14, 2010 by Carlosl Comments Off

Rufus Pollock intervention in the Open Content, tools and technology panel was different by all means to the rest of the session, not only because he finally couldn't be in Amsterdam and had to join via Skype, but because the approach and topic were quite different.

He gave a very brief talk and left aside video to focus in data in general, reminding the audience after several presentations about video and open audiovisual content that there's more to fight for when it comes to the open culture.

He started asking the audience to try to find online information on the public spending of each one's country in education, health or culture…only to show that the information, allegedly public, was far from being easily accessible. (The answer, at one of his projects: wheredoesmymoneygo.org)

This, beyond being an example to make evident the lack of accessibility to public data, is an example of some of the content that can also be found in other of Rufus' projects: CKAN (comprehensive knowledge archive network). This project is a key example of the idea Rufus Pollock centered on: the need to create an open data ecosystem. How can we allow the people to plug together data with different tools?

That is what the open knowledge foundation is trying to find out; how to break the barriers between different countries and databases available in a central easily accessible place, or, in other words, how to plug in

together all the datasets from different sources?
And once at that point, it's really important to remember that the information should be not only accessible, but also open (with everything that implies in relation of the use you can make of that data).
But before we get at that point where we have a frame for collaborative work where data can be broken into pieces and then put together again governments and institutions need to be convinced of the advantages of it. Pollock appeals to the crowd's intelligence, pointing how it's been previously proven that people coming up with ideas and applications that they could have never thought of.
Rufus Pollock is a Shuttleworth Foundation Fellow, an Associate of the Centre for Intellectual Property and Information Law at the University of Cambridge and a Director of the Open Knowledge Foundation which he co-founded in 2004. He has worked extensively as a scholar and developer on the social, legal and technological issues related to the creation and sharing of knowledge.
You can hear the entire talk here: MP3
Or watch the presentation here.

Materiality and Sustainability of Culture – Birte Christensen-Dalsgaard and the Cost Model for Digital Preservation project

Posted on November 14, 2010 by Nicola
by Nicola Bozzi
Birte Christensen-Dalsgaard holds a Ph.D. in Theoretical Atomic Physics, but she has been working for media archiving institutions involved in digital preservation – like the Aarhus University Library and the Royal Library – for many years now. Even if digital archives don't sound as complex as theoretical atomic physics, in her presentation Christensen-Dalsgaard showed us that running them involves some pretty complicated reasoning. Starting with the premise that an archive should provide the best possible version of an object, and an appropriate context to access it, Birte and her team have worked hard on algorithms and models to lay out cost-effective strategies.
First of all, archives need to provide a navigation structure, which has to be kept up to date. Christensen-Dalsgaard and her team have to make sure access and presentation are maintained, while user experience has to abide by the last web x.0 principles (currently they are implementing the semantic layer introduced by web3.0). In order to keep the costs down, one of the strategies they have employed has consisted in ESP games, where users are encouraged to insert complex metadata, that a computer couldn't do on its own, while playing a relaxing online game. This way everybody wins: the institution doesn't spend all its money on human labor and users have a little fun while helping to make the service better.

Apart from crowd-sourcing, other aspects that don't immediately come to mind when thinking of digital preservation are energy efficiency and sustainability. In this regard Birte pointed out how green IT can make a difference, when electricity costs force you to come up with new models for distribution – for example moving the servers from Denmark to Norway, where electricity is not coal-powered, can be a good strategy. More in general, by showing a series of slides documenting he Cost Model for Digital Preservation project – which conceptualizes the task by breaking down its process and listing its most cost-critical aspects – Christensen-Dalsgaard made clear how important the model itself is, and how cultural heritage institutions need to find efficient algorithms to optimize performance and dialogue with local (and international) officials.

Materiality and Sustainability of Culture – Inge Angevaare and the costs of digital preservation

Posted on November 13, 2010 by Nicola
by Nicola Bozzi

With her 11-year long experience at the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, the National Library of the Netherlands, Inge Angevaare knows a good deal about archiving. Her presentation pointed out a very important and often underestimated aspect of digital information: its long-term preservation.
As pointed out in the past by theorists like Geert Lovink (the internet, no matter what, needs and depends on an infrastructure) and Katherine Hayles (digital objects have their own materiality), Angevaare focused on the very real and tangible costs – in terms of both storage and human labor – that the prolonged maintenance of digital objects implies. Digital files are more fragile than we think, and

even a missing bit can totally compromise the visualization of an image. For these reasons, as formats and supports are replaced over time, digital repositories need to keep up with technological evolution.
Despite the prevailing optimism about online resources as commons – which, as Angevaare points out, have never historically required the intervention of humans – the digitization, organization, and preservation of digital information over the years is worth millions in public money. As mentioned above, and even if most of us never pay attention to it, files don't last forever, and the ever-evolving variety of formats and supports that are necessary to store them need to be taken care of constantly. Something that even Google, in its controversial digitization of the world's books, for example, is not granting. And if the private sector is not going to safeguard the availability of information on the long run, institutions and organizations willing to cover the task have to raise public funding to do so. This is what the NCDD (Netherlands Digital Preservation Coalition), for which Angevaare currently works as a coordinator, sets out to do.
The institution has a very ambitious mission: to establish an infrastructure for digital preservation throughout the public sector. Not only by providing facilities, but also funding and expertise, a sustainable division of labor, and synergy with the government. Since different domains have different information dynamics, the NCDD also needs to coordinate them throughout a spectrum ranging from cultural heritage to governement/ archives, from media to scholarly communications.
It's a tough job and, even if you're not doing it, don't take your files for granted.

Hans Westerhof: Paying the Cost of Access

Posted on November 13, 2010 by Erwinl

Hans Westerhof, deputy director at the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision and program manager of the Images for the Future project spoke about the cost that access bears on archives in a digital world in the panel *Materiality and Sustainability of Culture*.
The traditional archive of Sound & Vision consists out of 21 vaults, spread out over 5 floors in a building that opened in 2006. In the digital domain, the institute collects over 1 petabytes a year in both daily broadcasting ingest and the results of the Images for the Future project. The physical archive is contiuously starting to look very different: servers are replacing vaults (13-15 PB exected in 2014). But what really weighs upon the budget, is not necessarily the storage costs (however we, as archives, have a firm disadvantage when it comes to negotiating server costs, as this is a new terrain to us), but the cost of access. Broadcast professionals and public users expect immediate digital hi-res downloads, which brings along:
robot tape-arms
proxies for all hi-res videos
software for creating proxies & restore
management system for data files
Sound and Vision is working hard at other ways of access through user generated content and metadata (wiki, openimages, waisda, collaborations with wikipedia) and education programs which tend to be project-based (academia, ed-it).
We can control the cost of access in numeorous ways, but the bottomline is that by going digital we create a lot more (re)use, which is a costly success.
We (the cultural heritage institutions) need to become better at:
going digital (get real, get digital, understand and own the subject matter which is often new to our institutions)
collaborating (think and act beyond institutions boundaries, share platforms, create economies of scale)
negotiate (with service providers & private companies)
improve on arguing the value & benefits of our case (we're creating monetary value for others and should start thinking within the framework of people that can help us out)

Jeff Ubois and Wishful Thinking: Thoughts on Cultural Institutions and Archival

Posted on November 14, 2010 by Catalinal
by Catalina Iorga

Jeff Ubois, of archival.tv, gave the last talk of the Economies of Commons 2 conference at De Balie, Amsterdam and presented his thoughts on the imbalance of public/private institutions, and how libraries, museums and archives can meet the new challenges of preservation.

Ubois is currently exploring new approaches to personal archiving for Fujitsu Labs of America in Sunnyvale, California, and to video archiving for Intelligent Television and Thirteen/WNET in New York. He has also worked as a consultant to – among many more – the Internet Archive and the Economist Intelligence Unit.

His talk focused on public finding for libraries, museums and archives (LMAs). These institutions are often assigned an intrinsic value and thus deemed worthy of educational funding, but also talked about with view to being at risk (fire in the library, anyone?). Lately LMAs are being mentioned in connection to the free use economy; fair use industries, according to the Computer and Computing Industry Association, have produced $4.7 trillion in 2007, a 36 percent increase over the 2002 revenue of $3.4 trillion.

Most importantly, there's a great deal of wishful thinking when it comes to LMAs, market alternatives and public/private partnerships, with most assuming that there's no reason why they shouldn't work. However, these partnerships aren't free. Economic uncertainties are always looming on the horizon as businesses that invest in LMAs expect to get something in return. In addition to this, there's a fundamental asymmetry in public/private negotiations. LMAs start from a position of disadvantage, a situation that Ubois exemplified with the O. Orkin Insect Zoo. The zoo is ironically supported by Orkin Pest Control.

Google Books, labeled by Ubois as 'the mother of all public/private partnerships', closed a deal with the Austrian Library to scan 400 000 library books, according to AFP. However, the Library signed an NDA (non-disclosure agreement) with Google, meaning that the details of this massive digitization process cannot be made freely available. 'Knowledge for the sake of knowledge' thus becomes 'knowledge for the sake of money'. The latter are not Ubois' words. What he strongly advises against, though, is the privatization of public cultural goods and warns against entrusting a private Californian organization with social heritage. Even if it promises to do no evil.

To conclude, Ubois examined the real opportunities LAMs have for direct public engagement. As new patterns of production, in which information creation surpasses storage capabilities of the average citizen, LAMs have a real chance to make a difference by supporting personal archiving. How? By collecting small endowments for preservation in a crowdsource funding model and reaching new constituencies.

The best of the Oxcars

Posted on November 14, 2010 by Carlosl

After three days of intense discussion and with a reduced audience, the Economies of the Commons 2 conference was closed with the best session that could have possibly done it.

With the screening of "The best of the Oxcars", a compilation of three big gala-performances over the last three years in Barcelona defined by the collective behind them, EXGAE as "The biggest event of free culture ever", the Oxcars renew the concept of award ceremony.

The idea and the goal of these galas celebrated with around 2000 attendants each year is not to award, but to show open initiatives in the most varied and bizarre categories (from Animation, films or TV shows to "granted lawsuit"). At the same time, they educate the audience in the terms and advantages of free culture –interesting reminder on how free culture is not "gratis" culture with a mixed tone of humor and activism.

Looking at the list of winners and awards, we can see recognition to great open initiatives such as the Blender foundation or Guillermo Zapata's "Lo que tu quieras oír" short film. (Whatever you want to hear) At

the same time, there was also room to showcase the works and creations of individuals who defy the all mighty rights collection associations, like the SGAE, the biggest of these associations in Spain, one of the most hated institutions of the country. But participatory culture was also present in this showcase under the motto “do it at home, it’s legal”.
But if there’s something to be missed in this last session is a better explanation of what lies beyond this fun performance. Simona Levi, member of the EXGAE collective that presented and commented the video mentioned the hundreds of thousands of responses from the civil society against laws cutting users rights and how in 2009 the pressure of internet users got the minister of culture to be released of his duties.
Nevertheless, for an international audience unaware of the extremes the greed of SGAE can reach or the mafia-like behaviors that keep artists and creators scared of open in some times, maybe that was not enough.
I think it’s important that the international community, and specially the international open content community realizes the extreme situation that Spain faces, with law projects to allow disconnection from the internet to users who make “illegal downloads” (although Spanish law recognizes the right to private copy). It is exactly that situation, that limit situation to the users rights that encourages a cornered society to fight, while the government (no matter the name of the minister of it’s theoretically left-winged) keeps siding with abusive collectors and proprietary-closed culture.
To finish giving some supporting substance to the critic, I’d like to point out the video also had time to mention the case of a shop tender from Barcelona who was sued for 100.000€ by the SGAE for playing music in her store and after six years of court, finally won her case. This, together with the fact that the digital levy the SGAE has been collecting for years (taxing everybody that bought paper, printers, hard drives or anything that might eventually be used for piracy) is being declared illegal and over 1 billion € will have to be returned helps us keep the hope that, even in Spain, it’s not too late for the open culture.
If you want to know more about the Oxcars awards and EXGAE, or just have a fun time watching some of the prizes, I recommend you have a look at their website.

Full Video of Economies of the Commons 2

Posted on December 29, 2010 by morganl
We were very happy with the turnout of the Economies of the Commons 2 conference in Amsterdam. For those of you who could not make it, there is a full video report of all presented lectures to be found at the DeBalie website and can also be watched below.

Economies of the Commons II Flyer

Posted on October 31, 2010 by morganl

download the hi-res flyer here.

3 Pictures

All photos by for De Balie by Taatske Pierterson. More pictures at http://flickr.com/photos/**tags/ecommons2**