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## *Recommendations concerning open data in the cultural sector*

This report provides answers to the circumstances under which (cultural) institutions might make their collections and information related to them available in the form of open data, in order to make digitised materials more available for use and reuse. The goal of opening up and linking heritage collections and related information to one another, is enshrined in the Flemish vision statement *Een Vlaams cultuurbeleid in het digitale tijdperk*<sup>1</sup> (Flemish cultural policy in the digital era) and in the Dutch policy statement *Nationale strategie voor digitaal erfgoed* (National Digital Heritage Strategy)<sup>2</sup>.

In this report, the terms 'collections' and 'related information' are used in a broad sense. They aim at both analogue collections and related information that have been digitised and collections and related information that have been digitally generated. They also apply to both materials whose heritage status has been recognised by heritage organisations, and contemporary cultural products in the arts sector. Because of this, this report concerns cultural producers, exhibition venues, and heritage custodians all together. All three play a vital part in preserving digital data and content, and in making them accessible. For those who use (or reuse) open data and/or content, it is irrelevant whether these originate from a heritage organisation, an arts organisation, or an exhibition venue.

The report contains recommendations addressed to the Dutch and Flemish governments, advising them to enable (cultural) institutions to conduct a balanced open data policy. The report contains seventeen recommendations, addressing various legal, technical and practical restrictions. These recommendations are illustrated with a wide range of practical examples. The activities carried out by DEN and PACKED vzw to substantiate the report, are documented on the following Wikipedia page:

[https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Wikiproject/Procesbeschrijvingen\\_Belgisch-Nederlandse\\_podiumkunsten](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Wikiproject/Procesbeschrijvingen_Belgisch-Nederlandse_podiumkunsten)

1 For further details, see Sven Gatz, *Visienota 'Een Vlaams cultuurbeleid in het digitale tijdperk in Vlaanderen'*, 2017.

2 For further details, see *Nationale strategie digitaal erfgoed*, Digital Heritage Network, 2015.

## *Recommendations concerning legal restrictions*

1. Make data and materials that are not (or no longer) subject to copyright protection available under a Creative Commons Public Domain Mark or a CC0 Public Domain Dedication.
2. Remain vigilant for any data and materials whose copyright protection is about to expire. Each year, draw people's attention to heritage collections and related data that enter the public domain.
3. Carefully document the copyright status of heritage collections and related information, even in cases where this is unclear.
4. Make data and materials that are still protected by copyright, but for which the cultural institution hold sufficient copyrights (exploitation rights), available under a licence that is as free as possible, such as CC0, CCBY or CCBYSA.
5. When creating and acquiring heritage collections (or collection items) and related information and representations, make agreements with the authors in question, which cover the exploitation rights as broadly as possible within the cultural institution.
6. View an active open data policy as a focal point, with regard to grants and other forms of financial support to cultural institutions.
7. Identify any structural measures that could be used to reduce the size of the 'copyright hole' in the stock of open data and materials.
8. Explore the impact of the General Data Protection Regulation on efforts to both open and link heritage collections and the related information. Also, indicate how cultural institutions can best deal with personal data within this new legal framework.

## *Recommendations concerning technical restrictions*

9. When publishing data, adhere – whenever possible – to the guiding framework of the five-star scale for Linked Open Data. In this context, use linked data sources wherever possible.
10. Make terminology resources available to society as Linked Open Data, with a minimum of legal, technical and practical restrictions. Link terms to other terminology sources, Wikidata and DBpedia, using unique and persistent identifiers. Cooperate on the expansion and maintenance of terminology sources, both in Flanders and the Netherlands.
11. Whenever possible, cooperate with others to put systems in place for the long-term management of open data. Also, use shared facilities to ensure continuing access. Establish networks that use a reference architecture.

## *Recommendations concerning practical restrictions*

12. Make the mandatory annual activity reports (concerning exhibitions, concerts, and performances, for example) available as raw data, under a CC0 Public Domain Dedication. Make any additional recordings of past activities, involving relevant photographic and audiovisual material, available under a free licence.
13. Make any collected data on a given sub-sector and on cultural services available under a CC0 Public Domain Dedication.

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14. Evaluate the use of open data in the context of the information policy of the cultural institution in terms of quality and impact. If necessary, provide the tools needed to perform this evaluation.
15. Implement pilot projects aimed at the widespread publication of heritage collections and the related information under a free licence. These projects should also illustrate the reuse of the heritage collections and the related information.
16. Give appropriate parties the mandate and the means to formulate an overarching approach to develop and provide the provisions and facilities for quality assurance and knowledge sharing concerning open data.
17. Jointly implement an open data policy that is in line with existing initiatives.

The full report is available at: <http://taalunieversum.org/publicaties/aanbevelingen-over-open-data-de-cultuursector>.

## The report's mandate

In 2013, the Council for Dutch Language and Literature presented its advisory report entitled *Valuing Partnership - Advice on Dutch-Flemish policy for the sustainable management, preservation and dissemination of Dutch-language digital heritage* (only published in Dutch as *Waardeer Samenwerking – Advies over Nederlands-Vlaams beleid voor het duurzaam beheren, behouden en beschikbaar stellen van Nederlandstalig digitaal erfgoed*, download via <http://taalunieversum.org/publicaties/waardeersamenwerking>) to the Committee of Ministers of the Nederlandse Taalunie (the Dutch Language Union). On the basis of this advice, it was decided to establish the Taalunie Committee on Digital Heritage, with a mandate to formulate answers to the following three questions:

1. Which lessons can be learned from other major digitisation projects that are being or have been undertaken?
2. What are the success factors for Dutch-Flemish cooperation in the field of international data infrastructures?
3. Under what circumstances would institutions allow their collections and data relating to their collections, to be made available in the form of open data in order to achieve optimised use and reuse?

The first two questions have been answered in two previously published reports:

- *Lessons for the future drawn from Flemish and Dutch digital heritage projects* (download via <http://taalunieversum.org/publicaties/lessen-voor-de-toekomst-uit-vlaamse-en-nederlandse-digitaal-erfgoedprojecten>)
- *Success factors for Dutch-Flemish cooperation in the field of digital heritage* (download via <http://taalunieversum.org/publicaties/succesfactoren-voor-nederlands-vlaamse-samenwerking-rond-digitaal-erfgoed>)

This report answers the third and final question.