

Title: From Dutch Australians At A Glance (DAAAG) to Dutch Abroad At A Glance (DAAAG):
A template for making archival material accessible globally.

Being Digital in people's archives - connects the memories in the archives with the memories in people's minds - and **obviates the tyranny of distance**. (Fmr Dutch State Archivist Professor E. Ketelaar (2003).ⁱ

Almost all Australians are immigrants or have immigrant ancestry and thus have links to countries of origin around the world including very strong links with the Netherlands. Australian Indigenous people, in many cases, also have international familial connections.

UNESCO (2003) and ICOMOS (2004) noted in recent times how the museum world is experiencing major transformations due to the global recognition of the urgent need to preserve both intangible and tangible cultural heritage resources – in the face of the accelerated pace of cultural and economic globalization and the improbability that museums can cope with housing collections that reflect their nation's ethnic diversity.ⁱⁱ Maria Grever (2009) of Erasmus University claims, 'having to rethink the construction and transmission of historical knowledge in this increasingly globalizing world of fading national identities, mass migration and an internet accessible to the general public is one of the greatest challenges facing us today'.ⁱⁱⁱ The UNESCO charter notes that a template aimed at the preservation of immigrants' cultural heritage would have to confront these challenges.^{iv}

Historians agree that connectivity and communication are prerequisites for effectively managing and sharing information and addressing the impact of globalization in this context. Anthropologist, Arjun Appadurai, defines globalization as the 'disjunctive flow of objects in motion – ideas, ideologies, people, goods, images, messages, discourses, technologies and techniques. For James Gleick, the raw material that lay all around, glistening, and buzzing in the landscape of the early twentieth century, letters and messages, sounds and images, news and instructions, figures and facts, signals and signs: the hodgepodge of related species on the move, by post, or wire, or electromagnetic wave, much of which is found in archives – is what we now refer to by a single word – information.'

Archival entrepreneur Bert Looper^v advocated not only a conceptual switch in archivists' thinking from archives to information, but also a recognition of the paradigm shift in our postmodern society^{vi} from a goods-producing to a services-performing and experience-generating economy. His views are supported by Remco Rabin, who notes as the major shift in the digital age an emphasis on national remembrance (thus social memory) to history as an instrument for the expression of one's own experience (individual memory).^{vii} The current obsession with family and personal history is the most significant expression of this shift. Increasingly, in the globalizing world, the Internet has become a new 'shared space' where individuals can construct, transmit and reflect on the historical knowledge that shapes their own and family's history and identity. There are numerous public arenas in cyberspace, many of them connecting to cultural memories. Archives, libraries, museums and other memory institutions, all connect with the minds and the memories of people. But what distinguishes archives from all other memory institutions is their central commitment to wide accessibility in the public sphere. The nexus between evidence, accountability, openness and transparency in all dimensions of the records continuum is the distinctive feature of archives.^{viii}

Dutch Australians At A Glance (DAAAG) is an innovative project, dedicated to the digital preservation of Dutch Australian immigrants' cultural heritage. Minister Van der Laan, *then* the Netherlands State Secretary, noted in a 2003 policy speech: 'while the process of digitalisation is a vital tool for cultural heritage organizations and communities ...to be noticed by the general public...it... should be... a single digital collection... that is easily accessible' (Council of Europe/ERICarts, "Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe, 8th edition", 2007). The DAAAG project was conceptualised to address this challenge.

DAAAG's vision is to enable the sustainable digital preservation of Dutch Australians' tangible and intangible cultural heritage through the creation of a resource designed to be accessible, interactive, multi-layered and interoperable. Dedicated to excellence in terms of design and content, the focus is on innovation in collecting, preserving, interlinking and providing access to rich historical material of relevance to those in the Netherlands and in

ⁱ E. Ketelaar, *Being Digital in People's Archives*, Published in: *Archives & Manuscripts* vol. 31 # 2 (November 2003) pp. 8-22.

ⁱⁱ The International Council on Monuments and Sites ICOMOS is an international non-governmental organization of professionals, dedicated to the conservation of the world's historic monuments and sites.

ⁱⁱⁱ M. Grever, *Fear of Plurality: 'Historical Culture and Historiographical Canonization in Western Europe'*, in Angelika Epple and Angelika Schaser (eds) *Gendering Historiography: Beyond National Canons, Campus*, Verlag, Frankfurt/New York: 2009.

^{iv} UNESCO Charter on the Preservation of the Digital Heritage, UNESCO Organisation des Nations pour l'éducation, la science et la culture. http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=1539&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

^v Bert Looper, 'Parliaments and Archives in the Age of Access: The Elimination of Front Office and Back Office in the Digital Era', *Digitisation of Parliamentary Information and Archives Report, Part I: Brussels*, Belgian Federal Parliament, Brussels, 2002, pp. 10–18; Bert Looper, 'De archivaris en het raadsel van de verdwenen archieven', *Archievenblad*, no. 107/2, maart 2003, pp. 14–19.

^{vi} Joseph B Pine and James Gilmore, *The Experience Economy: Work is Theatre and Every Business a Stage*, Harvard Business School Press, Cambridge Mass., 1999; Jeremy Rifkin, *The Age of Access: The New Culture of Hypercapitalism Where All of Life is a Paid-for Experience*, Tarcher/Putnam, New York, 2000.

^{vii} Haruko Taya Cook, "Japan's War in Living Memory and Beyond", in *Representing the Japanese Occupation of Indonesia, Personal testimonies and Public Images in Indonesia, Japan and the Netherlands*, ed. Remco Rabin (Zwolle:Waanders publishers, 1999), 36-54.

^{viii} Ketelaar 2003.

Australia. The goal is to utilise archival documentation, including records and statistics, as well as voice, images, film and photographs in order to capture the vital aspects of the Dutch connection with Australia and Australians from 1606 to the present, including maritime, military, migration and mercantile histories.^{ix} The primary purpose is to provide – to the public, scholars, journalists and other digital end users in receiving and relinquishing countries – access to the holdings of relevant databases, held in state, regional, national and international archives, consulates and other governmental organizations, but currently not available to the public, and also to provide links to relevant genealogical records. This is highly relevant not only to the 300,000 Australians (and their descendants) who claim Dutch origins but also to those with whom they have connections in their home country.

DAAAG comes at a time when increasingly alignment worldwide of the databases of ‘memory institutions’ into interoperable virtual interfaces is being sought by organisations such as universities, the memory institutions themselves (GLAMS: galleries, libraries, archives and museums), as well as by communities, families and individuals.

Increasingly, to provide this type of access to cultural heritage databases will require partnerships between communities, the business sector, government, heritage tourism, genealogical organizations and GLAMS. Migration is, by its very nature, a ‘mutual heritage activity’ since all migrants leave documentary traces of their past in memory institutions in their country of origin, and move records of their present and future into the GLAMS of the receiving society. How best to negotiate these traces and record, in digital forms, the dual, interacting histories they represent will require research into the establishment of a cross-cultural ‘information commons’. DAAAG will consider advances in relevant theories and practices in order to produce practical recommendations for the future management of the converged data of diverse institutions to optimize utility and efficiency. In doing this, the project will make a significant contribution to the heritage, cultural and information fields. More specifically, the work will represent a major step towards building a living, growing repository of reliable, networked information that will generate a greater awareness and understanding outside of the Netherlands of the Dutch and their influence in the wider world.

Methodology

The project would bring together technical (IT) and historical experts from the Netherlands and Australia to explore the question of how best to identify, aggregate, link, publish and provide access to multiple records of Dutch migration over time between Netherlands and Australia. Thus the main aim of the proposed thematic group will be to identify and develop methodological processes that will be required for the effective interoperation of relevant databases and digitized collections of diverse archives around the Netherlands, Australia and Indonesia. It will build on the work undertaken to date for ‘Dutch Australians At A Glance (DAAAG)’ project, to extend its focus to ‘Dutch Abroad At A Glance (DAAAG): A template for making archival material accessible globally’. This will involve detailed discussions with a wide range of organisations and with their web developers and data curators, and will require the specialist knowledge of digital humanities and e-humanities practices in the Netherlands and Australia. The focus of the first stage of the project would be on Australia. The project could be expanded in the future to other countries. In Australia virtual museums and other resources are being developed to record and represent the migration of people to and from Australia. The work plan would address the two key strands of the project process. These, broadly, are the human and the technical aspects. The first relates to content – including data collection, categorization and prioritization and how to potentially involve the public, interactively, in the collection and curation of additional relevant content so as to add further public value. The second relates to technical issues – including data management, interface design and the complex questions of database interoperability. It is recognised that this is a bold project, and there will be technical challenges, as well as issues of language and translation. A linked open data approach is one technical option that could be explored. In Australia the recently funded ‘Humanities Network Infrastructure’ project may provide a framework for such data sharing, <http://www.nectar.org.au/humanities-networked-infrastructure-huni-virtual-laboratory>; there are similar European frameworks of relevance). The proposed project/theme group will fully scope out the human and technical aspects of this undertaking, to form a solid foundation and template for future work, including identifying specific obstacles and challenges that need to be overcome. Overall, the methodology will involve a detailed and intensive schedule of activities to address the question of how best to harness and interrelate existing digital resources in the Netherlands with those of other countries, specifically Australia, and provide ease of public access to those records. The detailed schedule can be developed quickly when required using the outstanding expertise of the team, several of whom are experienced project leaders.

Outcomes

There would be mutual benefits for the Netherlands and Australia. The processes involved lay the foundations for: building a repertoire of cultural memory; providing multiple forms of access to historical documents of different kinds and in different formats; and addressing trans-temporal and intercultural links. A key outcome of the project/theme group would be to build a strong foundation for the formation of a larger collaborative proposal that involves both countries. The social value of this research longterm is immeasurable in terms of individual and community identity and pride, and

^{ix} N.Peters (ed), *The Dutch Down Under 1606-2006*, University of Western Australia Press, 2006.

also in terms of the relationship between the two countries. There would be an emphasis on scientific innovation in preserving, promoting and enriching the records of cultural heritage and on the exchange of those records between countries. This would facilitate the development of a model and a template for future work. The project will benefit from Western Australia's IVEC super computing facility and the Federal Government's 'National Broadband Network' which is to bring a super fast internet capacity to end users around Australia.

From a university perspective the common digital interpretive research resource environment that DAAAG establishes will facilitate closer cultural and social analysis for comparative research and education. This will in turn widen the scope and range of the interpretative opportunities and foster international academic relationships and networks involving Partner Organisations - universities, libraries, museums, archives and industry – and open up new avenues for research and grant applications. Much of this project's work would involve scoping out possibilities for making collections available, for data sharing between the two countries and sourcing external grants. The Homeland/Hostland perspective supports the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs 'mutual heritage perspective' created for 'countries whose history intersects with the Netherlands, generating many material and immaterial relics of the past, which are collectively referred to by the term 'common cultural heritage'. By maintaining, managing, using and highlighting this heritage, we can foster a critical reflection on our past and a mutual understanding of past, present and future. This can strengthen relations and promote cooperation between countries, both bilaterally and multilaterally" (Ministry Buitenlandse Zaken website [Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs website] <http://www.minbuza.nl/nl/zoekresultaten?freetext=Mutual+heritage&zoek-submit>).

Proposed Five Partners for a Three Month Thematic Group Residency

The group comprises three IT/Humanities experts - two from the Netherlands and one from Australia; and two migration experts - one from the Netherlands and one from Australia.

Netherlands Leader (a pre-requisite for a NIAS-Lorenz Theme Group):

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Dr Paul Arthur

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Dr Arthur is recognised as a leader in the digital history field internationally, and has published widely on colonial and exploration history; he is President of the Australasian Association for Digital Humanities <http://aa-dh.org>.

Dr Nonja Peters

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Facsimile + 61 8 92669031; Mobile + 61 (0)414700289; Email N.Peters@curtin.edu.au. Dr Peters is an expert in Dutch migration and resettlement in Australia and Dutch maritime, military and mercantile connections with Australia since 1606. She is working on Dutch Australians At A Glance (www.daaag.org) in partnership with with Marijke van Faassen of the Huygens ING Institute Netherlands History and Professor Marlou Schrover of the Leiden University history Department, with the support of the National Archives in The Hague.

e-Humanities Group, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts & Sciences (KNAW) <http://ehumanities.nl>

The theme group would include a nominated representative from the eHumanities Group, and would participate in activities of the e-Humanities Group and draw on its network. Program Leader Prof Sally Wyatt

<http://ehumanities.nl/sally-wyatt> is very supportive of this proposal and has suggested Prof Jan Kok, an expert on migration and digital archives. http://www.ru.nl/geschiedenis/wie_wat_waar/medewerkers/medewerkers/kok.