

Redactie: Cijfers achter woorden zijn noten!

Summary

Digitization of Mill collections, experiences and perspectives

This thematic day on 22nd November 2008 was organized by TIMS-Netherlands and Flanders, The Mill Documentation Foundation and The Dutch Mill Association. The most important reason was the planning to digitize most parts of the mill collection of The Dutch Mill Association. The main goal is to generate internet access to the information about single mills. Appreciation will be generated by a wide audience to couple institutional and private mill related digital database information when at least one common characteristic can be formulated as part of the distributed digital information.

Speaker Ron Cookson (Mills Archive Trust, Reading RG1 4RJ, United Kingdom)

The Mills Archive was used as a working model. The practical realization of this archive exists of hardware, techniques and process organization. Pictures were scanned and stored in TIFF format and after a conversion with JPEG were used for internet distribution. As database Microsoft Access was used which performs well with more than 20.000 records. Scanning can be done by external companies and back-ups and checking back-ups from time to time is important. Profits for selling pictures through internet are low and often it is time consuming to find the correct copyrights. Information can be found on internet⁵.

Speaker Erik Stoop (The Mill Documentation Foundation)

The Mill Documentation Foundation manages the collection of The Dutch Mill Association and consists of archive material, library material, pictures and other documentation material. The main active area of attention is The Netherlands and consists of the foundation archive (1923-1973), material of related organizations and private collections. Important is the complete administration of delivered steel stocks from the Firm Pot at Kinderdijk. The library order is per Province. Atlases, magazine De Molenaar from 1898-1906 and 1923-2000 and numerous other local magazines are available. Unique is the collection of inventory books made by A. ten Bruggencate (1885-1957). Numerous mill pictures and articles cut out of newspapers are arranged in the name of cities and mills. The digitalization process and the internet access to the information have been started for some time.

Material can be seen and scans can be made at Zeeburgerdijk 139, Amsterdam, on Thursday between 10-15 hours.

Speaker Lizzy Jongma (Reekx, consultants and service providers in provision of information)

Has made an Information Plan for The Dutch Mill Association.

-----*Most important trends in the digital world are:*

- Virtual communities, an ingredient of web 2.0 and is all about social interaction between people.
- User generated content (non professional): pictures, videos, audio, tagging, weblogs etc.
- Blogging of authors including RSS feeds.
- Tagging: granting of key words to pictures by end users.
- Mobile applications: special format exchange between devices from where information can be downloaded to iPod and GSM.

-----*Examples of couplings are:*

- Sources: Van Goghmuseum⁷
- Knowledge: Beeldbank Nationaal Archief⁸
- Applications: Victoria and Albert Museum⁹
- Picture and babbles: UBC Botanical Garden and Centre for Plant Research¹⁰

First a selection has to be made of all material to be offered. After digitalization meta data must be made in order to open up the material. An important part of the project is the coupling of different sources of information related to the existing or disappeared mill. Peter van Diermen (DEVENit, developers & inventors in IT) showed application software called Atlantis for the realization. See (web based) Thematis Erfgoedportal¹¹. Atlantis supports OAI-PMH (Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting¹²). Also EAD (Encoded Archival Description) is possible for

exporting to other archive formats¹³.

Speaker Bob Poppen (administrator and research worker in mill related archives of Groningen)

This archive consists of documents 75 meters wide, about 1000 books and many pictures. During the last five years 41.000 pictures have been digitized of which 9.000 from the North of Germany. This material is used for the Dutch magazine De Zelfzwichter, for visitors, exhibitions and presentations about the mills of the province of Groningen. In the past, the archive was only concentrating on collecting mill material, not to make it accessible through internet. Uniformity with other archives about the basic structure of the archive is the problem these days for the volunteers. Databases built in the past cannot be coupled with others and visitors can not access the information independently. Cooperation with the RHC (Groninger Archives) has started and other institutes have been approached for cooperation. Internet is beginning to fulfill a source of mill related information, mill databases and Wikipedia are examples of that. For the realization of a digital mill archive the next items are important:

- Central site from which information can be accessed.
- Good overview of work already done to prevent double work.
- Mill archives publish an inventory of their collections.

Finally it is necessary to mention that not all information will be obtainable through internet and visiting archives will always be necessary. Research only behind the computer will therefore be an illusion.

Speaker Dick Bunscoeke (Perspective for coupling mill related information)

Pictures are valuable for imagination, facts and stories about building constructions and people related to this give content to these pictures. Most mill related information at the moment is distributed but after digitizing this information can be coupled together and made accessible to mill interested end users. Not only large collections like The Dutch Mill Association, 'De Zaanse Molen' and the 'RACM' for instance, but also local associations and private collections can play an important role.

Combining digital information is in fact 'chain automation' and surplus value will be gained.

A Dutch specialist in this area is prof. dr. mr. J.H.A.M. Grijpink who formulated some 'chain laws' which are helpful when thinking about 'chain processes'.

- 'Small solutions' and gradual development must have a central role.
- Centrally no intervention must exist with participants to the chain.
- The covering level must be simple in design and content.
- Striving to consensus about the general design is unnecessary and a waste of time.
- 'The Problem' is leading because that is common to everybody.

These laws should be realized by common presentation of mill related information. With a free choice of data input, a minimum set of community elements, shared responsibility and costs, the aim is surprisingly close! More than ten years ago LAMA (Country Mill Administration) made a proposal for a minimal set of community elements about the geographical pointing of mills¹⁴.

Together with a time indication every mill can be identified uniquely.

How to begin: One of the big participants has to create (with subsidization) the common infrastructure to which all can attach. The 'chain problem', which everybody binds together, called: 'where can I find information about mills', must be the leading choice. During time a 'mill google' page can be formed and gain dynamics. Items like 'tips and tricks', FAQ's and also 'Mill WiKi' can be coupled. And finally all participants to the chain are adding information in his or her own way! Together we can make it true because time has ready provided the information that is digitalized. And as is known: shared information will not be lost so fast. That perspective deserves that as many people as possible work together in fulfilling this digitalization project.

Reactions to the presentations

Can molinological Flanders participate? In the beginning The Dutch Mill Association will be focused primarily on The Netherlands but in a later stage Flanders can be connected as well.

Will other organizations be willing to cooperate due to the expectation of less hits to their own websites? This will not be the case because visitors will only reach dedicated sites which are not

connected through to other sites as Ron Cookson confirmed. On the contrary the reach will be effectively enlarged.

During the discussion The Dutch Mill Association was seen as an umbrella site.

Willem Entrop reacted afterwards in writing a supplement concerning questions about the chosen system related to specific implementation forms about building and equipment of mills. As an example can be mentioned a series of articles by Ton Meesters in Molinology about self-reefing of mills. Picture collections fulfill an important source of information in this case. Connecting databases with characterization details of mills to picture databases will improve accessibility and access time.

Indexing of which is visible on pictures is important in this case, not the choice of selecting software to be used! TIMS Netherlands and Flanders or The Mill Documentation Foundation (SMD) should develop this general implementable system which will be of great value in the future coupling of databases.

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