Persistent Identifiers for Dutch cultural heritage institutions

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Over the past years, more and more collections belonging to archives, libraries, media, museums, and knowledge institutes are being digitised and made available online. These are exciting times for ALM institutions. They are realising that, in the information society, their collections are goldmines.

Unfortunately most heritage institutions in the Netherlands do not yet meet the basic preconditions for long-term availability of their collections. The digital objects often have no long lasting fixed reference yet. URL's and web addresses change. Some digital objects that were referenced in Europeana and other portals can no longer be found. References in scientific articles have a very short life span, which is damaging for scholarly research.

In 2015, the Dutch Digital Heritage Network (NDE) has started a two-year work program to co-ordinate existing initiatives in order to improve the (long-term) accessibility of the Dutch digital heritage for a wide range of users, anytime, anyplace.

The Digital Heritage Network is a partnership established on the initiative of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. The members of the NDE are large, national institutions that strive to professionally preserve and manage digital data, e.g. the National Library, The Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, the Netherlands Cultural Heritage Agency, the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, the National Archive of the Netherlands and the DEN Foundation, and a growing number of associations and individuals both within and outside the heritage sector.

By means of three work programmes the goals of the Network should be accomplished and improve the visibility, the usability and the sustainability of digital heritage. Each programme contains of a set of projects. Within the sustainability program a project on creating a model for persistent identifiers is taking place. The main goals of the project are (1) raise awareness among cultural heritage institutions on the subject of persistent identifiers, (2) develop a business model for a persistent identifier service especially for smaller CH organisations, and (3) set up some show cases.

Some of the products delivered by the project in 2016 will be:
(1) a business model for a persistent identifier service based on an affordable co-financing model
(2) a technical implementation of a persistent identifier service based on one of the existing PI models
(3) a general agreement with suppliers of collection management systems and record management systems used by cultural heritage institutions in The Netherlands
(4) a decision tree for cultural heritage organisations which can guide them through the process of selecting a particular type of Persistent Identifier (Handle, DOI, ARK or NBN:URN)
(5) a technical implementation help function

In the presentation we will explain the collaborative work carried out in The Netherlands within the framework of the NDE Network, focusing on the Persistent Identifiers project. We will present our preliminary results on communication strategy, business model and decision tree. And we will speak about the discussions we have with the commercial vendors of record management systems in order to built-in facilities for persistent identifiers in the systems used by the Dutch cultural heritage organisations.