

Proceedings of the Conference

Collect and Connect: Archives and Collections in a Digital Age (COLCO2020)

November 23-24, 2020

Preface

The international conference *Collect and Connect: Archives and Collections in a Digital Age (COLCO 2020)* officially concluded the NWO¹/Brill Creative Industries Project Making Sense of Illustrated Handwritten Archives. This collaborative research project was carried out by the Leiden Centre of Data Science (LCDS), Naturalis Biodiversity Center, the universities of Groningen (ALICE), Leiden (LIACS), and Twente (STePS), and publisher Brill as creative industry partner from early 2016 until December 2020. The aim of the project was to develop user engineered computational methods to recognize and semantically interpret heterogeneous digital archival collections.² The consortium's research was financed by the Dutch Research Council's Creative Industry programme as well as Brill publishers under the grant number: 652.001.001. The aims of this final conference were twofold. First, to present the results of finished and original research in the field of digitized archives and natural and cultural heritage collections. Second, to promote exchange and discussion between professionals in the field of digital cultural and natural heritage.

The international Collect and Connect conference took place on November 25 and 26, 2020 and was organized and chaired by Dr. Andreas Weber (University of Twente), Dr. Eulàlia Gassó Miracle (Naturalis Biodiversity Center, Leiden), Maarten Heerlien (Rijksmuseum Amsterdam), and Dr. Katy Wolstencroft (Leiden University). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the conference was organized as a virtual event. Despite limitations in online communication, the conference attracted substantial international attention. We received 19 submissions out of which 9 were selected (acceptance rate: 47,4%). Each submission received at least 2 extensive reviews by experts in the field. All papers were presented and discussed during the conference and are included in these proceedings. In addition to the peer reviewed papers, the conference had three keynote lectures by Dr. Sharon Leon (Michigan State University), Prof. Franco Niccolucci (PIN – University of Florence), and Prof. Lambert Schomaker (University of Groningen), and a variety of interactive formats, such as round table discussions and demos. These sessions are not part of these proceedings. The conference, which attracted more than 300 registered participants from all over the world, led to lively discussions among computer scientists, humanities scholars, and digital heritage, collection, and archive professionals.



¹ Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (Dutch Research Council).

² Weber, A., Ameryan, M., Wolstencroft, K., Stork, L., Heerlien, M., Schomaker, L.: Towards a Digital Infrastructure for Illustrated Handwritten Archives. In: Ioannides, M. (ed.), *Digital Cultural Heritage, ITN-DCH 2017, LNCS*, vol. 10605, pp. 155-166. Springer, Heidelberg (2018), [10.1007/978-3-319-75826-8_13](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-75826-8_13); Stork, L., Weber, A., Gassó Miracle, E., Verbeek, F., Plaat, A., Van den Herik, J, Wolstencroft, K.: Semantic Annotation of Natural History Collections. *Journal of Web Semantics* 59, 100462 (2019), [10.1016/j.websem.2018.06.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.websem.2018.06.002); Gassó, E., Stork, L., Weber, A., Ameryan, M., Wolstencroft, K., *Natuurkundige Commissie Archives Online*. Leiden, Brill (2020), <https://dh.brill.com/nco/>.

Thematically, the conference, and also this proceedings volume, focusses on the question of how computational technologies can help libraries, archives and museums to enrich their digitized archives and collections with contextual information, in order to make them retrievable and interlinked in novel ways. A major challenge in the field is the heterogenous character of many of such digitized collections. Many handwritten archives, archives of sound and moving images, and collections of physical objects in the realms of natural history, archeology, history, and art history, entail combinations of textual and visual elements. The interpretation of such material requires a range of different expertise and computational technologies. The papers of this proceedings offer a rich insight in how different computational technologies can help to enrich heterogenous digitized collections with context.

We would like to thank the international program committee who has helped us to process and review all submissions. The program committee consisted of the following researchers (in alphabetical order): Rasa Bocyte (The Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision), Dr. Giovanni Colavizza (Leiden University/University of Amsterdam, UvA), Dr. Marieke van Erp (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, KNAW), Prof. Charles van den Heuvel (KNAW), Laurens Hogeweg (Naturalis Biodiversity Center), Prof. Aske Plaat (Leiden University), Dr. Annemieke Romein (KNAW), Prof. Steven Verstockt (Ghent University), Dr. Lorella Viola (Université de Luxembourg), Dr. Marco Wiering (University of Groningen), and Dr. Gerben Zaagsma (Université de Luxembourg). The programme committee was chaired by Prof. Jaap van den Herik and Prof. Fons Verbeek, both from Leiden University.

Finally, we would like to thank our sponsors. Without the additional financial support of the Dutch Research Council (NWO) and Brill publishers, we would not have been able to organize and hold this conference.

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Andreas Weber
Eulàlia Gassó Miracle
Maarten Heerlien
Katy Wolstencroft