

6th Communia Workshop: Memory Institutions and the Public Domain 1-2/10/09, Barcelona, Spain

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Images for the Future: Realising Maximum Accessibility to Audiovisual Heritage (BY SA 3.0)

Abstract:

The audiovisual collections of the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision (Sound and Vision) in Hilversum, of the Filmmuseum in Amsterdam, and of the National Archive in The Hague document our shared history of the past hundred years. Films, documentaries, radiobroadcast, and television programmes comprise more than 700.000 hours worth of material. The costs for creating this oeuvre have run into the billions. The educational, cultural, and economical value of this material is enormous.

Spread over a period of seven years, the FES (Fund for the reinforcement of Economic Structure) is providing a budget of 154 million Euros to digitise a large portion of the Netherlands' audiovisual memory. With this project, the imminent threat of decay and loss of vulnerable films and video- and audiotapes is being taken away. During the project, a total of 137.200 hours of video, 22.510 hours of film, 123.900 hours of audio, and 2.9 million photos from these archives will be restored, preserved, digitized, and disclosed through various services.

The Images for the Future consortium assumes that the collections represent great value. It has asked the Foundation for Economic Research (SEO) to test this assumption, resulting in the set-up of an area code prefix costs and benefits analysis. In doing so, the SEO followed the customary OEI-guideline (OEI = Infrastructure Effects Research). These guidelines show how the costs and benefits of roads, railways, and the likes, can be stipulated for the 'Netherlands Ltd.' The environment and other 'soft' effects are also being taken into consideration. In addition to stipulating total costs and benefits, the analysis also shows where the effects end up: with users, intellectual property rights holders, the government, or the consortium.

The calculations of – current and future – user benefits are based on several assumptions regarding the use of audiovisual content. It thereby neglects the more abstract project goals, which are difficult to express in monetary terms. One example is the preservation of cultural historical heritage and the increase in multimedia literacy. Despite a subsequent underestimation of total benefits, the analysis proves the quantifiable benefits to surpass the costs.

The main goal of the project is realising maximum accessibility to the audiovisual material for the targeted user groups (educational institutions, the general public, and the creative sector). One of the five end products outlined in the project plan to meet this goal is: "Provision of access to a core collection of digital film and audio, either devoid of intellectual property rights, or licensed under Creative Commons."

The project was kicked off on 1st July 2007 and has a running time of seven years.

Images of the Future is a project from the Filmmuseum, Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Centrale Discotheek Rotterdam, National Archives, Association of Public Libraries and KnowledgeLand.