

Measuring the Use of Collections Before and After Publication in Wikimedia

Trilce Navarrete

University of Southern Denmark

Trilce.Navarrete@gmail.com

The mission of museums worldwide revolves around giving access to human's knowledge.

Intergenerational transfer of knowledge about collections is taking an important new dimension: with Wikipedia, people all over the world can have access to potentially everything housed and managed by the memory institutions. But, what is actually the impact of publishing online? Based on two Dutch museum cases, access to collections will be analyzed comparing publication of analogue collections with publication online using the Wikimedia BaGLAMa2 tool. It will be argued that publication through Wikimedia substantially increases access to collections, particularly of the lesser-known collections.

Figure 1 Screenshot of a negative from the Tropenmuseum made available in Wikimedia and used in a Wikipedia article

Histoire de la culture des plantes sucrières

L'histoire de la culture des plantes sucrières couvre une période allant de la haute Antiquité à nos jours.

Mais c'est surtout à partir du milieu du [xvii^e siècle](#), avec le développement du [mercantilisme](#) et du [colonialisme](#), que commence la période dite industrielle avec la [Caraïbe](#) qui devient la principale région mondiale pour la production du sucre obtenu à partir de la [canne](#).

Cette période connaît une expansion à marche forcée au siècle suivant, marquée par le [commerce triangulaire](#) vers les îles françaises et anglaises. Elle n'a cédé cette place qu'à la fin du [xx^e siècle](#) avec l'abolition de l'esclavage et la



Planteur de canne à sucre indonésien exhibant son outillage; époque : Empire colonial néerlandais.
Crédit photo : Tropenmuseum.

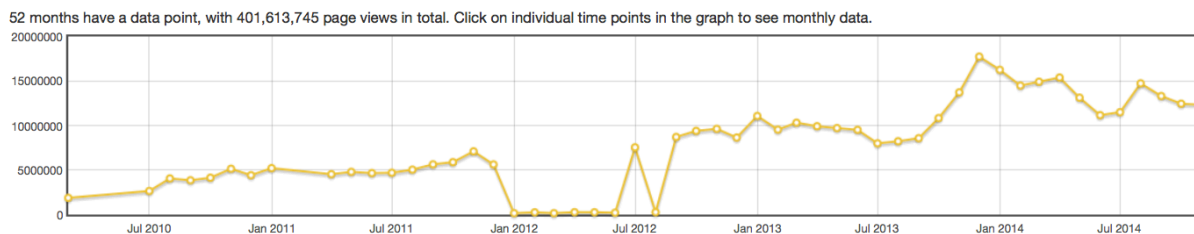
Source: http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Histoire_de_la_culture_des_plantes_sucrières.

Digitization has represented not only a chosen technical option for the management of information but has also fundamentally changed the way to access and (re)use information in all areas of life. However, limited data is available to understand the actual impact of emerging knowledge transfer platforms, including Wikipedia. Most quantitative analysis related to digital heritage collections derives from the library science tradition, particularly the analysis of use and seeking behaviour in order to understand user needs and improve the information service in museums (Skov and Ingewersen, 2008), archives (Yakel, 2004; Zhang and Kamps, 2010) or libraries (Connaway, 2011). Results show that users can have different information needs at different times and that convenience of access remains an important factor when accessing content. Users further favour full access to content, including images, sounds or full text rather than only a bibliographic reference. Allocation of resources would benefit from a better understanding of users' preferences and information needs.

In the Netherlands, only a handful of museums have started collaborations with Wikimedia. This contribution will review the history of the Tropenmuseum, ethnographic museum in Amsterdam and of the Rijksmuseum, art and history museum in Amsterdam, and their approach to open data and their collaboration with Wikimedia. Analysis will include a follow-up of the access to objects through the archive (in the analogue world) and through the BaGLAMa2 tool (in the Wikipedia world).

The presentation will consider issues of collection origin and origin of users, GLAMs as illustration, organizational process when publishing the collections in Wikimedia and expectations of success. Particular attention will be given to the democratization of access to collections: all objects, from any part of the world, can be potentially positioned in any context to be accessed from all over the world. The repositioning of digital objects, from the physical museum and the institutional website into an open platform supporting collaboration and exchange, can potentially change the shape of the long tail.

Figure 2 Page views of Wikipedia articles containing images from the Tropenmuseum



Source: <http://tools.wmflabs.org/glamtools/baglama2>.

References

- Jancic, Maja Bogataj, et al. (2015) *LAPSI Policy Recommendation N.5 The Proposed Inclusion of Cultural and Research Institutions in the Scope of PSI Directive*. Brussels: EC.
- Connaway, Lynn, et al. (2011) "If it is too inconvenient I'm not going after it:" Convenience as a critical factor in information-seeking behaviours' in *Library & Information Science Research*. 33(3):179-190.
- Navarrete, Trilce (2014) *A History of Digitization: Dutch Museums*. PhD dissertation. University of Amsterdam.
- Skov, Mette and Pter Ingwersen (2008) 'Exploring information seeking behaviour in a digital museum context' in *IliX '08 Proceedings of the second international symposium on Information interaction in context*. New York: ACM, pp. 110-115.
- Yakel, Elizabeth (2004) 'Seeking information, seeking connections, seeking meaning: genealogists and family historians' in *Information Research*. 10(1). Paper 205.
- Zhang, Junte and Jaap Kamps (2010) 'A Search Log-Based Approach to Evaluation' in M. Lalmas et al. (eds.) *Research and Advanced Technology for Digital Libraries*, LNCS 6273, pp. 248-260. Berlin: Springer.