

# The golden age of illustration and collaboration

## International collaboration via Wikidata, the multilingual linked open data hub

*Abstract for the International Conference on Sustainable Digital Heritage 2021*

On 15 March 2021 outgoing Minister Van Engelshoven of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science launched the [National Strategy for Digital Heritage 2021-2024](#). The strategy aims to digitally connect heritage collections, so that users can better tell stories about and with heritage. The key lies in cooperation within the network. Maastricht University (UM) wants to make its heritage collections easier to find, more useful and more sustainable for the widest audience possible, but also for scientific purposes. UM does this by contributing to the establishment of an innovative digital infrastructure ([Linked Open Limburg](#)) that makes it possible to offer its collection of data linked, open and enriched. This makes it easier to share these data with others and enrich them with new linked information, making collections as accessible as possible. This infrastructure creates the conditions for new ways of publication, research and use.

To develop, maintain and extend expertise in the field of linked open data Maastricht University Library initiated the project 'Making Special Collections findable, visible and reusable in Wikidata' ([video](#)). Starting with the 'Golden age of illustration collection' (a collection of 56 richly illustrated children's books from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) the library will over a period of ten months focus on creating structured and linked open data on its own website, Wikidata (the international, multilingual database of the Wikimedia Foundation) and Wikimedia Commons (the media repository of the Wikimedia Foundation with an important focus on structured data). An important role within this project is reserved for a Wikidata specialist. With this Wikidata project the library develops more expertise in the field of linked open data in general and Wikidata & structured data on Wikimedia Commons in particular.

In the presentation 'The golden age of illustration and collaboration' the speakers will introduce the project and discuss both the 'why' (the context) and the 'how' and 'what' (practical choices made, the data model used, the concrete work done on both Wikidata and Wikimedia Commons) of the project. After this short introduction the presentation will mainly focus on the way the library collaborates - via the two Wikimedia platforms - with both the international wiki community and (university) libraries and cultural heritage institutions in and outside the Netherlands. With Wikidata being a huge data hub for regional, national and international collaboration on structured and linked data the UM recognises the power of the network and reinforces its ambitions to make its digital heritage more visible, usable and sustainable.

### Short bio's:

Odin Essers is the main curator of Maastricht University's Special Collections and as such responsible for policymaking, collection management, education and research support, fundraising and outreach. Objectives: making the Special Collections as visible and useful as possible for a wide and diverse public, both inside and outside the academic community. Contributing to education and research, focusing on active partnership in the province of Limburg and the Euregion, and involving the wider community in events and projects. Offering physical and online access to UM's Special Collections and professional support when using them. Investing in preserving the collections and expand them where useful for UM and the region.

UM Profile page: [maastrichtuniversity.nl/odin.essers](https://maastrichtuniversity.nl/odin.essers) LinkedIn page: [linkedin.com/in/odinessers](https://www.linkedin.com/in/odinessers)

Daniëlle Jansen is an expert in Wikimedia projects (Wikipedia, Wikidata, and Wikimedia Commons), inclusiveness and gender. Daniëlle currently works as a Wikidata specialist in Residence at Maastricht University Library. She is central to the library's aim to develop more expertise in the field of linked open data, Wikidata and structured data on Wikimedia Commons.

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