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Bio

I'm a historian specialised in arts & culture research using digital methods. I work as assistant professor Cultural Policy & Management at FASoS, Maastricht University in the Netherlands, and have been involved in various digital arts and heritage projects, including the [Dutch Culture Monitor](#), [Time Machine](#), and [Amsterdam Time Machine](#). Since obtaining my PhD in History in 2007 (Utrecht University), I've explored in my research and teaching topics such as relationship between culture, economy, and cities; the development of digital methods, especially for the fields of history and heritage; and the relationship between research, policy and practice.

Abstract

Commoning digital heritage: collective approaches to heritage (research) projects

Terms such as 'partnership', 'alliance', 'collaboration', 'network' or 'inter-organizational relations' are keywords in many digital heritage projects. This paper presents part of ongoing research on digital heritage policy and practice in the Netherlands and in Europe. Based on own experiences with digital (heritage) projects such as Amsterdam Time Machine and Culture Monitor, as well as observations of other projects, I first argue that collaboration in digital heritage give rise both collaborative 'advantages' and 'inertia', then question the validity of such a terms in the heritage research context, and conclude with a commoning-inspired perspective on collective approaches to digital heritage.

Motivations for collaboration, expected advantages, and factors for success or failure have been discussed extensively in existing literature. Collaboration is often viewed as positive, because pooling resources, capitalizing on complementary expertise are thought to result in economies of scale and increased innovativeness, both in for profit and not-for-profit, and in cross-sectoral and sectoral partnerships. However, empirical research also reveals numerous problems and disappointments in these partnerships. In brief, these studies show that everybody struggles with collaboration.

Inspired by recent work on (urban) commoning, I posit that in the field of digital heritage we should not seek to limit such frustration and 'inertia' or merely view it an inevitable byproduct of developing innovative heritage products or projects. Rather, in a time where notions such as social responsibility, inclusion and diversity take center stage in both heritage policy and practice, we could develop collective approaches to digital heritage as the preferred way to organize our research and practice. In this way, collaboration can also be understood as a means to pursuing collective approaches to digital heritage, which may then even become inseparable from the heritage 'product' itself.