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Managing Humanities Research Data and Collections, The Records Continuum Model and the Collections of the Meertens Institute.

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Managing Humanities Research Data and Collections, The Records Continuum Model and the Collections of the Meertens Institute.

Douwe Zeldenrust

Access to data and collections is one of the most fundamental starting points for every humanities researcher. Increasingly, historians and social scientists use digital and digital-born information. Traditionally, these resources are managed by archivists using the 'Life Cycle Model' (LCM). This model was viewed as fundamental to archival ideas and programs. But the need to work with digital records began to highlight key conceptual deficiencies in this paper-orientated model (Gilliland, 2017). This influenced the development of the 'Records Continuum Model' (RCM). This alternative model is more flexible and provides insight into the complex contexts in which (digital) documents are created and managed (McKemmish, 2017). It is progressively more adopted by governments e.g. and potentially provides a framework for managing resources of humanities institutions as well. But within that domain the LCM is still dominant. This paper will reflect on the potential and the issues of using the RCM as a concept for managing research data and collections of institutions within the humanities.

In order to make the first steps in introducing the RCM within this domain, two collections of the Meertens Institute (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences) will be taken as a use case. The Meertens Institute has a rich tradition in studying language and culture in the Netherlands. Its vast collections have been gathered in a period of over 90 years (Zeldenrust, 2020). The use cases have been selected on the bases of two criteria. First, the collections need to have been brought together over a longer period of time in order to make the collection management policies and possible changes visible. Second, they need to contain both analog and digital items in order to explore the suitability of the RCM for the diverse characteristics of humanities collections. The first use case is the audio collection 'Dutch in the U.S.A.' accumulated by Jo Daan (Collection 2001). The second one is the toponymy collection accumulated by Rob Rentenaar (Collection 191). Lastly, the use of the RCM as a concept for managing research data and collection of institutions within the humanities is part of my PhD research. As this research is ongoing, this paper will show work in progress.

Resources

Gilliland, Anne J. (2017). 'Archival and Recordkeeping Traditions in the Multiverse and Their Importance for Researching'. In Anne J. Gilliland, Sue McKemmish and Andrew J. Lau (eds.), *Research in the Archival Multiverse*. Monash University Publishing, pp 31-73.

McKemmish, Sue (2017). 'Recordkeeping in the Continuum'. In: Anne J Gilliland, Sue McKemmish and Andrew J Lau (eds.), *Research in the Archival Multiverse*. Monash University Publishing, pp 122-160.

Zeldenrust, Douwe A. (2020). *Verzamelen verandert, Collectiemanagement Plan Meertens Instituut 2020 - 2023*. Amsterdam: Meertens Instituut.

Archives

Meertens Institute, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. Collection 'Jo Daan in Amerika', 1966, Collection 2001.

Meertens Institute, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. Collection 'vernoemingsnamen', 1960 - 2000, Collection 191.