DATA-KBR-BE

DATA-KBR-BE: Facilitating Data-Level Access to KBR Collections for Open Science

DURATION
15/12/2019 - 15/3/2022

BUDGET
498 976 €

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Context

Providing data-level access to digital collections is the primary challenge for undertaking digital humanities research in libraries (Wilms 2018). This challenge is multi-faceted: digital collections are technically "too difficult to access or share", are subject to legal restrictions: "copyright issues prevent reuse, even in research" or not (yet) digitally available: "not all collections are digitised yet and those that are often have OCR issues)" (ibid.). These findings are reiterated in the report of a recent European-wide survey on *Europe's Digital Humanities Landscape* undertaken by the European Association of Research Libraries (LIBER)'s Digital Humanities and Cultural Heritage Working Group (Wilms et al. 2019).

The situation is similar in North America. The flagship initiative, '*Always Already Computational: Collections as Data*', which defines '**Collections as Data**' as a "conceptual orientation to collections that renders them as ordered information, stored digitally, so that they are inherently amenable to computation" was established to document, exchange experience and share knowledge in support of users who want to work with collections computationally. The initiative's final report (Padilla et al. 2019) and the related project deliverables provide a range of community developed principles, practical guidelines and activities to encourage practitioners to implement 'collections as data' in their own institutions. The proposed project ***DATA-KBR-BE: Facilitating Data-level Access to KBR Collections for Open Science*** seeks to address these challenges on the Belgian level by focusing on the computational needs for its National Library's digitised collections of cultural heritage materials.

General objectives and underlying research questions

DATA-KBR-BE will optimise KBR's existing ICT infrastructure to stimulate sustainable data-level access to KBR's digitised collections for digital humanities research.For this project, research teams at UGent and the UAntwerp will work closely together with the collection, digitisation, and ICT experts at KBR to **co-design two interdisciplinary research scenarios** that will extract relevant **thematic datasets** from ***BelgicaPress*** **(KBR's digitised historical newspaper collection)** for reuse and analysis in the field of digital humanities.

Methodology

Specifically, the project will select a corpus from KBR's existing collections (WP1) to extract a series of datasets that are specifically catered to the interdisciplinary needs of researchers across different universities (WP2), and host those datasets on a new KBR Open Data Platform (data.kbr.be; WP3). The datasets curated during the project will be compliant with the **FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable)** principles of research data management, and deposited in a **Trusted Digital Repository** (see WP4).

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Potential impact of the research

Towards the end of the project, **scientific exploitation and social valorisation** of these federal open datasets will be stimulated through the organisation of subject-specific high-profile hackathons It is our hypothesis that the close collaboration between KBR experts and the partner universities' researchers on the development of both this platform and its datasets will result in a replicable workflow that may be used to gradually open up KBR's collections for further research – to ultimately become part of a systematic, automated approach for offering tailored datasets of its digital collections to researchers as a service, in line with KBR's strategic plan.

Research results

The Open Science Datasets that will be curated and made accessible in DATA-KBR-BE will enable KBR to make a significant contribution to a range of both National and International Research Infrastructures. These include the Belgian node of DARIAH: Digital Research Infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities which provides sustainable portfolio of services enabling digital enabling digital scholarship in the Arts and Humanities in Belgium and beyond; the CLARIAH: Open Humanities Service Infrastructure project, which embeds high-quality, user-friendly tools and resources into the workflows of humanities researchers; and the BELSPO-funded BISHOPS (Belgian Infrastructure for Social Sciences and Humanities Open Science) project that will develop an infrastructure to support the collection, description, preservation and reuse of digital research data that are produced by Federal Scientific Institutions (FSIs) such as KBR in the fields of humanities and social sciences. DATA-KBR-BE will therefore facilitate data-level access to digitised cultural heritage collections, which will in turn enable researchers across the arts, humanities and social sciences to contribute to the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC): the European Commission's open environment for storing, sharing and re-using scientific data and results across disciplines and borders in Europe, via the SSHOC, the Social Sciences and Humanities Open Cloud.

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