



# Moving with a changing publishing culture

Strategy for the formation of the National  
Library collection  
2024-2030

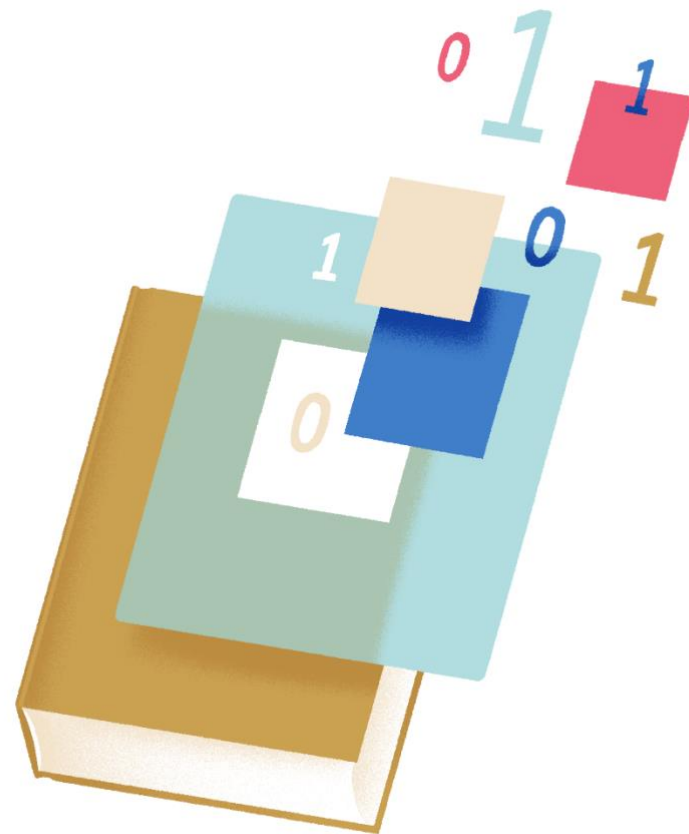
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# 1 The Netherlands writes and publishes

As a National Library, the KB makes a continuous effort to preserve scholarly output published in the Netherlands, as well as everything published in and about the Netherlands in a sustainable way. The publishing landscape has, however, changed radically in recent decades. Whereas people used to depend on a publisher for publishing, in 2024 anyone can publish their opinions or thoughts via blogs, websites, self-publishing platforms and social media, with potentially a much wider reach than paper can provide. Publishing is also much more of a volatile process than it used to be: what is online today may be gone tomorrow. These developments pose new questions for National Libraries worldwide: what choices do we make when it comes to collecting publications in and about our country and how to make them sustainably accessible? At a time when publishing has become a fluid process, how do we capture a collection that is representative of our times, for current and future generations?

This strategy for the National Library collection is an elaboration of the KB's policy plan.<sup>1</sup> It describes the collection profile and selection criteria. We describe how we, as a National Library, against the backdrop of a digitising society, will make choices when it comes to shaping our heritage collection for now and the future.



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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.kb.nl/en/about-us/policy-key-figures>

## 2 Delineation and purpose of the national library collection

Taking care of the National Library collection (see box) is a key task for the KB that is laid down in the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW).<sup>2</sup> With the digitisation of society, the change in how we write and publish and the growth of the information flows that this results in, we feel the need to define what we consider a publication more broadly than 'books, newspapers and magazines'. A publication can no longer only be captured in the fixed form of a newspaper or book or another form of publication on paper. According to a 2022 National News App Monitor measurement, most people now use apps to follow news (88 per cent of respondents), 41 per cent do so via social media and only 29 per cent through newspapers [source NOS]. To keep up with our digitising society, we need to look broadly at what we understand by the term 'publication'. Our definition is that we regard any coherent text unit made publicly available in or about the Netherlands as a publication and thus, in principle, as fitting within our collection profile. It does not matter whether that publication appeared online or on paper, or who created and shared it: it could be a person, an organisation or even a machine, such as the writing robot ChatGPT.

### What is the national library collection?

The national library collection consists of all publications from and about the Netherlands, regardless of language, form, content or current location. The KB has kept one copy of each publication – preferably digital – in its repository collection since 1974. The repository collection is the part of the national library collection that is owned by the KB.

This broadening of the definition of publication that we introduced in our previous collection plan<sup>3</sup> is necessary in order for us to be a representative reflection of the publishing culture of our time in which we collectively publish more words online than we ever did on paper. At the same time, such a general definition also presents us with the need to make clear-cut choices as to what we do and do not do.

<sup>2</sup> WHW art. 1.5, paragraph 2: "As the national library, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek operates in the field of librarianship and information services, both for the benefit of higher education and scientific research and for the benefit of public administration and the exercise of an occupation or business. Within that framework, it shall, in any case, take care of the national

library collection, promote the creation and maintenance of national facilities in the aforementioned field and promote coordination with other academic libraries."

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.kb.nl/sites/default/files/documents/kb\\_contentstrategie\\_publicatieversie\\_def.pdf](https://www.kb.nl/sites/default/files/documents/kb_contentstrategie_publicatieversie_def.pdf)

# 3 Principles

We preserve the publications that make up the National Library collection and make them accessible to present and future generations. Since we cannot collect all of everything but we do want to build a collection that is representative of the time in which it was formed, we have to make very conscious choices as to what we collect, how we preserve the collected works and make them accessible. These choices are in line with the principles and selection criteria we use when curating the collection as well as with our sustainability policy - the aim of which is a climate-neutral National Library collection. The following nine principles guide how we collect and how we want to work with our collection:

## General principles

1. We take care of the published written word from and about the Netherlands;
2. The way we collect follows publishing culture;
3. We collect in a network of heritage institutions.

## Weighting factors

4. Reflection and representativeness take precedence over completeness;
5. Fragility and uniqueness are prioritised;
6. We are working towards a polyphonic National Library collection.

## Use

7. We make our collections digitally accessible to man and machine;
8. Items in our collection are traceable;
9. We make our collections as openly accessible as possible.

We explain these principles below.

### **1. We take care of the published written word from and about the Netherlands**

At the heart of our collection profile is the preservation and sustainable accessibility of the written word published by us and the generations before us. We aim to collect one copy of every publication and to keep it available as heritage for future generations. In line with our commitment to make the most of the opportunities and challenges presented to us by the digital world in relation to the KB's tasks, we collect digital publications wherever possible. Here, we distinguish between the General Collection (see appendix 1) with generic rules and the Special Collection to which different criteria apply (see appendix 2).

### **2. The way collect follows publishing culture**

Unlike many other countries, the Netherlands has a voluntary deposit procedure which means that there is no legal obligation for publishers to deposit their publications in the National Library's collection. We therefore work continuously to build support and invite publishers, small and large, to send their publications to us. The

selection criteria that publications must meet are communicated clearly on our website.<sup>4</sup> Within these criteria, we include publications regardless of their content..

In addition to publications from mainstream publishers, we collect what we as a society publish digitally via websites and social media. For websites and social media, we take the initiative ourselves regarding what we want to archive based on selection criteria (see Appendix 2) and suggestions from researchers or heritage institutions, for example. This is how we capture a cross-section of our digital culture with limited available resources. We do this in close coordination with other public institutions that want to preserve digitally born material sustainably from a heritage perspective.

### 3. We collect in a network of heritage institutions

The rise of new media and forms of publishing has meant that heritage institutions like us are asking themselves how they relate to this development. A podcast, published online by a Dutch newspaper fits within the KB's collection profile but also within the collection policy of The Netherlands Institute for Sound & Vision. Based on the responsibility to use limited public funds efficiently, we coordinate the forming of our collection with other heritage institutions as much as possible. We do this both to collectively form a rich 'national collection' and avoid any overlaps in collection development, as well as to identify gaps. One example is the

[National Register of Web Archives](#) coordinated by the KB which keeps a central record of which organisation has included which archived site in its collection.

Internationally too, the KB is a hub in a network of libraries that are collectively responsible for collecting the world's written heritage, sustainably preserving it and making it accessible. We continue to work together to map our national written heritage contained in foreign collections and make it retrievable, as we did previously with Trinity College Dublin<sup>5</sup> and the University of Uppsala, for example.<sup>6</sup> Through collaboration with the International Internet Preservation Consortium IIPC, we coordinate curation of web content on high-impact topics that transcend national borders, such as the war in Ukraine.<sup>7</sup>

### 4. Reflection and representativeness take precedence over completeness

Because of the expansion of our collection profile, we recognise that having 'all of everything', i.e. including all formats and editions of every publication, is not a tenable strategy. After all, we have limited technical possibilities, people and funds. Digital publications, on the one hand, are more ephemeral and fragile than physical ones. For instance, web pages are known to stay online for an average of 90 days.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, there are more of them than ever. A well-thought-out selection of what we collect and keep permanently

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.kb.nl/uitgevers/opnamecriteria-depot-van-nederlandse-publicaties>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.kb.nl/over-ons/projecten/fagelproject>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.uu.se/en/library/about-the-library/special-collections/the-leufsta-collection/the-leufsta-library>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.kb.nl/en/news/ukraine-web-collection-captures-online-impact-war>

<sup>8</sup> <https://blog.archive.org/2019/10/18/the-wayback-machine-fighting-digital-extinction-in-new-ways/> (2019)

accessible is therefore essential. We want to preserve publications that are characteristic of the current Dutch society, culture and knowledge for the future, in digital form or printed on paper (where that's necessary). By formulating clear criteria, we can ensure that we put together a collection that reflects Dutch society as broadly as possible and is representative of our current publishing landscape. These criteria are detailed for each collection flow in the appendices to this collection strategy.

## **5. Fragility and uniqueness are prioritised**

When we have to make choices, we give priority to collecting publications with a high risk of loss, such as websites and other publications that are only circulated digitally, but also to medieval manuscripts and bibliophile editions, for example. This last category includes publications with a special design or execution (i.e. private press editions, art books, children's books or special printed works, graphic design or special printing techniques and iconic editions with original dust jackets).

## **6. We are working towards a polyphonic National Library collection**

There are gaps in the KB's collection: that is especially true for the period before 1974, the year in which the KB was given the statutory task as a National Library to form a heritage repository for publications from and about the Netherlands. When it was founded back in 1798, the intention of the library was to collect national heritage in printed form but for all kinds of reasons, this was done quite arbitrarily. Genres such as thrillers, detective novels and comic books were considered less valuable academically or cultural-

## **What is polyphony?**

Here, what we mean by polyphony is providing equal space within the National Library collection for the different stories and perspectives of all (groups of) inhabitants of our country - from the past, present and future, regardless of their origin, religion or belief, orientation, political preference, cultural interest, and so on.

historically, and the same went for publications by women and migrants. Consequently, these were not structurally preserved. But it is not only selective collection policy in the past that presents a challenge – because Dutch society is constantly changing. We are constantly welcoming new Dutch citizens, with their own stories and perspectives and their own publishing culture that belong in the National Library collection just as much as the voices that have traditionally been the loudest in our society. Reaching out to these newer voices and building a lasting relationship with them so that their publications also find a way into the collection forces us to constantly examine the representativeness and completeness of our collection. As part of the *Polyphony roadmap* that the KB is developing in 2024, we are taking a targeted approach in order to enrich the story told by our collection. Broadening what we consider to be publications and actively collecting what is published online will help with this: the digitisation of society has lowered the barrier to publishing for everyone. We are following this development so that the National Library collection increasingly reflects the diversity in



Dutch society, in which all inhabitants of our country can recognise themselves..

## **7. We make our collections digitally accessible to man and machine**

Society increasingly expects information to be findable and accessible online. In recent years, the KB has focused on making the National Library collection digitally accessible. Millions of books, newspapers and periodicals from more than a hundred heritage institutions have since been digitised and are accessible through services such as *Delpher* and the *Digitale Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse Letteren* (DBNL; Digital Library for Dutch Literature). Yet there are still large gaps in what is available digitally: especially when it comes to special collections that do not lend themselves as well to standardised, mass-produced digitisation and, due to legal restrictions, when it comes to more recent material from 1960 onwards. The KB will continue to focus on the digitisation of written heritage in the coming years. Appendix 3 includes an explanation of our priorities for the coming years.

## **8. Items in our collection are traceable**

Digitisation also turns collections into datasets that can be separate from the original items or carriers. To be able to make collections available as datasets in a reliable and traceable manner, it is crucial to make digital collections accessible not only to humans but likewise to machines and algorithms as readable data. This means that

where possible, all parts of a digital collection are permanently accessible on the web, via persistent references (sustainable links). Over the next few years, the KB will implement a unified policy on persistent identifiers and associated version policy that is in line with the FAIR principles<sup>9</sup>, the National Digital Heritage Strategy<sup>10</sup> and the Digital Heritage Reference Architecture DERA 4.0<sup>11</sup> of the Dutch Digital Heritage Network in which the KB is one of the six supporting institutions. We also apply international standards such as [RDA](#) and [IIIF](#) so that we can improve the interoperability of our collections. Where useful, we aim to record provenance data, i.e. any data that provides an insight into the history of ownership, enabling the authenticity of the item to be established and facilitating (academic) research. That could be invoices, correspondence regarding purchases, etcetera. This makes it increasingly easier to give an answer when we are asked how long a book has been in the KB, for example.

## **9. We make our collections as openly accessible as possible**

The KB strives to make the accessibility to its collections as open as possible within the legal frameworks applicable in the Netherlands - and in accordance with access agreements with, for example, rights holders. Ethical issues also play a part when it comes to collecting, documenting, processing and providing access to digital publications. We aim to strike the right balance between the importance of public access to information and privacy issues and copyright, for example. When providing access to sensitive information or to large numbers of digital publications and data files for the purpose of generative AI training, for example, it may

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>  
<sup>10</sup> <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4604654>

<sup>11</sup> <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5562061>



therefore be necessary to impose additional conditions for re-use. If restrictions apply, we justify our access policy for our users and publish the conditions under which we make our collection accessible openly and transparently.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See for example the KB Statement on commercial generative AI at <https://www.kb.nl/en/ai-statement>

General Collection	
Sub-collection	Numbers (approximate)
Physical monographs	1,600,000
Physical periodicals	88,000
Websites	23,500

Table 1: Overview of numbers for the National Library collection in the KB General Collection (approximate)

Special Collection	
Sub-collection	Numbers (approximate)
Medieval manuscripts (up to 1549)	1500
Post-medieval and modern manuscripts (from 1550 onwards)	145,000
Early printed books (circa (1450-1800)	200,000
Modern special editions (from 1801)	50,000
Koopman Collection	10,300
Children's books	225,000

Table 2: Overview of numbers for the KB Special Collection (approximate)

# Appendix 1:

## Priorities and criteria

### General Collection

With our General Collection, the aim is to collect as many publications as possible within a number of set criteria and the technical and financial possibilities. We distinguish between the following flows:

- › Books, newspapers and periodicals;
- › Websites belonging to the Dutch web domain;
- › Dutch academic publications.

### Books, newspapers and periodicals

Our principle is and remains caring for the written word published in and about the Netherlands. We want to preserve books, newspapers and periodicals, insofar as they fall within the inclusion criteria,<sup>13</sup> permanently for the future and to make them as useably available as possible. In recent years, the KB has followed a 'digital first' policy for this purpose. We have made arrangements with CB and publishers to automate the delivery of both physical and digital books. These arrangements are based on the principle that we will receive a paper book only if we have not yet been supplied with a digital copy. We make exceptions to this rule for children's books, art books, poetry

and for all publications that fall under the criteria for the Special Collection (see Appendix 2). We will continue this policy in the coming years and we will then anchor the 'digital first' principle even better in our work processes. In doing so, we anticipate increasing demand for digital services and the facilitation of other forms of research such as big data research and full-text search, for example. Moreover, by prioritising the collection of one form of a publication, we can preserve more varied publications with limited people and funds, more so than we can if we would collect one publication in different forms and editions.

In the case of non-academic journals, print-on-demand publications from many self-publishing platforms and articles and news releases from large media companies, we do not yet have the necessary facilities for us to be able to process digital publications on a large scale. Some of these publications are only circulated digitally so there is a risk of information being lost due to bankruptcies or migration of content from one editorial system to another, for example. In the coming period 2024-2030, we will therefore be taking steps to set up new content flows for collecting e-newspapers, e-periodicals and print-on-demand editions. Again, the principle here is that we will not include any paper edition or issue once a full-fledged digital flow has been set up. Where possible, we do record information on editions that we do not include in the National Bibliography so that we can provide researchers with insight into what editions have been published over the years.

Because the repository directive only took effect in 1974, there are gaps in our heritage collection. Before 1974, there was no

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.kb.nl/uitgevers/opnamecriteria-depot-van-nederlandse-publicaties>

agreement (barring a few exceptional periods in the nineteenth century) that one copy of every Dutch publication would go to the KB. As a result, before 1974 the focus was on science and subject areas were collected according to selection principles. However, any form of selection of publications excludes other publications and certain types of publications were not collected or were collected infrequently. As a result, the KB's collection does not give the most representative picture of Dutch publishing history. We see, for example, that in the past works by women, publications from and about the colonies (especially by and about people of colour) and certain genres were not preserved adequately or were preserved to a lesser extent. Here, genres refers to lighter reading matter or translations into Dutch. To make the collection more polyphonic, it is therefore necessary to supplement the repository retroactively.

In the coming years, we will therefore continue to pay attention to filling gaps in our collection by selectively purchasing missing books, newspapers and periodicals through antiquarian booksellers and auctions. When it comes to accepting donations, we are selective due to limitations in our processing capacity and the upcoming move of our collection to a new book repository. We only accept donations from organisations or private individuals under strict conditions if they are of unique and potentially endangered material that is not yet included in the collection of another Dutch public institution with a preservation function and they fit our selection criteria.<sup>14</sup> The principle of including one form of a publication also applies here.

As we are actively committed to promoting polyphony in the National Library collection (see principle 6, We are working towards a polyphonic National Library collection), we pay particular attention to:

- › Works by women and other creators who are underrepresented in the collection, whatever the grounds or cause;
- › Shared past: works from and about the former national territories which focus on our country's colonial history;
- › Genres that are underrepresented such as magazines, lowbrow culture and translations into Dutch;
- › Publications by groups of migrants that are (or were) temporarily or permanently settled in the Netherlands.

In implementing our acquisition policy, we will take into account collections of other depository libraries and give priority to collecting publications that are not yet available at heritage libraries, and to the Special Collection.

## Websites belonging to the Dutch web domain

Today, our history is mostly written online. More and more information is only being published in digital form on the internet. This information is volatile as web sources are frequently updated and can therefore quickly disappear forever. A lot of National Libraries worldwide periodically harvest a copy of their own national web domain. In Europe, national domain crawls are performed in Germany, Denmark, France, Croatia and the UK, for example.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.kb.nl/over-ons/informatie-voor/schenken-aan-de-kb>

Successive national domain crawls provide a good snapshot of the internet history and publishing culture on the web, making them particularly important for researchers.

As a National Library, it is our ambition to perform a national domain crawl too. We want to realise this ambition in the next few years. In recent years, we have therefore joined other heritage institutions in advocating for new legislation facilitating web archiving and have archived the Frisian web domain on a trial basis. Once renewal of legislation is initiated by OCW, the KB can start periodically harvesting the Dutch web domain. In a general sense, we understand this to mean all websites from and about the Netherlands, regardless of form, content or domain extension and aimed at the residents of our country. In terms of implementation, we still expect to have to make choices due to technical, financial and content limitations. We will document these in a collection description, among other things.

In addition to archiving our national web domain, the KB will continue to archive websites selectively. We harvest these selected websites as completely as possible and carry out quality control wherever possible so that we can preserve content and *look & feel* as much as possible. The frequency of archiving can vary: from once or twice a year to very frequently. In its web collection, the KB preserves a selection of over 23,000 websites that form a snapshot of the Netherlands' born digital culture. Part of this collection – the XS4ALL homepages web collection of 'web incunabula' from the Dutch internet – was placed on the Dutch [Memory of the World Register](#) by UNESCO in 2022. A special event as it is the first born digital collection in the world to be given this status. We will continue to

expand our web collection in the coming years and respond to current events and questions from the field of research in the process. We will register the results in the [National Register of Web Archives](#).

## Dutch scientific output

The KB strives to sustainably preserve Dutch published scientific output, both as heritage and from the perspective of keeping a 'record of science'. To this end, the KB works with university libraries and retrieves all open access publications that are placed in Institutional Repositories. In the coming policy period, we will investigate how we can also place publications that are not open access in our e-repository and we also want to start harvesting the repositories of colleges and other academic institutions. We are also exploring whether we can play a role in maintaining the accessibility of open learning materials, educational materials that are made accessible freely and publicly in a sustainable way.

Since 2003, the KB has also collected articles from international academic publishers in order to keep them in a safe place. And in order to provide access to this content if a triggered event and/or post-cancellation meant that the publications would no longer be accessible to researchers at Dutch universities due to the bankruptcy of a publisher, for example. Consequently, our collection includes publications from several international publishers (e.g. Springer, Blackwell and Sage).

In its previous collection plan, the KB as a National Library shifted the focus regarding academic publications to collecting publications

published in the Netherlands. This also resulted in the ambition to explore and develop a robust network of safe places within which each country takes care of its own publications (publisher, researcher, university). We contribute to this network by storing a replica of Portico on European territory as an additional guarantee that the information will not be lost. Portico is a US service provided by the non-profit organisation Ithaka. Portico provides a digital archiving service for publishers, libraries and other collection-holding institutions focused on the educational sector. Publications already stored by international publishers with no connection to the Netherlands will be deselected in the coming years. Before deselection, a check will be carried out via [Keepers registry](#) to see whether the content in question is being sustainably preserved at other institutions. If that is not the case, the KB will continue to take care of these publications.

Contracts will be continued with the (international) publishers that do have a link to the Netherlands: all content will remain a permanent part of the KB collection (Springer, Elsevier, Brill, IOS, Wolters Kluwer). In the coming years, we will add Open Journals, Benjamins Uitgeverij BV, Sense Publishers (part of Brill), CRC Press/Balkema and Amsterdam University Press.

## Appendix 2:

### Priorities and criteria

### Special Collection

The KB's Special Collection consists of purposefully assembled collections with a collection history: manuscript material, printed works, digital publications or a combination thereof with a substantive consistency and/or museum value. Because of their authenticity, materiality, uniqueness or value, these collections are subject to special processing, storage and/or accessibility requirements. These follow IFLA's 'Criteria for Determining Special Collections Status': (1) Market value, (2) Rarity and Scarcity, (3) Date and Place of Publication, (4) Physical and Intrinsic Characteristics, (5) Condition, and (6) Bibliographic and Research (historical, cultural or intellectual) Value.

The KB's Special Collection consists of the following sub-collections:

- › Medieval manuscripts up to and including 1549
- › Post-medieval and modern manuscripts 1550-present
- › Early printed books circa 1450-1800
- › Special printed works 1801-present
- › Children's books 1801-present
- › Web archaeology and The Digital City
- › Social media

The priorities and criteria for each collection are described below.

### Medieval manuscripts up to and including 1549

The KB preserves more than a thousand medieval manuscripts: handwritten books from before the mid-16th century. We cannot easily determine the exact number because these works cannot always be clearly dated. Moreover, delineating a manuscript is often challenging: some books are composed of several manuscripts, each with its own localisation and dating – so-called composite volumes – while only fragments of other books consisting of no more than a page or even less have survived. In such cases it takes a lot of research before we can determine how many (remains of) books we have.

Despite the limited intake of medieval manuscripts, the KB's collection has grown steadily – by an average of two books a year – sometimes as a result of donations but mostly through purchases. Almost always these are manuscripts which originate from the Netherlands of the present day or Middle Dutch manuscripts from the former Low Countries. We coordinate purchases with heritage libraries within our network.

In the 2024-2030 policy period, the KB will make great strides in making medieval manuscripts accessible online. We are working with the Huygens Institute on the realisation of eCodicesNL, an online platform modelled on the Swiss e-codices to make all medieval manuscripts preserved in Dutch heritage collections



digitally accessible according to the DERA.<sup>15</sup> To this end, we are revising existing descriptions of medieval manuscripts in the KB brought together as part of Medieval Manuscripts in Dutch Collections (MMDC) and expanding them where necessary. We have taken on an advisory role in connection with the capture, revision and expansion of descriptions of manuscripts in other Dutch collections. We are also digitising our entire collection of medieval manuscripts. We will make arrangements with the RKD regarding the transfer and management of the material collected by the Alexander Willem Byvanck Society. Finally, during this policy period we will be paying special attention to the description of so-called maculatures: loose sheets and strips of parchment that were found during restorations and in early modern printed books.

### Inclusion criteria

- › No pursuit of completeness: aim is to enhance a representative collection;
- › Years of production: up to and including 1549;
- › Does not need to have been produced/distributed in the Netherlands. Emphasis is on current national borders, but also on Belgium and Germany (mainly works written in the vernacular);
- › Does not have to relate (only) to the Netherlands, but emphasis is on Dutch history, religion, culture and literature.

## Post-medieval and modern manuscripts 1550-present

With its collection of post-medieval and modern manuscripts, the KB aims to provide a good representation of the manuscript heritage of the Netherlands from 1550 onwards. The emphasis is on Dutch history, culture and literature. The collection includes manuscripts mainly from the Northern Netherlands but occasionally also from the Southern Netherlands, especially for the periods 1550-1650 and 1815-1830.

Some sub-collections are regarded as focal points such as the Alba amicorum (friends' books) collection, the largest in the Netherlands with around 800 objects. With its collection of letters from scholars, literary writers and statesmen, the KB preserves a substantial part of the national letter collection. In principle, we collect manuscript material by literary writers – the Modern Writers collection – up to the nineteenth century, with a few exceptions such as the Willem Kloos collection, H.F. Tollens Cz., Willem Witsen, Henny Marsman and Jacques Perk and the literary archive of Angèle Manteau. We also keep archives of modern artists Jan Toorop and Willem Pijper. We actively collect items for all these collections.

The collection of post-medieval and modern manuscripts also includes a large number of manuscripts relating to early modern literature (poems, songs, plays) and a large collection of travel journals and diaries. Since 2020, the KB has also had 100 armorials on permanent loan from the CBG Centre for Family History. We will

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<sup>15</sup> <https://ecodices.nl/>

therefore be paying special attention to armorials in the coming period. In the collection and acquisition policy relating to the collection of post-medieval and modern manuscripts, the KB also takes into account the focal points in collections of other Dutch heritage libraries and coordinates intended acquisitions with the network.

Due to the impending warehouse move, the focus for the collection of post-medieval and modern manuscripts during the 2024-2030 policy period is on accessibility. Many collections, such as the collection of diaries of Willem Oltmans and the letter collections, need to be made more accessible at item level before they can be included in the new book repository. We are also prioritising digitisation and online accessibility of several manuscript collections. For example, we are digitising the entire Cornets de Groot archive with funding from Metamorfoze. We are also aiming to make these digitised collections full-text searchable using Handwritten Text Recognition.

Finally, in the 2024-2030 policy period we will develop a sustainable future plan for the Catalogus Epistularum Neerlandicarum (CEN), the central letter catalogue of the Netherlands. Because the KB is leaving the GGC as a cataloguing system, we are looking for another solution for preserving and enriching CEN metadata within a network.

### Inclusion criteria

- › Does not need to have been produced/distributed in the Netherlands: focus is on Northern Netherlands; for periods 1550-

1650 and 1815-1830, however, also on Southern Netherlands (Belgium, Luxembourg);

- › Does not have to relate (only) to the Netherlands, but emphasis is on Dutch history, culture and literature.

Specific criteria for sub-collections within the modern manuscript collection:

- › We actively acquire *alba amicorum*; priority: alba from before 1800, taking gender balance into account. We do not acquire student alba from Leiden, Amsterdam and Groningen;
- › *Letters*. We actively acquire letters from scholars, men of letters and statesmen (mainly additions to existing collections such as Huygens, Ortelius, Van Schurman and Cuper); we do not actively acquire letters from the nineteenth century onwards;
- › *Writers' manuscripts*. We actively collect manuscripts from the period 1550-1800; we only actively collect later writers' manuscripts for existing collections: Kloos, Tollens, Witsen, Marsman, Perk and the literary archive of Angèle Manteau;
- › *Artists' manuscripts*. We actively collect manuscripts for existing collections: Toorop, Pijper.

## Early printed books circa 1450-1800

With over 200,000 works from the period 1450-1800, the KB's collection of early printed books is one of the largest in the Netherlands. Its strength lies in its broadness since almost all periods, genres and languages are represented: from precious incunabula, atlases, illustrated academic works and emblem books, to inexpensive newspapers, song collections, almanacs and school books. The collection represents a cross-section of what was written, printed and read in the Netherlands and abroad between 1450 and 1800. The collection has a number of focal points: incunabula and post-incunabula, pamphlets, government publications, historical newspapers, occasional verse, songbooks, popular printed matter, auction catalogues and French Protestantism.

The collection is exceptionally well catalogued. All items are described in the KB catalogue, while the Dutch printed books can also be found in the Short-Title Catalogue Netherlands (STCN, the national bibliography up to 1801).<sup>16</sup> A large number of the Dutch early printed books have been digitised and are accessible via platforms such as Early European Books Online, Delpher and Google Books.

Acquisition focuses on works printed in the Netherlands up to 1801 that are not yet held in Dutch public institutions. We make exceptions for copies with special provenance, colouring or annotation. We also occasionally acquire books from outside the Netherlands if they have an important link to Dutch history. In particular, in the coming period we will be promoting polyphony within the collection by expanding it to include rare popular printed matter, books with traces of use and

printed matter from the former colonies. We will coordinate with Dutch heritage libraries with regard to this too.

In the coming years, we will continue to bring the collection of early printed books to the attention of a growing audience. In 2023, we collaborated with publisher Lannoo on the publication of a facsimile of an exceptional botanical work: [Flora Batava](#). We are now exploring options for future editions of facsimiles. We are also networking to explore how to serve user groups more broadly by facilitating searches for illustrations in books, for example. We are also actively expanding the STCN by setting up national and international cooperation projects. Finally, in view of the depository move we are focusing on expanding the catalogue's metadata in two areas: provenance and copy-specific information such as material use and colouring.

### Inclusion criteria

- › Time period: circa 1450-1800;
- › Published in the Netherlands; occasionally from outside the Netherlands if the work in question has an explicit and significant link to Dutch history;
- › Editions need not be in Dutch (French, German and Latin were common during the period).

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<sup>16</sup> <https://data.cerl.org/stcn>

Specific areas of focus that are actively acquired:

- › *Incunabula* and *post-incunabula*: from the Northern Netherlands; from the Southern Netherlands in agreement with Belgium;
- › *Occasional verse*;
- › *Pamphlets and posters*: government publications;
- › *Booksellers' catalogues*;
- › *Songbooks*;
- › *Popular prose*;
- › *Almanacs*.

## Special printed works 1801-present (incl. bibliophile works, artists' books)

Since its inception, the KB has added contemporary publications to its collection. Over the course of two centuries, the criteria have shifted from international academic publications to works published in the Netherlands. Acquisitions for this collection – through both donations and purchases – are mainly 20th- and 21st-century works, although rare 19th-century works executed entirely in the form of lithographs have also been acquired in recent years.

Pre-2000 acquisitions include limited editions, photo books, clandestine publications and protest publications, often stencilled, such as those by Provo. Although we have acquired large collections by special publishers like Brusse or authors like Couperus, for example, in the past, we have not done that in the last 10 years as most of the gaps have been filled in the last 50 years. However in recent years, we have included hundreds of unknown – sometimes

ephemeral – publications by deceased printers-on-the-margins from their estates, editions that, despite contacts in those circles, had not been sent to the repository. Once popular but very poorly preserved – and therefore rare – genres we still acquire en bloc as much as possible, such as detectives, train literature and erotic novels from the period 1850-1970.

Over the last decade, the acquisition of artists' books has come under strong scrutiny. These books which include photo books, conceptual art and publications by art academies, for example, are often not sent to our repository. We actively acquire contemporary and older artists' books. In order to show that the KB is the only institution in the Netherlands that systematically tries to collect all artists' books published in our country, a publication on this topic is in preparation. We also aim to complete our collection of book publications by the most important artists of the past to enable research on them to be carried out under one roof. These include the books of H.N. Werkman and M.C. Escher, for example.

For the Koopman Collection, the focus has shifted from French literary editions from the interwar period to illustrated editions. Although still with an emphasis on French, the focus has also become a bit more international: contemporary books by book illustrators and typographers.

### Inclusion criteria

- › Can possibly be included as an extra copy due to differences in printing, handwritten annotations, different version or provenance, etc.;

- › No minimum print run (generally: at least five copies);
- › No preference for digital.

Specific criteria:

- › Time period: 1801-present;
- › For the Koopman Collection, works do not need to be published in the Netherlands or in Dutch.

Specific genres of special printed works:

- › Bibliophile editions: books that are unique in terms of their design and execution, usually printed in small numbers; private press editions;
- › Special design: graphic design, books with special printing techniques (e.g. natural printing, galvano, litho, original photographs), books with hand-coloured illustrations; special modern techniques (stencil, e.g. Provo); and publishing houses (Brusse);
- › Occasional publications: book week gifts, year-end editions by typographers/publishers;
- › Deluxe, precious and rare editions (e.g. on special paper, bound in vellum; popular nineteenth-century editions; first editions of Hermans); including author's collections (Couperus); facsimiles over €500.00;
- › Iconic editions with original dust jackets (examples: first edition of Bordewijk, *Karakter*) or original paper covers (popular material with Art Nouveau advertisements);

- › Artists' books (including photo books, conceptual art) and publications by art academies or art institutions (such as Witte de With, Rotterdam);
- › Publications with special – loose or pasted-in – inserts (e.g. original prints, drawings, paintings (e.g. lithographs by Karel Appel and Armando); picture albums, paper samples in book histories; books with manuscripts, photographs, letters);
- › Assignment copies and books with handwritten annotations (possibly) by the author or an important reader;
- › Popular prose in rare or unique copies (e.g.: detective novels);
- › Banned, illegal or erotic books (pornography, fascist literature, clandestine publications 1940-1945, pirated books).

## Children's books 1801-present

Although children's books could already be found in the KB's collection soon after its inception, there was no active collection policy for these yet in the nineteenth century. The oldest known donation of children's books to the KB dates from 1927 and in the 1930s and 1940s, we acquired several large lots of children's books. We have been collecting children's books structurally based on a collection policy since 1960. And from 1974, agreements were concluded with Dutch publishers based on which the KB receives a copy of almost every children's book published. In 1997, the NBLC<sup>17</sup> transferred the 'Book and Youth' collection to the Literary Museum which in turn gave the collection of 75,000 children's books to the KB on long-term loan and donated it to us in 2021. It contained important sub-collections, such as abc books by Antina de Ru, Jannie Daane's collection of 'better' children's books from 1960-

<sup>17</sup> National Dutch Library Centre (NBLC), now the Netherlands Association of Public Libraries (VOB).

1980, and the collection of Jaap van Leeuwen who collected books for young people on homosexuality and friendship. The KB collection now comprises over a quarter of a million children's books.

We still acquire additions for the KB collection through a combination of donations and purchases, sometimes as individual items and sometimes in large numbers at a time, and via a variety of channels ranging from specialised auction houses to thrift shops. We actively search for books that are still missing from the KB collection but in principle, we only acquire children's books of which there is no copy available yet in other Dutch heritage libraries with a collection of children's books, brought together in the Central Database of Children's Books (CBK). We acquire every children's book that is missing from the CBK, regardless of quality. This varies widely, both in terms of the book's design and its condition: children's books often contain numerous traces of use.

We continue to give special attention to children's books that do not reach the KB as easily such as Dutch-language children's books produced outside the country's borders, e.g. in Suriname, and self-published editions. Take, for example, the first children's books on COVID-19 which were not produced by commercial publishers but rather by parents and teachers. During this policy period, we will be networking to make the CBK more sustainable by incorporating it in a new management system. In this way, partner institutions and all lovers and researchers of children's books can continue to make full use of the essential detailed metadata.

## **Inclusion criteria**

- › Can possibly be included as an extra copy due to differences in printing, handwritten annotations, different provenance, etc.;
- › No minimum print run (generally: at least five copies);
- › No preference for digital.

Specific criteria for children's books:

- › Time period: 1801-present;
- › Published in the Netherlands or in Dutch (not from Flemish publishers) or translations by Dutch authors or illustrators;
- › Loose items are included if they belong with the book, e.g. a picture book that comes with a finger puppet, a book that comes with a paper dress-up doll or a book of fairy tales that comes with an audio CD;
- › The following are not included in the collection of children's books: manuscripts, children's books up to and including 1800 (which belong to 'early printed books'), original drawings, archive material and paraphernalia not published as belonging with a book.

In principle, children's books are included as General Collections unless they meet the following criteria for inclusion as Special Collections:

- › The illustrations are (partly) hand-coloured or contain hand-coloured details;

- › The publication contains special loose parts such as removable cards or stickers or textile additions;
- › The publication is too valuable or fragile for unsupervised access to it to be provided at the general front desk, e.g. early pop-ups;
- › The publication is too valuable or fragile to apply stickers and security strips to it, e.g. a fully illustrated book to which stickers cannot be applied without covering part of the illustration.

## Web archaeology and The Digital City

The KB preserves digital information that can give future generations a picture of Dutch digital culture today and enable researchers to write the history of Dutch online culture, even if it has already disappeared from the digital domain or has changed dramatically. In terms of content, the web collection should therefore reflect the past, current affairs and trends in online culture as closely as possible. We store the online sources that we select sustainably and keep them as authentic and complete as is technically possible.

Because theoretically, the number of sites for selection runs into the millions (the Dutch web consists of an estimated 10 million sites, of which 5.6 million are .nl sites), we have to make clear-cut choices. Not only in terms of the current online offering but also by looking back at what still needs to be stored retrospectively based on what we know today. This selection takes place within national and international networks.

## Inclusion criteria

We apply the following principles to retro collections of websites and other born digital material:

- › The website is online or was online at one time;
- › The website is accessible to the public;
- › The website is not already in the collection of another public Dutch (heritage) institution with a preservation function. Websites in foreign collections, including those in the Internet Archive, do qualify for inclusion provided that they are still online;
- › Special attention is paid to websites from the period 1993-2001 with cultural-historical value;
- › In special cases, it may be decided to include a website or collection of sites that are no longer online but have been preserved on a physical medium. See the five main criteria below with regard to this.

We apply five main criteria when making selections for retro collections:

1. Historical value (age of the site);
2. Perception (beauty and remembrance value);
3. Physical quality (flawlessness, authenticity);
4. Content quality (rarity, information value, ensemble value and representativeness);
5. Archivability (is it technically, legally or organisationally possible to archive the site).



Examples of successful retro collections from the KB's past include the special web collection XS4ALL homepages (included on the Dutch Unesco Memory of the World list of documentary heritage as the first born digital Unesco heritage), Euronet-Internet homepages and homepages from the early days of the Dutch web.

## The Digital City

The Digital City of Amsterdam (DDS) is the oldest digital city in the world and one of the first social networking sites in history. The internet first became accessible to ordinary people in the Netherlands with the launch of the DDS on 15 January 1994 in Amsterdam. In recent years, the Amsterdam Museum, the Waag Society, Sound & Vision, KB and various web archaeologists and academics have made considerable efforts to preserve the archival versions of DDS. The importance of this work was underlined in 2023 when UNESCO awarded the DDS the World Documentary Heritage status, by including it in the international [Memory of the World Register](#). This collection was included in the KB in 2023 with the aim of permanently storing DDS Amsterdam as part of the National Library collection and making it accessible for future research.

## Social media

The web is 'the digital monument of our generation'. Social media is an inseparable part of that web and of our digital culture and society. Many social discussions start on online platforms like X (formerly Twitter). Whether it is about the climate, vaccination, the nitrogen action programme or the shortage of teachers, that is where the

debate is often most heated. For journalists and scientists, these sources are already of great importance and it is necessary to preserve them for future researchers and interested citizens as well.

That preservation is extremely complex: not only do the multiplicity and changeability pose a challenge, there are also no set standards and tried-and-tested tools for archiving social media. There is a lack of laws and regulations on this in the Netherlands and finally, the archiving of social media brings with it the necessary ethical issues.

For that reason, the KB has chosen to preserve a limited, relevant part of social media in the coming years rather than entire social media platforms. In doing so, our definition of a publication – any coherent text unit made public in or about the Netherlands – is leading and our 'traditional' selection policy based on Dutch books, newspapers and periodicals is the starting point. We preserve social media statements in which text is the primary form of expression and which ideally help to place the existing collection in its historical, social and technological context. We always implement our selection policy in consultation and cooperation with network partners such as fellow heritage institutions and academics. For public online publications such as podcasts and online learning resources, we seek coordination with fellow institutions such as Sound & Vision, Kennisnet and SURF in order to prevent such forms of publication from not being preserved anywhere and being lost en masse.

## Inclusion criteria

Characteristics of social media items that fit within our selection policy are:

- › Public access. We only archive public social media items so no private Facebook groups, for example, or Telegram, Signal or WhatsApp messages;
- › Textuality. We predominantly archive social media items that are textual in nature or originate from platforms that are predominantly textual such as X, LinkedIn and Facebook. We do not target social media platforms where the emphasis is on sharing visual content such as Pinterest, Instagram or Flickr or Snapchat, TikTok or YouTube. For that reason, we do not include games and other interactive environments within social media platforms and 3D platforms or virtual reality environments such as Metaverse either. When a textual expression contains (audio)visual content that is important for the interpretation of the text, we will include it if it is legally and technically possible to do so.
- › Context. Social media items that we collect tie in with or are part of already existing collections: so, for example, social media messages embedded in a news item on a newspaper site that we preserve, social media accounts from periodicals and social media items that connect to topics on which we also already archive websites. We hereby preserve the historical context of our sources and allow reconstruction in the future. We do not include raw data without context for that reason.

### **What are we going to do?**

1. We will archive a selection from a number of social media accounts focused on news and literature on 'textual' platforms such as X, LinkedIn and Facebook. We will ask the owners of those accounts for permission to do so. We will focus on a limited number of (several dozen) accounts of:

- a. Opinion makers
- b. Journalists
- c. Academics
- d. Writers
- e. Newspapers/periodicals

Where possible, we will also try to get permission to archive the accounts of several popular microbloggers with a lot of followers, to also have a picture of today's Twitter culture;

2. We tie in with the event-harvesting we already carry out as part of our web archiving activities by archiving social media posts around a number of topics (e.g. #allowancesaffair or #climatechange). We coordinate these topics with both national and international network partners such as the Digital Heritage Network (NDE) and the International Internet Preservation Consortium (IIPC). We also detect social media posts referenced from websites already archived by means of link analysis, thus gathering more context around the existing collection;
3. We engage in the sustainable storage of already existing social media collections and research sets compiled by universities and researchers. We seek to collaborate with parties such as DANS on this;
4. Depending on the resources and storage capacity available, we carry out random sampling, archiving all the messages posted on one day from the most frequently used social media platforms in the Netherlands, as is done in some other countries such as Denmark. This type of timed recording should ideally be repeated annually on the same day.

## **Trend and tech watch**

- › We participate in national and international surveys within the network (NDE, IIPC) and will try to identify trends in web publishing and social media platforms and share our findings within our national and international networks;
- › Should new text-based social media platforms emerge in the coming policy period, we will try to preserve a relevant selection of these – in coordination with the network – as far as technically possible.

## Appendix 3:

# Priorities and selection criteria for digitisation

Since the late 1990s, significant progress has been made with the digitising of Dutch book publications and major newspapers and periodicals. In its digitisation activities, the KB has not only focused on its own collection: as part of the collaboration between the KB and Google, for instance, the collections of numerous other heritage libraries have also been digitised. In addition, over the past decade the KB has digitised Dutch books, newspapers and periodicals from the collections of more than 100 institutions through the national Metamorfoze programme. In doing so, the emphasis was put on material from the period 1840-1950 on account of its fragility due to the quality of the paper used at that time. This period was also given priority when selecting material on account of the conservation aspect.

The KB will continue to focus on the conservation and digitisation of written heritage in the coming years under the Metamorfoze programme. We will maintain the network orientation for which the funding was granted (Metamorfoze was originally a national programme, supporting all institutions with paper collections) but broaden the scope in the coming years. For instance, the limitation of the the period to 1840-1950 will be dropped and the focus will no longer be only on 'paper' but also on born digital heritage and we will put even more emphasis on digital access in addition to conservation aspects.

### What are we going to do?

We will focus on the gaps in our digital collections of Books, Newspapers and Periodicals in our activities. In collaboration with the Huygens Institute, a nationwide project will be set up to digitise medieval manuscripts and make them accessible online via eCodicesNL. We will also focus on high-quality digitisation of books, including for the DBNL. From the perspective of this Flemish-Dutch collaboration, we are also looking at Dutch-language literary heritage from Flanders, the Antilles and Suriname. We will also add new titles to the digital newspaper and periodical archives in the coming years.

Under the Metamorfoze banner, we also facilitate the digitisation of Archives and Collections of national importance and implement the Indonesian Heritage Digital programme. Heritage institutions will also be able to apply for funding here in the coming years. We seek to align with DERA's guidelines as much as possible in our terms and conditions.

For sustainable access to items from the Special Collection, we are working on our own online portal that will make this collection accessible independently of location. For richer access to manuscripts and early printed books, we use techniques such as Handwritten Text Recognition (HTR). When digitising physical works from the Special Collection, we explore methods and techniques to visualise these publications more as three-dimensional heritage objects. By also including aspects such as materiality in digital representations of our collection items in addition to text, we offer users new, inspiring ways to discover, experience and explore our heritage collection. We do this in collaboration with researchers, the creative industry, other heritage institutions and end users.

## Reliable storage

The KB takes care of the storage of all digitised collections that have been digitised to date with funds from the Metamorfoze and DBNL programmes. In the process, we distinguish between books, newspapers and periodicals on the one hand and archives and collections on the other. The KB has also taken on the responsibility for providing sustainable access to books, newspapers and periodicals by adding the results to Delpher and/or the DBNL. For archives and other collections digitised via Metamorfoze, heritage institutions themselves are responsible for making the results permanently accessible. The KB does not provide access to these itself but we do store a copy of the results as an emergency backup.

Over the next few years, we will explore the possibility of storing the results of the Archives and Collections project at the heritage institutions where the source material is kept. An exception will be made for libraries' special collections in the case of which, in principle, the KB will continue to take responsibility for the reliable storage of digital recordings. We are also committed to connecting these digitised library collections via Pica Foundation's Connected Digital Heritage programme line to make it even easier for end users to find and (re)use these collections.

