

**SEARCHING FOR A LITTLE HELP
FROM MY FRIENDS:
Reporting on the Efforts to
Create an (Inter)national,
Distributed, Collaborative Social
Media Archiving Structure**

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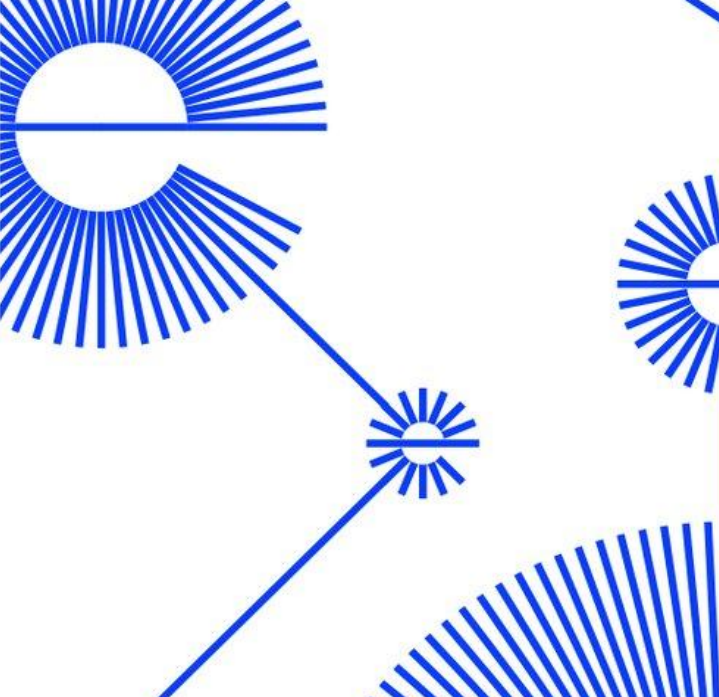
**May 11th 2023
2023 IIPC Web Archiving Conference
Hilversum, The Netherlands**

WHO WE ARE



✖ Gemeente
✖ Amsterdam
✖ Stadsarchief

KB } national library
of the netherlands



INTRODUCTION & PROJECT INSPIRATION

- 6 exploratory social media archiving projects with *Dutch Digital Heritage Network (NDE)* in 2019-2020
- Cultural heritage/research perspective
- KB, regional, city and thematic archival organizations
- Topics: Selection/tools/legal and ethical aspects

NL OPEN GOVERNMENT ACT (WOO)

POLITICO

Enter keyword



EXPLORE ▾

NEWSLETTERS & PODCASTS ▾

POLITICO

‘Nokiagate’ pits Dutch lawmakers against Mark Rutte in transparency debate

Dutch parliament takes aim at prime minister over deleting text messages.



Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte speaks on his mobile phone | Remko De Waal/ANP/AFP via Getty Images

- Trial project by government information governance organization (RDDI)
- Large test set (Twitter, Facebook & Instagram) with accounts of departing cabinet politicians
- Accountability/transparency purposes

ARCHIVING GERMAN-LANGUAGE TWITTER – WE NEED YOU!



We need your help to create an archive of German-language Tweets that is as complete as possible.

Twitter and the Twitter archive are an important source of research for many academic disciplines. However, the platform is experiencing turbulent times following its takeover by a consortium of investors led by Elon Musk. Twitter has already begun remodelling the platform, and further changes are anticipated. We need your help to ensure that the archive remains as complete as possible.



'Voorkom een digitale 'Dark Age''

18 april 2023 • Laatste update 24 apr 2023 • Lucie Galis • 4 minuten leestijd



Duitsland is begonnen aan de ambitieuze taak om alle Duitse tweets te archiveren – ruim 4 miljard berichten. In Nederland heeft de 'KB nationale

BUILDING MOMENTUM

- More structural approach needed
- Awareness in society for the importance of social media as heritage
- KB interested in needs of others, differences and similarities
- Building on our experiences and relations

MEANWHILE IN BELGIUM

Best practices for social media archiving in Flanders and Brussels
2020-2023 – KADOC and meemoo

> Collaboration most sustainable solution for private archives

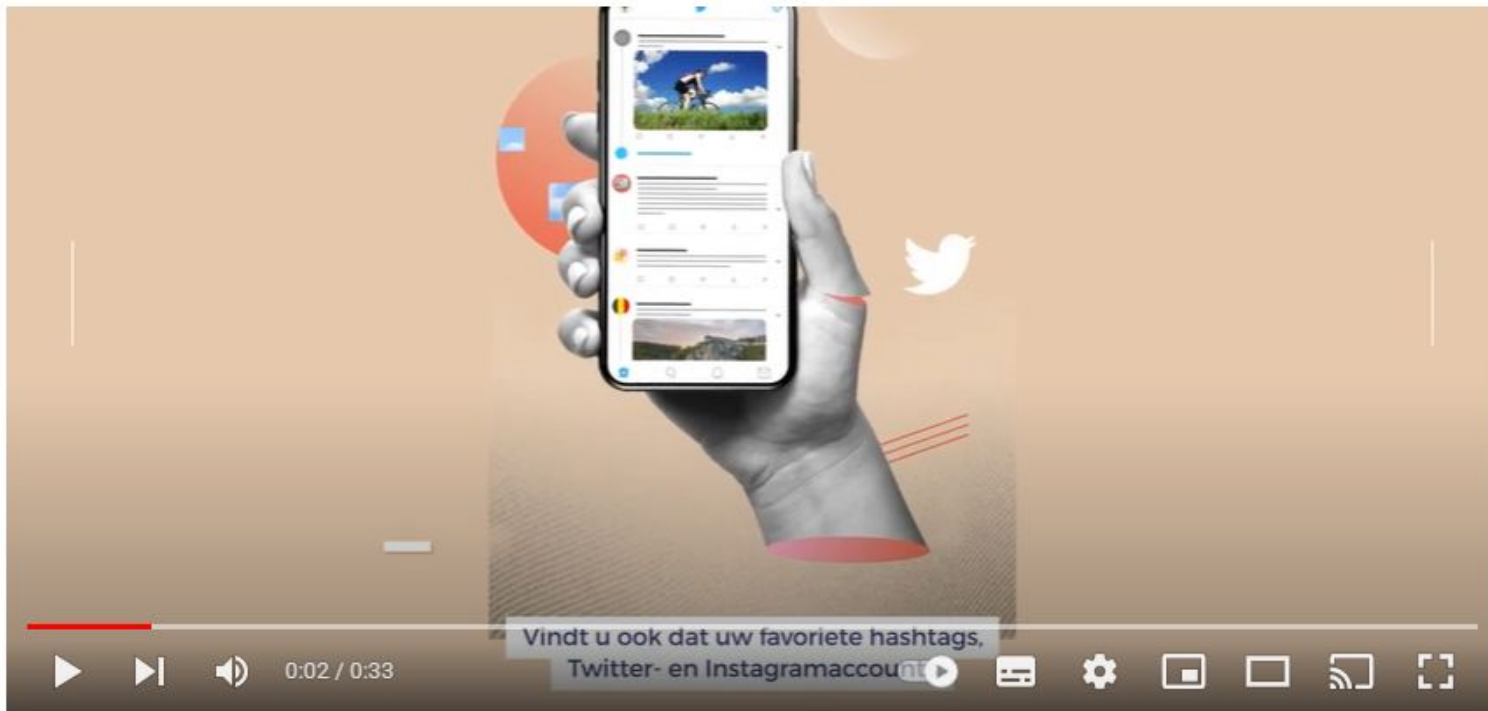


Image by gpointstudio on Freepik

BELGIUM ONLINE

YouTube ^{BE}

Zoeken



Red de sociale media

KBR : KBR
401 abonnees

Abonneren

3



Delen

Downloaden



87 weergaven · 1 jaar geleden · BELGIUM

Welke accounts en hashtags verdienen het om gearchiveerd te worden? [#biefstukfriet](#) of [#donderdagveggiedag](#)? [@pukkelpop](#) of [@RockWerchter](#)? Stuur uw suggesties door via www.kbr.be/nl/socialmedia. [Meer tonen](#)

BESOCIAL – National
library of Belgium

The top-left corner features a gold triangle and a pink triangle. The bottom-left corner features a blue triangle and a pink triangle.

**DREAM
BIG
AIM
HIGH**

A white wireframe cube is positioned to the right of the text, partially overlapping it. The text is stacked vertically within the cube's structure.

**DREAM
BIG
AIM
HIGH**



DREAM
BIG
AIM
HIGH

Survey

- 42 respondents
- Public <> private
- GLAM sector
- BE and NL
- 6 in-depth interviews



WHY COLLABORATIVE?

- Some **overlap** between what small vs. medium org's do, or between regional vs. local community archives
- **Difficulties with communicating** and offering/requesting support from one another
- Technical complexities remain primary issue, but more and more **concerns with awareness, legal frameworks, user needs**
- Still **little cross-collaboration between government, heritage, and research**
- Distinctly heritage perspectives lacking in the conversation: questions of **memory, description and cataloguing beyond only accountability and scholarship, community co-creation** of archives



WHY (INTER)NATIONAL?

- Many commonalities between NL and BE initiatives and challenges
 - Similar **research projects** on social media archiving foundations
 - Similar **focus** on heritage
 - Some **common language communities** and overlap in target resources e.g. same hashtags on Women's Marches used in both BE and NL
- Individual collaborations and exchanges based on personal initiative, but we all worked separately
 - **Why reinvent the wheel** if we can re-use knowledge and resources
- More leverage to advocate when there are recognized **examples and practices** to point to



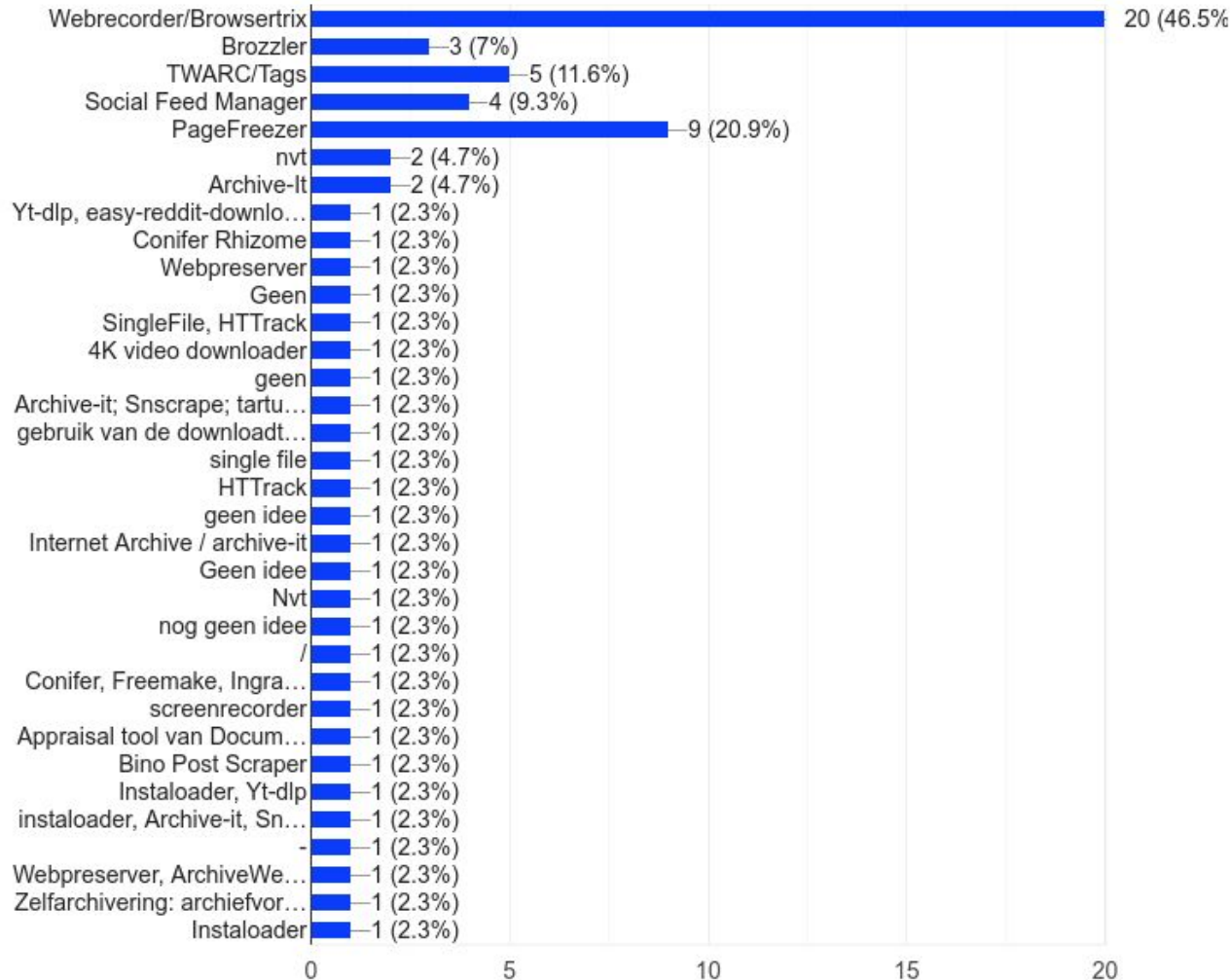
WHY DISTRIBUTED?

- Social media archiving is a complex issue with multiple stakeholders and varying goals and interests at play, yet there is a common baseline:
 - Storage and and processing **costs**
 - Access to bespoke **archiving software** is expensive, when it even exists
 - Open-source software is often more suitable but barrier to **expertise and risk of sustainability** cause problems
 - **Privacy protection and copyright** issues are basically untouchable - waiting for something to break...
- A distributed approach could:
 - Allow us to **share cost of access and development** of tools, as well as storage and processing systems
 - Avoid “double work” by **coordinating to work on different facets** of social media archiving
 - Empower us as a collective to **affect changes in policy and law**

PROJECT SETUP

- Time frame: **January-May 2023**
- **Broad view of social media**, including texting apps like WhatsApp and platforms like Twitch and Discord
- **Survey** sent out through mailing lists, communication platforms
- 6 in-depth **interviews** with participants in managerial/coordinating roles
- **Aims:**
 1. Insight into **wishes, needs, and obstacles to collaborative social media archiving** in BE and NL organizations
 2. What kind of **collaborative structure** would be best, if any (formal, informal)
 3. What are the collaboration possibilities at the **local, national, and international** levels
 4. How to **align heritage, government, and research perspectives**, if possible
 5. **Learning** from one another and other collaborations
 6. **First steps** into possible allocation of responsibilities

SURVEY RESULTS

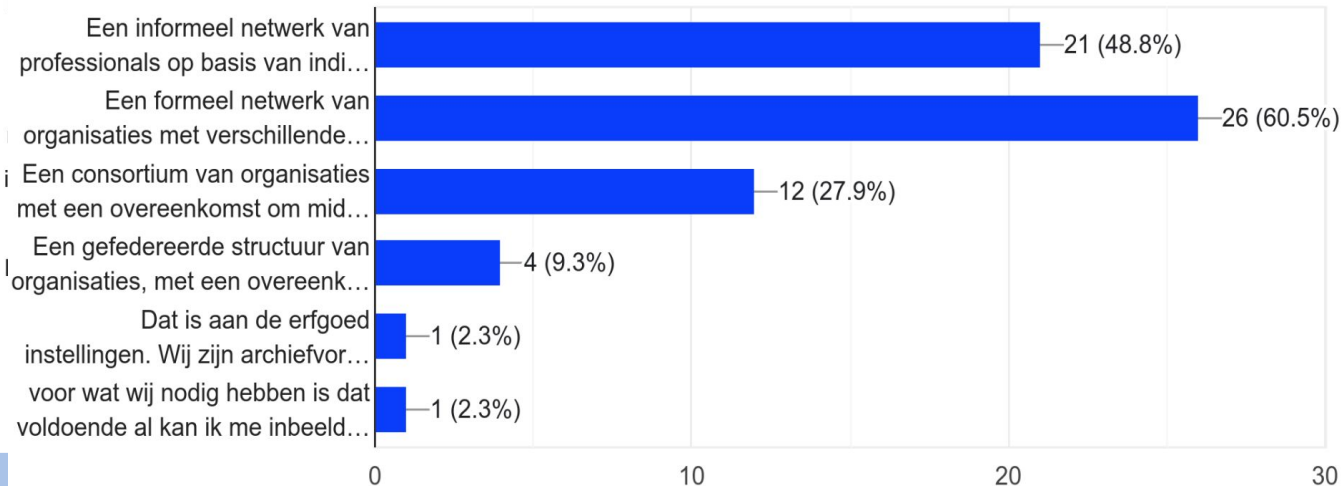


- **42 organizations** responded:
 - City and regional archives
 - National libraries
 - Private/subject-based collections & research institutions
 - Heritage units (Belgium)
- **Experience:** half has experimented, only 1 respondent with lots of experience!
- **Platforms:** Standard ones, but messaging too
- **In-house or vendor:** Half tried or wants to do their own archiving, but interested also in combining
- **Tools:** Webrecorder and open-source wins

SURVEY RESULTS

Wat voor soort samenwerkingsstructuur zou u het handigst vinden voor erfgoedinstellingen die samenwerken op het gebied van socialemedia-archivering? Er zijn meerdere antwoorden mogelijk.

43 responses



- Biggest **challenges**: Staff and expertise shortage, keeping up with social media changes and available tools, privacy and copyright, appraisal and selection, support and willingness in the organization
- **Priorities for collaboration**: Knowledge exchange and tool training, but also tool development, standards and policy design, and advocacy for social media archiving
- **Expected benefits**: technical support and access to tools and documentation as primary, followed by training, and some interest in funding and outreach
- **Expected contributions**: Project participation and knowledge exchange, some financial
- Desired **structure**: Formal network of organizations with no central governance or obligatory contribution, followed by informal network of individual professionals



INTERVIEW RESULTS

- **Participants:** national archives and libraries, regional archive, heritage consultancy, private themed archive
- **Reservations** about monetary contributions without guarantee of added value, but willing to contribute their time for knowledge exchange
- Difficulties with **making social media archiving visible**, to decision-makers but also users
- **Experience with social media archiving collaborations** a bit lukewarm: smaller organizations feel they can't contribute much, discussions but not many immediately useful outputs



PROJECT CONCLUSIONS

- **Reluctance to commit** to shared services **but interested** in making use of these if they would be available
- Organizations less confident that **every party's needs will be satisfied** because of previous experiences and lack of examples
- We need **more “success stories”**: examples of archiving social media and using social media collections, that are **realistic and accessible** to professionals and organizations with **varying levels of capability and experience**
- More **attention needed to aligning practices** in different sectors, and to the **organizational and societal factors** that play into social media archiving
- **Willingness to collaborate systematically** in some capacity, **but further work needed** to figure out exactly what
 - Perhaps different collaborative structures can **coexist at different levels**, e.g. local collaboration of different types of organization vs. specific types of organizations working nationally, internationally, etc

FIRST SUGGESTIONS & MOVING FORWARD

1. **None or very small financial contribution**, for the time being
2. Working groups around **specific topics that can produce outputs**
 - a. Plain sharing and discussion groups a bit demotivational for some
3. Clarify **goals depending on capability and business case** of each institution
4. Develop and maintain **resources**:
 - a. Guidelines/manuals
 - b. Tool tutorials
 - c. Practice-based, detailed, community-sourced use cases
 - d. Policy templates
5. Start working on **topics** requiring less investment and/or currently more overlooked, e.g.:
 - a. Legal/ethical use cases
 - b. Lobbying/awareness raising
 - c. Collection description and reuse
 - d. Common registry of archived social media
 - e. Community involvement (creators, users)
6. Promote **organizational commitment to collaboration**, not just individual staff members
7. **Rotate responsibility for coordination** between participants to ease workloads
8. Organize permanent open gatherings annually or bi-annually, to **cultivate community** around social media archiving and highlight usefulness

THANK YOU!

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