

Open Images: Towards an Audiovisual Commons

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Abstract. Open Images (www.openimages.eu) is an open media platform that offers online access to audiovisual archive material from various sources to stimulate -creative- reuse. Footage from audiovisual collections can be downloaded and remixed into new works. Users also have the opportunity to add their own material to the Open Images and thus expand the collection. Open Images provides an API (<http://www.openimages.eu/api>), making it easy for third parties to develop mashups. The platform currently (April 2011) offers access to over 1.400 items from various sources, including a considerable number of newsreels from the collection of the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision. This amount will grow substantially over the coming years as new items will be uploaded continuously, and as new partners join the initiative.

1 Content

Openness The items are available under Creative Commons licenses or they are part of the Public Domain. The open nature of the platform is further underscored by the use of open video formats (Ogg Theora), open standards (HTML5, OAI-PMH) and open source software components. Furthermore, all software that is developed within the scope of Open Images is released under the GNU General Public License (<http://www.openimages.eu/source>). Items published on Open Images and the accompanying descriptions (metadata) are accessible through an Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH). This enables third parties to retrieve the stored metadata and media files in a structured way. The past years several services were built on top of Open Images, mostly thematic websites reusing the audiovisual material in a specific context. These services provide added value for audiences by reusing material from Open Images in a meaningful way.

Re-use on Wikipedia In cooperation with Wikimedia Netherlands, Open Images continuously contributes audiovisual content to Wikimedia Commons (and is currently responsible for over 11% of the video content on Wikimedia Commons). OAI-PMH-based technology has been developed to fully automate the ingestion process from Open Images to Wikimedia Commons. Already, more than a thousand of items from Open Images have been uploaded and a large proportion of them are used to enrich over 600 textual Wikipedia entries with related audiovisual content. In January 2011, these entries were viewed nearly

1.3 million times. This shows the potential for the cultural heritage sector to collaborate with the Wikimedia Foundation to reach new and greater audiences within a meaningful context.

Participation Everybody is more than welcome to add material to the platform not only institutes and producers, but all netizens creating new materials based on Open Images fragments and items from other open repositories. The Open Images editorial team is collaborating with various institutional content providers, notably with the EYE Film Institute Netherlands (www.eye.nl) and European archives in the EUscreen (www.euscreen.eu) Best Practice Network. To support these partnerships Open Images enables partners to build their own branded portal for open content within the current platform and organizes workshops for creatives interested in telling their own stories with the open content provide through the platform. Within COMMUNIA the EU funded thematic network with a mission to formulate policy recommendations on ensuring sustainable access to the public domain in the digital age the Working Group Memory Institutions (museums, libraries and archives) identified a lack of a publicly accessible digital public domain for audiovisual works, an Audiovisual Commons (<http://wg3-communia.pbworks.com/>). With the latest developments described in this talk, and by constantly improving the platform and adding material in parallel, Open Images progresses further into such an Audiovisual Commons.

Open Images is an initiative of the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision in collaboration with KnowledgeLand. Open Images has been developed as part of Images for the Future, which enables digitization and provision of audiovisual heritage on a large scale.

2 About the Author

Maarten Brinkerink works as a project manager at the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision R&D department. He holds an MA in New Media and Digital Culture and specializes in the distribution of cultural content using digital media. At Sound and Vision, Maarten manages innovative projects like Open Images (an open media platform), Oorlogsmonumenten in Beeld (a location-based iPhone app that enriches war monuments with audiovisual heritage) and Waisda? (a multiple award winning crowdsourcing game for collecting metadata for audiovisual content). Within COMMUNIA the European thematic network on the Digital Public Domain he led the working group on Memory Institutions (museums, libraries and archives). In his spare time Maarten is a board member of the Dutch Wikimedia Chapter , where he coordinates collaborations with GLAM-institutions (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums).