

# The Flemish Institute for Archiving (VIAA) Brings Audiovisual Heritage into the Classroom

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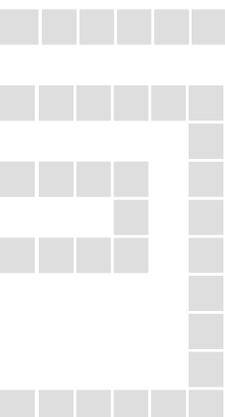
The Flemish Institute for Archiving (VIAA) works together with its partners to digitise, store, and provide access to audiovisual material, historical newspapers, documents, etc. At present, these partners are cultural heritage institutions who are granted ministerial funding, and broadcasters. Over the course of 2014-2015, this group will be further expanded with the archival services of the Flemish governmental bodies, of the Flemish cities and municipalities and the Flemish institutions that have been accredited as archive, museum, or heritage library. Along the way, this group will be enlarged further according to emerging needs and priorities.

It is the aim of VIAA to preserve the digital heritage of Flanders and make it accessible to all in a sustainable way. Apart from the entire process of digitisation and archiving, at least an equal amount of care is given to this accessibility of the material. For this, VIAA created its 'interaction' department. The VIAA Content Providers<sup>1</sup> – museums, archives, broadcasters – collect their material, prepare it, inventory it. In the long term, VIAA digitises and stores it, but this is not sufficient; in the short term, there is only a real return for these content providers if the digitised material is also really used. VIAA therefore explicitly chose the term 'interaction' and not 'access', because the latter only refers to granting a certain 'way in' but this does not suffice for VIAA's interaction plans.

In order to start working on the use of the material, VIAA has focused on three target groups as they were determined by the Flemish government: education, scientific research, and public libraries. In this article, we focus on the interaction with the first target group, education<sup>2</sup>. This target group also has the highest priority within VIAA, and that has



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to do with different factors. One of these factors is the question from education itself: they wish to use material in the classroom that doesn't come from YouTube. On that platform, teachers are confronted with unclarity: who created this fragment? What does the maker say; which message does he want to convey? How should we interpret this? It is not always easy to handle these sources in a media critical way. Another disadvantage of YouTube is that sometimes links disappear, and this is an unpleasant surprise when trying to show a snippet in your class.

At the same time, it is dangerous to consider something as authentic too easily. When seeing a clip that comes from your national broadcaster, or from the collection of a cultural heritage institution, you should also remain media critical as a teacher. You need to put the fragment in its time era; in its context of airing, you have to look at the intention (e.g. a news clip versus the capture of an artistic performance). Although a particular level of quality is higher than in a random YouTube clip, a certain assessment is still needed. For example, the digitised corpus might also contain material from a heritage institution representing a clearly voiced, specific view on society. When someone talks in clips coming from such a collection, both students and teachers need to be able to put this in perspective. An advantage in this is that the source of the material will always be very clear; but that does not take away the need for sufficient framing with context.

In order to draw teachers' attention to this, VIAA cooperates with the intermediary organisation Mediawijs<sup>3</sup>. The core task of VIAA is making available the material, and the attention to dealing with the materials is then brought in by Mediawijs. This way, VIAA itself

does not deliver ready-to-go products, but gives teachers the tools to be able to do something with the material themselves in a good way.

In neighbouring countries such as the Netherlands, there already exist different educational platforms such as schooltv.nl. The material on that website does not pose a language barrier, so Flemish teachers will also often take from that platform as a source. However, there we see the problem that certain historical events are differently portrayed based on where one is geographically located. For example, World War I is lived and portrayed very differently in the Netherlands than in Flanders. Therefore, this is not really helpful for the Flemish educational field.

The core thus remains the material that is offered. Together with iLabO<sup>4</sup> a trajectory was started to determine how teachers want to be offered which material. Through a living lab method, VIAA undertook a State of the Art (SOTA) analysis, a small survey with a number of teachers followed by a larger survey, followed by the organisation of co-creation sessions to determine what an interface to the content should or could look like. There were contacts with the ministerial cabinet and the department of education, the Canon Cultuurcel<sup>6</sup>, teacher trainingvi, Agentschap voor Kwaliteitszorg in Onderwijs en Vorming (AKOV), and Vlaamse Onderwijsraad (VLOR). In addition, the Content Providers were sourced, as most of them also have their own educational department. All of this led in a very demand-driven way to the development of the current online platform (see further).

VIAA tries as much as possible to attain its core goals and then to look at partnerships in order to fulfil the other roles. One of those

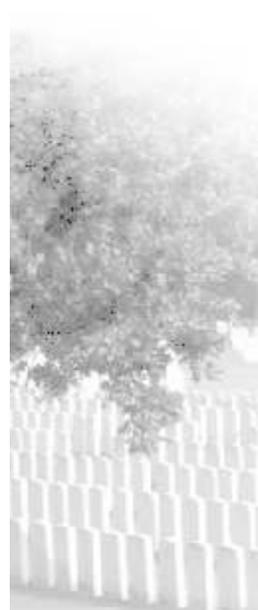
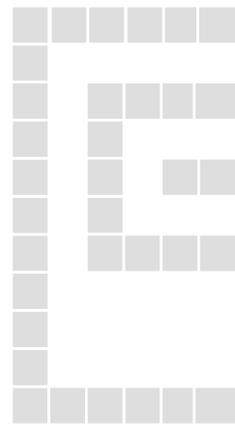
roles is also a certain degree of ‘content curation’ in the offer of audiovisual clips. From the tests, it clearly showed that teachers are not waiting for a database of millions of assets. They expect a pre-selection that is already partly tailored to their needs – age, subject, educational form. In order to make such a selection, first they worked together with teachers in the teacher training, and at the moment with some seconded<sup>7</sup> teachers. The work is about more than just finding some clips together; it helps to contextualise the enormous mass of digitally available material.

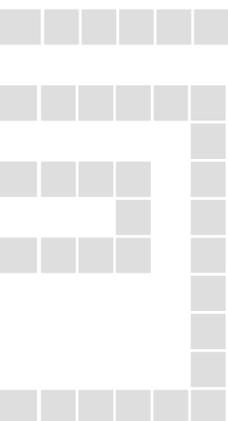
These seconded teachers are first looking at what is written in the curricula. They are all teaching classes in a certain domain and know the different educational forms in Belgium (ASO – general secondary education, TSO – technical secondary education, BSO – Vocational Secondary Education). This way they are going to select topics for a certain theme (e.g. technology) that can be interesting based on the educational form and the curriculum. For each topic, they create a briefing that indicates which archival material might be relevant for this, and in the case where such material is present, additional metadata should be created. Through Learning Object Metadata (LOM-metadata)<sup>8</sup> you can indicate for which age category something is suited or aimed at; this kind of metadata is not found in regular metadata from archive or museum collections.

One of the results of this curation work are the so-called Themes. They mainly come about based on preliminary research. The seconded teachers then look for audiovisual material to bring together that fits within the given theme, with the necessary LOM-metadata. Broader subjects, such as voting and choosing, are offered for different age cate-

gories. If you want material that can be used in a lesson, then it is better to search in Collections. Themes are about subjects on which material is being collected and that also appear in the curricula. Collections are the places where you as a teacher go to collect fragments for a certain class yourself, and where others can then source from (if you allow it). That last thing, sharing of self-made Collections, apparently is not self-evident. The first goal of VIAA is to stimulate use of the material, but a good selection of what is available is crucial in attaining this. Themes and Collections offer the teachers inspiration and make it possible that the teachers can directly get to work in a simple way. This way you get more structured content, and then the ball starts rolling. Through a comment line in the online platform, teachers can also inform each other that, for example, a certain fragment appears after a second look not to be so interesting for the target group they were aiming at, or make suggestions of other fragments.

In parallel VIAA also started a pilot project with educational publishers. There are in fact different types of users in the teacher corps. Some want to prepare all their class materials by themselves: looking for AV clips, cutting them, editing them, providing them with comments. Teachers with a bit less time want to peek around the corner to see what already exists in terms of subjects or Themes that, for example, have been provided with content and context by the seconded teachers. They can then make use of an existing list of about 10 fragments, and then make their own choices and order in it. A third group of teachers works very closely with the textbook. They only need to know what AV clip they can show with a certain textbook section. To be able to make that connection, VIAA relies on the educational publishers. The professionals that





work in such publishers on the textbooks are often also teachers themselves. They receive a login to the online VIAA platform and can then start by themselves to create Collections on a certain topic. They are then given the name of the publisher or publication. This way each teacher can look for Collections that are relevant to the textbook that he/she is currently working with.

The educational publishers are increasingly focussing on visual materials, an evolution you also see in the increasing use of image material in the books being produced. Available image material is thus rather important for a publisher. Nowadays some textbooks are still accompanied by a CD-ROM with relevant image material on it, but printing and distributing CDs is an expensive undertaking. From the point of view of the publisher, a selection of online available material is interesting, and from the point of view of VIAA, they want to stimulate the use of it. The partnership thus means a win-win situation. Yet, here one also encounters limitations. The platform on which the audiovisual material is available to the teachers works with a login system. Only those who are connected to an educational facility have access to it, and that way it also becomes possible to show within the protected environment material that is still copyright protected. The teacher who works for the educational publisher can thus perfectly assemble his Collections, but the publisher in this case cannot make commercial derivatives. There can thus only be the case of making a reference to the material on the online platform, and no full incorporation. If a publisher should want to launch a commercial product on the market based on material that was found on the platform (e.g. an iPad application), then the publisher would need to get back to the owner of the clip to make the necessary financial arrangements.

The way of coping with author rights on the audiovisual material is based on a model of trade with VIAA. The content provider lets his material be digitised and stored by VIAA at the expense of VIAA. He receives a digital copy that he can use on for his own purposes. In return for this service, VIAA asks for a license right to be allowed to use this material for education, for scientific research, and through public libraries. If a content provider wishes to conclude a commercial deal outside of this framework, or for example create new services with publishers, the content provider is free to do that. Such a trade model might perhaps work less well for the use of content in public libraries, because you are then leaving the closed/protected space. In cases where there are no copyright restrictions on the material, VIAA tries to make everything publicly available as much as possible. An example of this is the current digitisation of newspapers (regular press, clandestine press, pamphlets from the frontline, etc.) from WWI. It concerns about 280.000 newspaper pages that are being digitised. In the future, VIAA wishes to engage in conversation with the overarching rights managing organisations like SABAM<sup>9</sup> in Belgium. This way, they want to try to make global arrangements or deals, so that not every item needs to be cleared separately/individually.

The content providers are also not forgotten in this story. Many heritage institutions have an educational department and policy of their own – each more elaborate than the other. This school year, VIAA wants to make two use cases in which content providers show/prove how they handle the material and the platform. Often the content providers themselves also try to appeal to education with their collections. That is why VIAA tries to see how a cooperation or exchange can become fact. Currently there are talks with, among others,

Screen of the Testbeeld platform



the In Flanders Fields museum<sup>10</sup> and STAM Gent<sup>11</sup>. They also make educational packages, and can possibly enrich these with material from the online platform. If certain material cannot be found, VIAA can go looking for it. In addition, they can also make Collections on the online platform themselves, and this way put their collections in the spotlight.

The presence of a content provider's material on the online platform can also lead to an actual visit to that institution. In the case of such a visit, for example to a museum, a teacher will beforehand already try to contextualise the visit by means of the available collection material from this museum. A content provider can then refer to its own Collection on the online platform with interesting materials for use during the class. These can furthermore be enriched with material from heritage collections to which the museum in question perhaps would have otherwise never had access; think of it as a long-term digital loan. VIAA is advocating the fact that material is shared by and between all content providers.

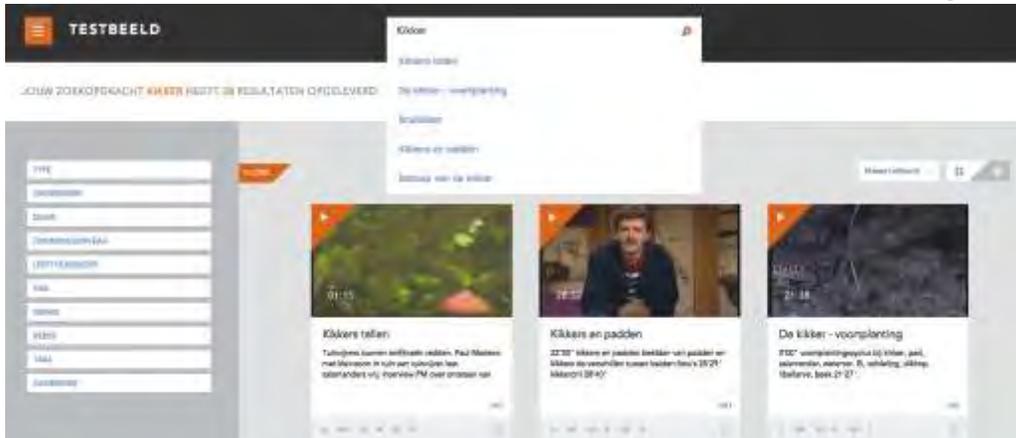
VIAA is now gathering additional information on how the institutions would like to be represented: the possibility to add texts, highlight certain parts, and so forth. In this way, teachers can also immediately see which institution their material comes from ("recognisability of the source"). The online platform also becomes a showcase of the collection of the content providers. This can be interesting in two ways: to contextualise educational packages even more, but also to make the direct link to schools and highlight the fact that this educational information exists. The optimisation of this scenario is still being investigated.

#### The online platform

Through the homepage, you first get to see a 'Theme in a picture'; at the moment this is on the 100-year anniversary of The Great War. If you click on 'Read more', you get to see a selection of films and clips that are connected to this topic. If you are working in the classroom around this specific theme, then these sources



Screen of the Testbeeld platform



are a first pool of material that you can search through. A Theme takes on the role of a pre-selected collection box of content, as a starting point for a deeper search.

Are you looking for a specific subject, you can enter a keyword that is instantly supplemented with a number of suggestions. These suggestions are always displayed in the search results, because the content collections behind Themes and Collections have already been created, and are thus ready-to-use for teachers who are looking for that kind of material.

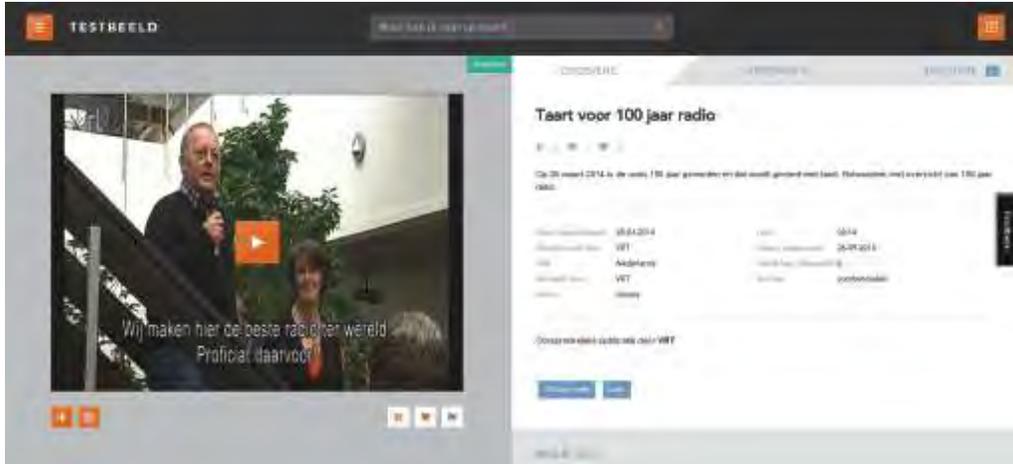
When you click on a fragment that you have found, you can play it in the browser. You see the accompanying metadata of the institution that delivered the material, plus additional metadata that provides more information about, for example, educational level. On the fragment page there is also room for discussion with other users, adding the clip to your own Collection on a certain topic and the possibility to edit the fragment. Through a simple tool you can adapt the beginning and end moment of the fragment. You can thus, for example, take out some minutes and only

create these as a new fragment and play this in the classroom. This way you edit fragments, you bring them together in a collection on a topic that you need in class, and you can play the films.

After this platform was first created, VIAA also went into the class to see how the platform was used in the classroom. Based on these field tests, a broader test audience of 300 current users was selected.

VIAA was founded on December 21, 2012 by the Flemish government. The initial start of VIAA was entrusted to iMinds (a strategic research centre of the Flemish Government, focused on ICT), with the aim of making VIAA independent by the end of 2014. After its founding at the end of 2012, four staff members were hired in May 2013. The last two months of that school year – May and June 2013 – were used to start up a trajectory within education. The living labs were tested, the different steps designed, the first contacts made with important stakeholders. In September 2013, with the start of the new school year, 14 schools were selected for a pilot phase

Screen of the Testbeeld platform

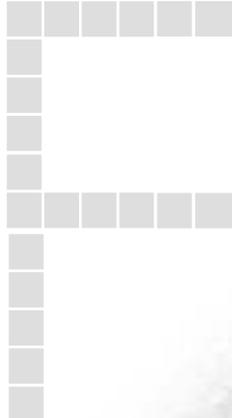
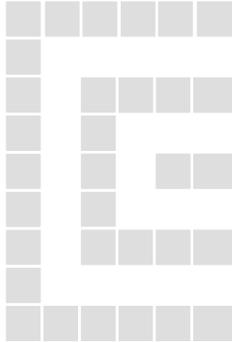
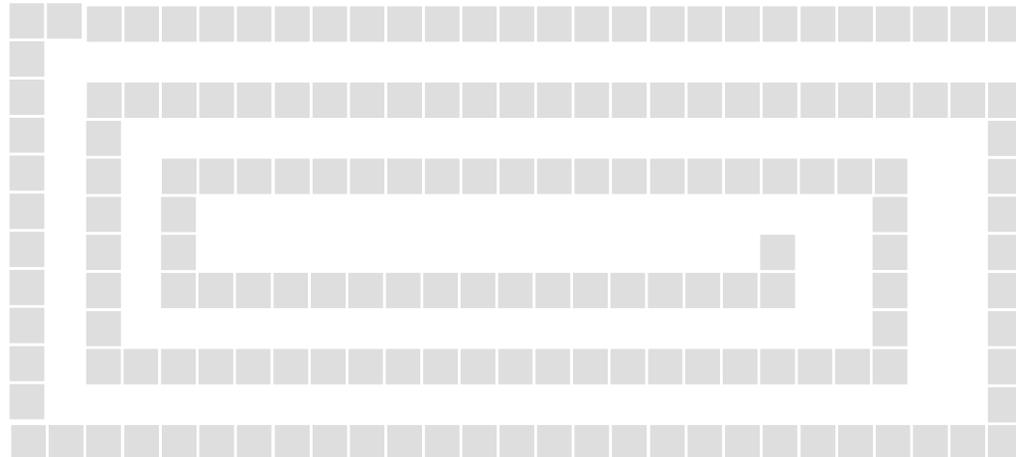


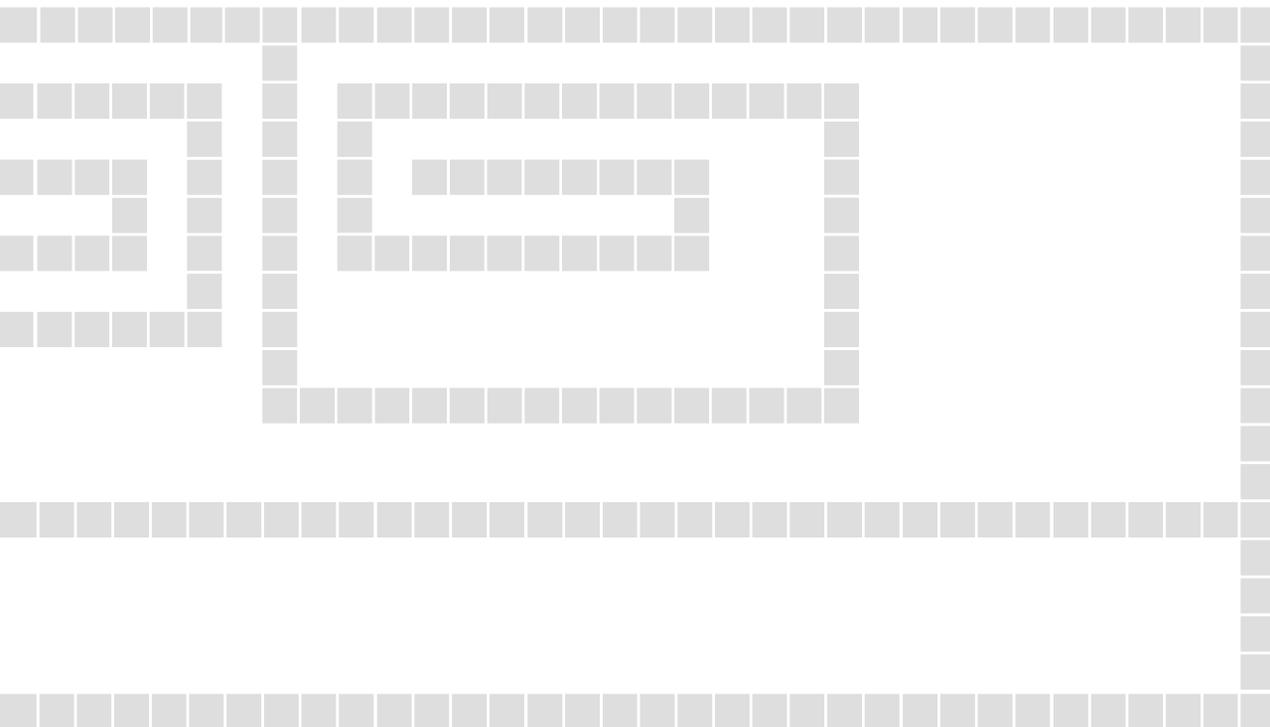
from March 2014 onwards. At the same time, an RFP was created to have the online platform developed. That was started in 2013.

As the environment was then being realised, it was also time to find out how which content was to be presented. VIAA could thereby count on teachers from the teacher training to offer support on the level of the content that could be presented. Around March 2014 the platform was finished in a first version and surveys were conducted with teachers on their

experience, on what functioned, and what did not. Based on that, between April and June, class visits were organised to see in real life how the platform and the content is being used in the lessons. This school year, a big leap forward was taken by the hiring of some seconded teachers for the further content build-out, and by creating a voluntary testing panel of 300 teachers. This way, the online platform and its interaction with users will be gradually expanded to more users and more curated content.

*Article delivered in October 2014*





1. VIAA uses the term Content Providers to refer to its partners who offer their audiovisual material for digitisation, storage, and interaction. Although the label makes it seem like their only role is to offer the material, “end of story”, this is not true. As we will see further in the article, it becomes clear that these partners also have an expertise in making a contribution on the level of the content that is offered on the online platform of VIAA (e.g. by means of creating an educational package of contents).
2. Here education refers to all institutions that have been recognised as such by the Flemish government, and are being financed or receive government funding.
3. Mediawijs literally means ‘media wise’. It is a Flemish knowledge centre with the aim of making all citizens, today and tomorrow, capable of engaging in a conscious, critical, and active way with the mediated society. More info at <http://mediawijs.be/>
4. Minds iLab.o is a test and experimentation platform in Flanders, Belgium, that performs Living Lab research for achieving policy and business goals using stakeholder co-design. More info: <http://www.iminds.be/>
5. Cultural cell as part of the Flemish Ministry of Education. More info: <http://www.canoncultuurcel.be/>
6. The term ‘teacher training’ in this article refers to the education trajectory that prepares one to become a professional teacher.
7. “Seconded teachers” typically undertake targeted research and analysis of issues relating to the academic world, working on projects in various fields. These teachers, who are normally employed by a school, receive a kind of contract suspension from teaching their classes in their school, and are paid for being part of the project for some time. Afterwards, they go back to being a teacher in their normal school.
8. The purpose of learning object metadata is to support the reusability of learning objects, to aid discoverability, and to facilitate their interoperability. See: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Learning\\_object\\_metadata](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Learning_object_metadata)
9. SABAM is the Belgian society of authors, composers, and publishers. They are a collective rights management organisation that collects, distributes, and manages (in the broadest sense of the word) all copyrights in Belgium and all other countries where reciprocal agreements have been negotiated. More information: [www.sabam.be/](http://www.sabam.be/)
10. The in Flanders Fields museum in Ypres is devoted to the study of World War I. More info: [www.inflandersfields.be/](http://www.inflandersfields.be/)
11. STAM is the city museum of Ghent. More info: [www.stamgent.be/](http://www.stamgent.be/)