



# **Documenting Internet-based Art**

## *The Dullaart-Sakrowski Method*

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## **0. Nederlandse Introductie**

Beeldend kunstenaar Constant Dullaart en kunsthistoricus Robert Sakrowski hebben een methode ontwikkeld voor het documenteren van internetkunst waarbij niet de technologische aspecten, maar de persoonlijke interactie met het kunstwerk en de (historische) context centraal staan. De nadruk ligt op het zo natuurlijk mogelijk registreren van deze interactie door middel van een *participatory DIY* methodiek. Mensen moeten deze methode thuis zelfstandig kunnen uitvoeren en vervolgens uploaden op YouTube.

Naar aanleiding van dit project heeft onderzoeksproject Culture Vortex een pre-pilot and twee pilotsessies georganiseerd om deze subjectieve methode in een gecontroleerde omgeving (i.p.v. bijvoorbeeld een thuissituatie) te testen. In lijn met het doel van Culture Vortex om publieksparticipatie te stimuleren in online culturele collecties probeert deze pilot antwoord te geven op de vraag hoe interactie met een online collectie gedocumenteerd kan worden en welke toepassingen deze documentatie vervolgens kan hebben. In de pilot wordt onderzocht op welke manier deze documentatiemethode het beste uitgevoerd kan worden, en wordt inzicht verkregen in de obstakels en valkuilen van deze methode. Deze informatie kan vervolgens gebruikt worden om de methode aan te scherpen en aanbevelingen te doen voor kunstenaars en instellingen die deze methode willen gebruiken. Voor meer informatie over de methode van Dullaart en Sakrowski, is een interview door onderzoeker en curator Annet Dekker te lezen op: [net.artdatabase.org/about/](http://net.artdatabase.org/about/) (een Nederlandse verkorte versie is te lezen op <http://www.tubelight.nl/articles/1321/het-vastleggen-van-een-culturele-esthetiek-het-documenteren-van-netkunst>).

## **1. Introduction**

In light of the internet-based art (net art) documentation project initiated by artist Constant Dullaart and art theorist Robert Sakrowski, the Culture Vortex research program organized a pre-pilot and two pilot sessions in a controlled environment to test their proposed subjective method of documenting net art. In line with the aim of Culture Vortex to encourage public participation in online cultural collections, this project seeks to answer how interaction with an (online) collection can be documented, and what (future) purpose this documentation can have. Dullaart and Sakrowski understand net art as a work that is meant to be shown on a personal computer, making use of its connection to the World Wide Web.

Dullaart and Sakrowski have developed a method to document net art that aims to move beyond the technical specifications and the interaction model of the artwork. They try to capture the reception of net art in an environment in which it was originally perceived. As Sakrowski explains, “the context, the private atmosphere, and the hardware interaction defines a large part of the ‘net art activity.’” The documentation should thus represent four different layers:

1. The hardware: computer, monitor, keyboard, mouse, net access, handheld devices, laptops etc.
2. The software: operating system, browser, server, plug-ins and Flash, Java etc.
3. The surroundings: noise, furnishing, living room, working space, bedroom, other people in the room.
4. The interaction: collaboration, participation of the recipient.

To reflect these different layers they developed a template for video documentation in which the work of art is presented as a split-screen: on one side is a screengrab displaying the artwork while a user navigates it, and on the other, an over-the-shoulder shot showing the user in their (personal) environment interacting with the artwork. Because this method emphasizes the “reception situation,” a situation that should be as “natural” as possible, it is important for users to be able to create the documentation of the artworks themselves, in their own surroundings. The template should thus be easily executable to allow for this kind of participation. This does not only regard to the documentation process itself, but also the database, storage and providing the right

meta descriptions. Dullaart and Sakrowski choose to use YouTube for this purpose: it is publicly accessible and easy-to-use, provides a cheap way of storing data, and by including a metadata form it is possible to create a database within YouTube.

The goal of this project is to find out how best to carry out this method and to gain insights into the obstacles of documenting net art in this manner. The information revealed through this research can be used to develop Dullaart and Sakrowski's proposed template further and make it more accessible for users, it can be used to reflect critically on their proposed method, and to make recommendations for artists and institutions who would like to use this method in their documentation of net art. For more information about the Dullaart-Sakrowski method you can read an interview with them by Annet Dekker at [net.artdatabase.org/about/](http://net.artdatabase.org/about/).

## **2. Collaborators**

**Annet Dekker** *Head of Research*. Independent curator and researcher with subjects of interest including the influence of new media, science and popular culture on art and vice versa. Her PhD is on strategies for documenting net art at the Centre for Cultural Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London, under the supervision of Matthew Fuller (since 2008). <http://aaaan.net/hub/annet-dekker/>

**Constant Dullaart** *Artist and Creator of net.artdatabase.org*. Trained as a video artist, his work has recently focussed on the internet and re-contextualizing found material. His work shows the changing vernacular of the contemporary computer user, and how global corporations (Google, Adobe, Apple) control this new visual grammar. Together with Robert Sakrowski he started <http://net.artdatabase.org/about/> to document net art in its surrounding. <http://constantdullaart.com/>

**Sandra Fauconnier** *Art Historian* (MA, Ghent University, 1997) with a background in architecture. Was a media archivist at V2\_ Institute for the Unstable Media (Rotterdam, NL) and worked for the mediatheque and collection of the Netherlands Media Art Institute (Amsterdam, NL). Currently, she is project lead for ARTtube, a website with videos about art and design, at Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen (Rotterdam, NL). <http://www.linkedin.com/in/sandrafauconnier>

**Sabine Niederer** *Head of CREATE-IT*, the applied research center of the School for Design and Communication at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences. She is also coordinator of the Digital Methods Initiative, the new media PhD program at the Department of Media Studies, University of Amsterdam. In her PhD project Sabine studies the technicity of online content, such as the non-human content agents that co-author online content (i.e. Twitter bots, Wikipedia bots), in an analysis of climate change skepticism on the Web. From 2004 until 2012, Sabine worked at the Institute of Network Cultures, with director Geert Lovink.

**Robert Sakrowski** *Creator of net.artdatabase.org*. Art historian and curator in the field of net-based art. He founded the [netart-datenbank.org](http://netart-datenbank.org) in 1999 and was also a founding member of the

web.museum e.V. in the year 2005. Since 1999 he has been dealing with the problem of how to collect and present netart while preserving its specific context. Currently running the initiative Curating YouTube.

**Kimberley Spreeuwenberg** *Production and Report*. Recently obtained her MA in New Media at the University of Amsterdam with a thesis on open source critique (Androids promise of freedom, a renewal of open source critique). Also has a background in graphic design.  
[www.kimmyspreeuw.nl](http://www.kimmyspreeuw.nl)

**Ward ten Voorde** *Video & Post-production*. Independent media production professional. Expert in audiovisual documentation of media art and installations.

### **3. The Project**



1. Overview of pilot setting.

#### **3.1 Pre-pilot: Technical Trial 24th November 2011**

To get a clear idea of the technical specifications and other requirements for documenting net art following the template developed by Dullaart and Sakrowski, we organized a technical trial. Annet Dekker, PhD researcher focusing on documenting net art, Sandra Fauconnier, collection archivist in the (new) media art sector, Kimberley Spreeuwenberg, producer and Ward ten Voorde, expert in audiovisual documentation of media art and installations, discussed the necessary equipment and took a look at the Usability Lab of the HvA. In contrast to the private environment for the documentation

setting described by Dullaart and Sakrowski in their method, which is meant to reflect the personal or “natural” surroundings of the documentalist, we chose to use a controlled setting for our pilots. This was chosen because it would allow us to compare the ways the test persons interact with the artworks and to get a clearer idea of the conceptual, technical and practical difficulties present in this method.

### Uncertainties

While discussing the project it became clear that there were still a number of uncertainties at this stage: What quality should the documentation have, HD or web? What is the purpose of the documentations? What software for making the screengrab should we use? Who will be the test persons, and how informed should they be? Does the material need to be edited? What sound should we record? How should we position the test person? What should the angle of the camera be? Do we need artificial light? These conceptual, technical and practical uncertainties were discussed with Dullaart and Sakrowski:

#### *a. Conceptual*

As described earlier, for Dullaart and Sakrowski it is important for the documentation to be “as natural as possible”—the emphasis in the documentation is on how people experience the artwork and about reflecting an idea of the era in which they exist. As Fauconnier explained: “Historically I think it is very important, because of the way that it not only documents the ‘immediate’ work but also (and especially) the context and interaction.” While discussing the Dullaart-Sakrowski method and comparing it to others for documenting net art it became clear there are some tensions between the purpose and practice of their documentation method and other methods that focus more on the technical aspects. They both try to reflect the artwork, but the more technical method is focused on the interaction model, trying to show all the navigation options of an artwork and its technical specificities—the interaction *of* the artwork—the Dullaart-Sakrowski method focuses on interaction *with* the artwork. According to Dullaart and Sakrowski a technical copy of the artwork is impossible since,



the implications of these network-based artworks suggests that the artwork functions only as intended when in the context of that network. This means that documentation should include enough social and technical environmental qualities and an illustration of the environment where the work is experienced, that we believe multiple documentations of the impressions viewers had of the work. This is currently the best way to preserve these artworks.

We have to understand and portray the artwork in its context: where it is “used” and how people interact with it without being obsessed with the “wholeness” of the artwork in a technical sense.

As Fauconnier pointed out “the explicit possibility [of the Dullaart-Sakrowski method] to assemble a variety of videos with the experiences of different people browsing the same work emphasizes how the individual, personal perception of a work is important in net art.” Moreover, as Sakrowski explains, it illustrates that the “whole” activity of browsing net art is never in a single place, “it will ever only be an interpretation, a variation. That means that all versions, all documented videos together will only come near to what a ‘net art activity’ is.”

In relation to this Fauconnier also noted: “As a collection holder I would find it valuable to also have documentation of the artists themselves, and eventually experts (art historians, critics) as test persons using this same method. I would like to be able to document a wide range of perspectives on the work, not just amateur visitors.” In this understanding, the wholeness does not necessarily stem from one all encompassing documentation, but a range of documentations of the same work that complement each other. As Dullaart described, “Imagine that the work has sides to it that have never been seen due to slow [internet] connection speeds or malfunctioning software. Is it up to us to document these layers of the artwork? Shouldn’t we respect the materiality of the World Wide Web, and the ways that the viewers of the artworks engaged with them?”

The focus on the documentation setting being “as natural as possible,” put forward by Dullaart and Sakrowski, has great value but can also be questioned as Dekker explains:

The value is that it gives a glimpse of what people do when they watch a net artwork, what strikes them, what they leave aside. This for me is particularly visible when you use video screen capture. A camera capture



that also shows the conditions in which something is viewed is of course also interesting in that it tells something about the context (what did the equipment look like, the environment, etc.), but it is important to know that this will always be very much staged and thus subjective. An interesting question that comes with this is of course in what way this adds to the experience or not?

This paradox is something we noticed during the execution of the pilots. As ten Voorde explains, the concept of “as natural as possible” is of course complicated in relation to the fact that we are filming, and thus, to a certain extent, it is always staged.

I question what a “natural” video documentation is. My opinion is that using a camera in itself already is an intervention and thereby shows a subjective reality. This means that even when the goal is to make an “objective” as possible documentation of a “natural” situation, it still is a matter of making decisions on location, camera positions and settings, lighting, sound, set dressing etc. to make it look “natural” and technically good.

In the case of our pilot we used a cameraman inside a laboratory, which is quite a far length from the setting proposed by Dullaart and Sakrowski who suggested, for instance, a setup with an HD capable smartphone on a tripod in a living room or office where the camera becomes an anonymous observer. However, this tension can be resolved to an extent. As Dullaart proposes, the idea of a natural setting can be restored “after simple practice within this setting, just as a subject of a documentary movie has to get used to the idea of unmanned cameras. Perhaps some casual surfing would be recommended before the actual recording starts.”

#### *b. Technical*

The conceptual grounds discussed above lead to particular technical decisions. Dullaart and Sakrowski explained that for them the purpose of the documentation is at a minimum purely archival—for YouTube—however where possible they like to collect all the material as a back-up. Both prefer the over-the-shoulder shot as the screengrab in HD quality, an h274 file format, and uploading it to YouTube in the highest quality available (HD 1028p).

Fauconnier pointed out that from the perspective of the collection holder it is interesting to have the material in a better quality than the YouTube files to be able to

present it on a larger format. The particular purposes—“archival” or “presentation”—thus influence the quality that is necessary. Yet, Fauconnier noted that from the perspective of a collection holder these decisions for presentation are especially dependant on the artists’ permissions and their desires for the presentation of the work. We eventually decided to record in HD 1280x720 because we had access to this equipment and could easily tone it down afterwards to match various visual qualities.

Another technical aspect that required a decision was the software used for the screen capture. This decision was dependent on the fact that people need to be able to use the technology at home by themselves without any professional experience. And as Fauconnier said, “If I would make any recommendations in this area, it would be in the direction of using open standards, or at least widely used video formats and codecs” to make sure the documentations can be viewed, shared and most importantly uploaded to YouTube.

One of our options was the Tobii software that was present on the Windows computer in the UI lab. This software did not have the most up-to-date codecs (we preferred H.264, the most often used web-based codecs with good quality). Moreover, this software is very Microsoft-oriented regarding file formats it can export. For instance it could not export QuickTime movies. It was also too limited in the settings it offered for the screen and video capture, and since it is professional eyetracking software it is also rather expensive.

The other option we explored was the open source software Camstudio. Since it is open source and free it seemed a very viable option. This free software version however is only Microsoft compatible and we had a Windows computer available to us from the UI Lab for the pilots that we could not install new software on. Eventually we choose to use IShowU, Mac software, on a MacBook Pro laptop. This software was also used by Dullaart and Sakrowski and seemed to have the best settings and codec options. Moreover, our cameraman was used to working with this software and from the three options it was the most affordable. Of course, the downside of IShowU is that it only works on Apple computers. Overall, as Dullaart pointed out “further research into a freely accessible cross-platform screen capture software would be recommended.”

Overview of Specifications/Settings of the Camera and Software used During this Pilot:

**Camera specifications:**

Model: HD camcorder, Canon XF100

Video compression: MPEG-2 long GOP

Audio compression (internal microphone): Lineaire PCM, 16 bits, 48 kHz, 2 channels

File format: MXF

**Camera settings:**

50 Mbps (CBR, 4:2:2) 1280x720, 50P (Progressive scan)

f4.0 / 3.7, s1/50, White Balance 3100K

**IShowU HD settings:**

Video: 1280x720, 50P, 16:9, Apple Intermediate Codec.

Audio: Lineaire PCM, 16 bits, 48 kHz, 2 channels

Fixed mouse mode; Make sound click on NONE; Springiness solid

Display 1360x768.

Software version 2.2.7 (download: <http://www.shinywhitebox.com/ishowu-hd/>)

**Computer settings:**

MacBook “Universal Access” settings: activate access to assistive devices ON.

**Computer specifications:**

MacBook Pro laptop OS X 10.5 Leopard

*c. Practical*

On a practical level, the Dullaart-Sakrowski method emphasizes the importance of filming the test subject in such a way that their surroundings are also documented so as to give an idea of the era in which the interaction took place. Keeping in mind the issues raised earlier in the conceptual notes, we decided on the following settings for the pilot:

- Test subject: The test subject will sit on the couch that is available in the UI lab with a MacBook Pro laptop OS X 10.5 Leopard on the table in front of them or on their lap. We provide a couple of browser bookmarks of where they can find the works we want them to visit. They are free to select which they'd like to view,

and look at them for as long as they like—we don't provide any time limit or background information. After the test subjects decide they have seen enough, we provide them with some additional information about the artist and the works of art (see appendix), and then let them interact with the artworks in the same manner again.

- Recordings: The camera is positioned behind the test person as an over-the-shoulder shot, registering parts of their surroundings as well as a clear shot of the computer screen. Ten Voorde will start and stop the over-the-shoulder recordings and the IShowU HD software.
- Selection of Artworks: The Selection of the documented artworks are defined by Sandra Fauconnier, as collection holder of NIMk, and Annet Dekker, as a PhD researcher focusing on documenting net art. We decided to choose works of art that are in collections of the collaborators of the pilot, i.e. the collection of NIMk, Impakt and SKOR. Annet Dekker is currently working with SKOR and has previously curated Impakt online. Sabine Niederer is currently working as the curator of the net art program of Impakt Online.

**Pilot 1:** Theo Deutinger, *World at Work* (2008) <http://td-architects.eu/worldatwork/>, Jaromil, *Time Based Text* (2005) <http://tbt.dyne.org>, JODI, <http://www.jodi.org> (1995), Martine Neddam, *Mouchette* (1996) <http://mouchette.org>

**Pilot 2:** Constant Dullaart <http://therevolvinginternet.com> (2010) and <http://thesleepinginternet.com> (2011), Alexander Galloway/Govcom.org, *The IP Browser* (2009) <http://ipbrowser.digitalmethods.net>, Dave Griffiths/Aymeric Mansoux/Marloes de Valk, *Naked on Pluto* (2011) <http://naked-on-pluto.net>, Linda Hilfling, *Misspellings Generator* (2007) <http://www.misspelling-generator.org>, JODI, *Geo Goo* web version (2008) <http://www.geogoo.net>

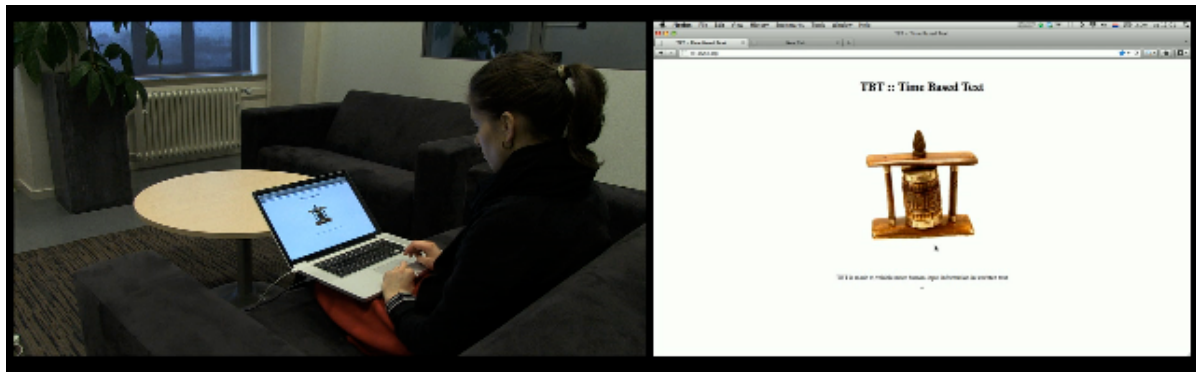
Collection holders:

**NIMk:** The Netherlands Media Art Institute promotes the wide development, application and distribution of, and reflection on, new technologies in the visual arts. NIMk supports media art in three core areas: presentation, research and collection, and through its facilities provides extensive services for artists and art institutions.

**Impakt Online:** The Impakt Foundation focuses on presenting and stimulating innovative audiovisual arts in an interdisciplinary context. Annual net art projects are launched on its web gallery Impakt Online ([www.impaktonline.nl](http://www.impaktonline.nl)).

**SKOR:** Foundation for Art and Public Domain is an internationally operating Dutch institution which advises, develops and creates art projects in relation to public spaces.

### ***3.2 Pilot 1 and 2 on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2011***



2. Screenshot from edited documented material pilot 1.

#### ***3.2.1. Pilot 1***

Present: Ward ten Voorde (cameraman), Annet Dekker (researcher), Kimberley Spreeuwenberg (producer), test person 1 (Zoë Kooyman), test person 2 (Ana Ribeiro). The first pilot on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December started with a bit of a delay because there were difficulties finding the right settings for IshowU HD. For participants, we asked one (former) student (test person 1) of the Preservation and Presentation of the Moving Image Master of the UvA and one intern (test person 2) from NIMk. While one of them was interacting with the artworks the other could observe. Before starting the documentation we briefly explained where they could find the bookmarks for works on the browser, and in case of *Time Based Text* (TBT) where they could find the program icon on the desktop.

During the session of test person 1 *Mouchette* did not function at first due to a proxy that was blocked by the Little Snitch software present on the MacBook Pro. After the session, test person 1 explained that she thought we had staged the blocked proxy to see how she would react to it. This remark seemed to indicate that she was conscious and contemplative of her role as a test person and of being filmed, thus influencing her engagement with the works. When asked about where there were any difficulties she replied: “I don’t know how it is supposed to react, did I see everything? I just clicked around.” The work *TBT* was particularly confusing to her as she wasn’t clear if it worked or not.

It became apparent that this first engagement with the artworks is very exploratory; test persons sometimes seem to randomly navigate through the website just to see how it reacts. *TBT* in particular did not seem to communicate very clearly how it should function. In relation to this, we also wondered if the actual installation of this artwork on the computer, something we prepared for the pilot, should not be part of the documentation itself.

After this first session Dekker gave the test persons information about the artworks, and in case of *TBT*, explained how it functioned. In this way we could, to a certain extent, see if there were differences in how a user interacts with a work of art without any knowledge of it compared to when they are informed, and explore what different aspects of the artworks are revealed or shown by the user. As all different documentations of an artwork contribute to an understanding of its “wholeness,” the documentation of a test person interacting with a work after they’ve been given information about it are equally important.

The second session of the test persons interacting with the artworks were shorter, but more thorough; they knew where to go and/or what should happen. In the case of the work by JODI the test persons now knew that the “gibberish” they saw was the actual source code of the image that is seen once looking into the source code. On a more practical level ten Voorde noted that the TL light in the room interfered with the visibility of the computer screen. Since the setting was already somewhat staged, we decided to show the work on the screen as best as possible.

### **3.2.2. Pilot 2**

Present: Ward ten Voorde (cameraman), Sandra Fauconnier (collection holder), Kimberley Spreeuwenberg (producer), test person 3 (Rachael Pocock), test person 4 (Cleo Graaf).

The second pilot followed a similar setup. This time however we asked one student of the Preservation and Presentation of the Moving Image Master of the UvA (test person 3) and one student of the HvA (test person 4), and Sandra Fauconnier also participated as a test person. In this pilot the test persons did not observe each other.

From the outset, test person 3 interacted with the artworks very thoroughly and seemed to have a good understanding of its possibilities even without additional information about the works. Test person 4 was the opposite. For instance, in the case of *IP Browser* she only clicked on the left or right navigation buttons and moved away from the website after a few clicks. Test person 3 also used the search box to look for websites. Fauconnier interacted very thoroughly with the artworks, explaining that she does not see herself as a typical test person because she knows the works quite well and has a vast knowledge of net art. She navigated the sites with the intention of “demonstrating” them quite thoroughly.

Unfortunately, during this pilot it turned out that the website-based artwork *Naked on Pluto* was not working, and there were internet connection problems a few times. In addition, the *Geo Goo* project did not function optimally because the required Google Earth plug-in was not installed on the MacBook Pro.

## **4. Conclusion**

The goal of this project was to find out how best to carry out the proposed Dullaart-Sakrowski method for documenting net art. Their method tries to capture the reception of net art in an environment in which it was originally perceived, so as to move beyond net art as a set of technical specifications or an interaction model. The method reflects their assertion that the “wholeness” of documentation cannot be found in one single registration, but the collection of several documentations will together illustrate what a work of net art is. Through staging their method with a series of test persons we tried to gain insights into the obstacles of documenting net art in this manner. The information



revealed through this research can be used to develop their proposed template further and make it more accessible for users, it can be used to reflect critically on their proposed method, and to make recommendations for artists and institutions who would like to use this method in their documentation of net art.

We organized two pilots in which we asked a total of five test persons to interact with a selection of artworks twice each; in the first instance they were not given information about the artworks, and in the second we provided them with additional information about the works and the artist. Test persons interacted with the works very differently in the first instance when they were not informed. Some seemed to be more familiar with the interaction possibilities than others.

When given information about the works the ways the different test persons engaged with them became more similar, and their exploration of these artworks was more thorough, navigating to more aspects of the works online. Incidentally, the duration of the interaction with the artworks was shorter. The limited time they spent on the artworks in the second session is likely due to already having some familiarity with them from the first session. Being given information about the works also likely contributed to shortened times in the second session as they had an idea of what needed to be explored and thus spent less time randomly clicking around.

Regarding technical and practical aspects, it became clear that when dealing with an unnatural situation—the test person recording themselves while navigating a net artwork as in the proposed method, or in our exaggerated case of a test lab and the presence of a cameraman—it is necessary to explore what the important considerations are. And as became clear, these considerations depend a lot on the objective of the documentation. In our case it was a first attempt at setting up the equipment in order to see if and how it worked, and what would be necessary for conducting the next session. We were also interested in seeing if we, as semi-novices, would be able to “easily” conduct the documentation method.

It became clear that artworks in an online or digital environment are very unstable and often encounter a number of problems including, as we observed: that the software of other programs can interfere (a proxy error); the oft-found requirement of installing additional software (Google Earth plug-in); the breakdown of the internet

connection; software that a work is built upon has changed its settings; Google. Consequently, it could be argued that the installation of the work of art on the computer can itself be part of the documentation, but this of course depends on the goal of the documentation.

#### ***4.1 Recommendations for Institutions or Artists***

Before starting the documentation method it is important to have a clear conceptual understanding of the purpose of the documentation, and how this relates to technical and practical aspects and requirements to make clear what needs to be considered for the process.

If the documentation material needs to be presented via a beamer, the quality of YouTube can be too low and HD quality with a larger pixel ratio may be required. The necessity of having a camera, screen capture software, a tripod, and preferably two people to execute the method could be a problem for the method which necessitates people being able to execute the documentation process at home by themselves. In addition, the level of informing the test persons about the artworks is dependant on the purpose of the documentation. As our results indicated, if a more thorough navigation of an artwork is required it is preferable to inform the test persons about possibilities of the website and the works components. However, as the conceptual discussion of the method illustrates, different versions of documentation together will provide the most thorough presentation of the work of art.

#### **5. Future Research**

These pilots only tested the documentation portion of the Dullaart-Sakrowski method, and did not address the template for uploading this material to YouTube. It is necessary to study and test if the process of uploading to YouTube, and the metadata form, are user-friendly. Moreover, this pilot was executed in a more controlled environment than is envisioned in the proposed method. Therefore it could be interesting to ask students, for example those of the Preservation and Presentation of the Moving Image Master of the UvA, to follow both the complete documentation method at home as well as the template for uploading the material to YouTube (provided on the method's project

website.) Questions that arise about test subjects in proposing this new scheme include: how do they interpret the specifications provided by Dullaart and Sakrowski? Is it something that they can execute on their own at home? What problems do they encounter? What kind of material do they upload to YouTube? Is this equally useable from the perspective of a collection holder or researcher?

For future research it would also be interesting to gather material documented by experts or the artists themselves to see how artists execute this method, and to document the material not only in a “personal” setting, but also, for instance, at festivals or exhibitions to see how these documentations complement each other. Moreover, it would be good to research a few cases where the work itself has disappeared with only documentation remaining. Is it possible to get an idea of the work's operation and intent from the documentation alone? This example would already allude to the question of this method regarding if and how people will react to the documentation in the future: does the documentation of the work that no longer exists still make sense? If not, what additional information is needed?

To conclude, the presentation possibilities of these documentations should be researched. In what context can they be used—educational, next to the original artwork or on their own—and in what form should they be presented—projected, on a screen etc.

Further uses for the documentations created should be researched in a possible second phase of the project, including exhibition models and/or comparing the Dullaart-Sakrowski method to other methods of documentation, presentation, and preservation. Other interesting questions that followed from these pilot cases include: How to deal with outsourcing cultural activities to commercial services like YouTube? What are the (dis)advantages? How to include documentation in exhibition settings?

Dullaart and Sakrowski would like to research further possibilities for encouraging their method as a time-based reception documentation example for existing collections, but also with new sales, and for study and future exhibition purposes.

## **6. Appendix**

1. Information that was sent to test persons prior to the first recording.

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### **Pilot 1 and 2 ‘net art documentation project’**

*8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2011 - Information about works documented & questions for reflection.*

#### **Location**

Hogeschool van Amsterdam, Rhijnspoorplein 1, room 05A12, 5<sup>th</sup> floor.  
From 10.00 till 13.00

#### **Present**

Pilot 1: Ward (cameraman) Annet (research) Kimmy (production) Test person 1 and 2  
Pilot 2: Ward (cameraman), Kimmy (production) Sandra (collection holder) Test person 3 and 4

#### **Introduction**

Please read the interview with Constant Dullaart and Sakrowski on <http://net.artdatabase.org/about/> as this gives a good idea of the setting and goal of the pilot. Note that instead of a personal space we test the documentation method in a more controlled manner at the usability lab at the HvA. Other than this we will try to stay as close as possible to the method described on their website.

#### **The objective of the Pilot**

We want to find out how the Dullaart-Sakrowski method can best be executed keeping in mind the goal of his method, i.e. allowing people to document net art in their personal surroundings, which emphasizes their personal experience.

**1. Capture audience experience.** The goal of the documentation is to capture audience experience which can be used at a later stage in exhibition settings to add to the work or to replace the work.

With this goal in mind we like to answer the following questions:

- Where do we need to position the physical camera?
  - What happens with the lighting situation (also think of this method when executed in a different environment)?
  - What role does sound play (both from the work as well as the environment or the person)?
  - Would there be a need to edit the work(s) after they’ve been recorded? Why so, or why not?
- What software is best to use, what are the specifications, advantages, and limitations?

**2. Template.** A product of these pilots will not only be the documented material, but we also want to work towards a template or protocol that people can follow to document net art themselves. At <http://net.artdatabase.org/instructions/> you find the instructions described by Dullaart and Sakrowski.

- Is the template understandable for a layperson?
- What needs further explanation, and how would you explain that?
- Is the metadata sufficient, what should be added or changed (think also of other information like, personal involvement with or previous knowledge of the work, description of the experience, etc)?

**3. Questioning the method.** Documentation is used for various purposes; think of presentation, preservation, publicity, art historical or social research, etc. We like to find out if the method we're following now is sufficient for each of these different uses and if not what should be different? Several questions that might help in answering this are:

- Is it the best way to document net art in a personal/subjective manner?
- What does it show and what does it not show? And how does the one or the other effect the result/goal?
- How does the method used relate to the goal, would a different goal require a different method, and what other forms could you think of?
- How easy do you think it is to use this method by yourself?
- What would be the preferred presentation platform for these documentation sample (now You Tube is chosen, but can you think of other spaces)?

This part will reflect on the process of documentation and the documentation as end-result. This could result in the form of a short essay.

### Preparation

We expect you to have read the information above and the mentioned information on [net.artdatabase.org](http://net.artdatabase.org). There will be two test persons present per pilot. You will switch between 'test subject' and 'observer'. As test person you will first be asked to visit a small selection of websites randomly, 'on your own terms' without additional information. After this we provide you with some additional information about the artworks or artists and you'll be asked to visit the sites again. Both these sessions will be recorded.

As observer we would like you to keep in mind the objective of the pilot above. You can take notes about the steps we take, the technological specifications such as the position of the camera, light, sounds etc. and other information that should possibly be mentioned in the template.

### The test day and layout

The test person sits behind a computer and is filmed from an over-shoulder shot. The screen is captured as well part of the environment. We will document how the person navigates through the website. Most importantly the physical camera captures the subjective viewing experience, ie the person viewing the net art in a specific environment. The screen capture software will capture the computer screen, the movement of the mouse and any additional computer sounds that are encountered in the work.

2. Additional information about the artworks that was given to test persons before the second recording session.

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## **Pilot 1: Additional Information**

Please read this information as preparation before the second session. It will give you a better understanding, or more entry points, into the artworks.

### **Theo Deutinger, World at Work (2008)**

Next to architectural work, the architect Theo Deutinger also produces so-called 'snapshots of globalization'. These are information visualizations and maps representing the world (and its globalization) at a particular moment. The "World At Work" project is a multi-layered visualization depicting and exploring worldwide working patterns of the world population. Deutinger has presented this issue in the form of a worldclock. The central elements of this clock are Earth's orbit in our solar system and Earth's rotation around its own axis. After all, our day/night rhythm is based on this natural course of the planet. The clock shows the times on which different parts of the world population are working, sleeping or enjoying leisure time. By taking the working day from nine to five as the point of departure, the clock is provided with a critical dimension when it comes to the division of labor. As a result, the clock reveals the unbalanced division of labor between the various time zones on our planet. Deutinger's world clock shows the activity of the world population at specific moments of the day and creates a direct connection between the origins of time - the solar system - and the most advanced means of calculating time: the computer. (Source: Impakt, [http://www.impact.nl/index.php/artworks/world\\_work](http://www.impact.nl/index.php/artworks/world_work))

### **Jaromil, Time Based Text (2005)**

Denis "Jaromil" Rojo is a free software programmer, a media artist and activist. He has made significant contributions to the development of multimedia and streaming applications on the GNU/Linux platform (the free counterpart of commercial brands like Microsoft and Macintosh). He was born in Pescara, Italy, but now lives in Amsterdam, Netherlands. Time Based Text can be considered software art, but above all it is a new form of digital poetics. Time Based Text offers a creative, experimental, joyful and critical way of handling digital text by implementing interactive, new software and network communications. Time Based Text is a type-performance that illustrates feelings. The emphasis of the software is on the process of writing/typing. It is a tool for time-based recording and playback of the process of typing a message, with the accuracy of milliseconds. The basic interface for typing records all typing and plays it back exactly the way the text was typed the first time, including all hesitations and misspellings. It reveals additional information on digital poetry, because the speed of typing and reading it, are visualised. E-mail, blogs, all kinds of digital media can be given a "human touch" by TBT. The software has been kept as basic as possible, is free to use and users are encouraged to add functionalities. The special TBT website offers space for TBT-created messages, haiku's and poetry, so that visitors can admire each others work. (Source: Impakt, [http://impact.nl/index.php/artworks/time\\_based\\_text](http://impact.nl/index.php/artworks/time_based_text))

Note: Type your text, when finished press ctrl-c and go to the desktop to find your file (recorded-text.html), double click to open.

### **JODI, [www.jodi.org](http://www.jodi.org) (1995)**

Dirk Paesmans & Joan Heemskerk work together in the Net under the common name of Jodi. They come from the world of photography, video and performance and transform the processes which normally occur in the background onto the surface of their Web pages at [jodi.org](http://www.jodi.org). Jodi.org positions itself as a thoroughgoing critique of Internet practice, deploying the familiar glyphs and signs of Internet protocol both as central components of its look and feel, and in order to test the conventions of coding, design and the organisation of 'content' on the Web. The site is assembled around the conceit of the malfunctioning interface, with the index pages taking their cues from crash screens all too familiar to many Net users. In "Location" <http://www.jodi.org> and "faq" <http://www.jodi.org/100cc/faq/index.html>, the browser display doesn't seem to be readable except as letter noise, but renders as 'readable' text when clicking on "View Sourcecode" in the web browser. Just as the web site plays with its accessibility and non-accessibility on the meta-data level of its address schemes, it plays with visible and hidden codes on the data level of its files, making what's plain opaque and vice versa. (Source: MediaMatic Magazine, [http://www.mediamatic.nl/magazine/previews/reviews/king/king\\_jodi.html](http://www.mediamatic.nl/magazine/previews/reviews/king/king_jodi.html))

### **Martine Neddham, Mouchette (1996)**

A pioneer of net art and designer of participatory content before the advent of Web 2.0, Martine Neddham is an artist who uses language as raw material for her works. Speech acts, modes of address, words in public spaces are the themes that drive her work. On the Internet, she has created virtual characters who lead an autonomous artistic existence in which her own identity is never revealed. The identity of these characters is energized through the participation of the site's visitors. Unpredictable events inspired by internetters are at the very core of her artistic development. Such events also represent current concerns about issues of identity in this era of Web 2.0. (Source: [bienalle montreal](http://www.biennalemontreal.org/en/2011/artists/mouchette-aka-martine-neddham), <http://www.biennalemontreal.org/en/2011/artists/mouchette-aka-martine-neddham>)

Mouchette.org is an interactive website created in 1996 by a pseudonymous character, an Amsterdam-based artist who calls herself "Mouchette". With her innocent salutation and claims to be "nearly thirteen"[1] greeting us from the introduction page, what initially appears as a personal website of a pre-pubescent female artist, evolves into darker themes in the subsequent pages. (Source: wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mouchette.org>)



## Pilot 2: Additional Information

Please read this information as preparation before the second session. It will give you a better understanding, or more entry points, into the artworks.

### **Constant Dullaart, The revolving Internet and the sleeping Internet**

For Constant Dullaart the Internet serves as a medium as well as a subject of artistic production. His main strategy is the exploration of the multifaceted languages of contemporary images circulating on the Internet and their re-contextualisation as found material in a medium of its own. With his artworks, the Amsterdam- and Berlin-based artist digs deeply into the caches of a networked cultural production without limiting the medium to simple technological traits: the default style of Web-based platforms, their widespread and often unscrutinised use as well as the popularity of globally standardised interfaces are manipulated with the aim of investigating their social potential.

Dullaart's practice ranges from art made with and for self-explanatory domain names such as The Revolving Internet.com or The Sleeping Internet.com and video works such as YouTube as a Subject as well as the adoption of this series of short loops for the real space under the title YouTube as a Sculpture. Brian Droitcour writes for Art in America magazine: "Dullaart's ready-mades demonstrate his interest in what might be called 'default' style—the bland tables of sans serif text and soulless stock photography that frame ads for some of the most common search terms (auto insurance, cheap airline tickets, pornography), baring the underbelly of the Internet's popular use." ... and the circle is turning and turning—and with no end in sight. (Source: <http://cont3xt.net/blog/?p=4567>)

### **Alexander Galloway/Govcom.org, The IP Browser (2009)**

Google has given us the ranked list of search engine returns. Librarians and editors provide directories, the Web categorized helpfully into topics. There is a third way of navigating the Web, still present in the "next blog" feature of blogspot.com, which recalls early Web rings.

The IP Browser creates an alternative browsing experience that foregrounds the Web's machine habitat and returns the user back to the basics of orderly Web browsing. The IP Browser looks up your IP address, and allows you to browse the Websites in your IP neighbourhood, one by one in the order in which they are given in the IP address space. The IP browser has a limited set of features: the user can either click to the next higher IP address or next lower one, using forward and backward buttons. Like a radio scanner, the browser skips over empty parts of the spectrum, incrementing the current IP address upward or downward until the next IP hosting a web service on port 80 is found. In this way, the user is able to browse specific IP address neighbourhoods. The IP Browser re-contextualizes the Web as infrastructure within which websites are fit. (Source: Digital Methods, <http://ipbrowser.digitalmethods.net/about.html>)

### **Dave Griffiths/Aymeric Mansoux/Marloes de Valk, Naked on Pluto (2011)**

Naked on Pluto is a Multiplayer Text Adventure Game on Facebook. You wake up on Pluto, in a city under the rule of Elastic Versailles revision 14, a corrupted Artificial Intelligence and former entertainment colony. It used to be the Las Vegas of the Solar

System, a true paradise for consumers and corporations alike. Until something snapped... What happened and how to escape? Versailles is a capital of convenience, a non stop 24hr zone of endless pleasure, provided by Pluto's huge entertainment corporations. Amuse yourself and your friends for hours on end collecting meaningless tokens, talking to our bland robots, or simply relax and take in the staggering conformity of your new home. Take absolutely no notice of the areas you aren't allowed to go into, even if it were possible to break out of the zone around the Palace, why would you possibly want to – or indeed why change the core structures of this world when they have been so excellently tailored to fit your every desire?

The game explores the limits and nature of social networks from within, slowly pushing the boundaries of what is tolerated by the companies that own them, carefully documenting this process as we go. Story and play are combined with an investigation on how exposed we are on social networks, and how our data are being used.

(Source: NIMk, <http://nimk.nl/eng/naked-on-pluto>)

### **JODI, Geo Goo de webversie (2008)**

JODI explores the relations between the world we build through the Internet and the one based on our past mental and physical maps. Services such as GoogleMaps have changed radically our worldview by making the Globe accessible as a commercial multi-user surface. Mapping these online geometrical constructs to reality and vice versa, overlaying their figures as jogging paths, The 'Parc Royal' of Brussels (Warande Park) becomes an INFO Park revealing symbols and mysteries of the capitale of Belgium and Europe, amplifying or deconstructing them through an intricate web of data and associations.

In 'GEO GOO', JODI appropriates Google Maps as a canvas for an artistic intervention that, like many of their other works, challenges conventional expectations of a familiar interface. The artist duo accomplish this by introducing randomness and apparent chaos, by subverting code and subtracting meaning. Maps of the entire globe, of regions, seas and mountain ranges, and even of the moon and the starry sky, all 'powered by Google', are superimposed with a growing database of crazy and intricate mathematical patterns. The shapes are drawn with the default markers, placeholders and paths that are available to users, allowing anyone to annotate and personalize their own Google Maps. The shapes and lines strongly remind of the occult and mystic practice, of many centuries, of superimposing esoteric geometrical signs and symbols upon maps. This long tradition of tracing shapes in cartography, of exploring secret information and meanings in the everyday environment, is strongly connected to JODI's own investigation of hidden codes, patterns and messages in digital systems. (Source: Imal, <http://www.imal.org/GEOGOO/> )