PUBLIC 2.0

(follow-up research on curators)

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Title:

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Nederlands Instituut
voor Mediakunst

Management Summary

This report highlights the current situation in the relationship between media art professionals and collections holders. The report is written as part of the national RAAK project Culture Vortex, which is an innovative programme that studies and encourages the engagement of web 2.0 in online cultural heritage collections.

The research was performed under the direct guidance of The Netherlands Media Art Institute (NIMk). The bases of this report are an online survey – published on various online platforms and sent by email within the network of NIMk – and a brainstorm session – organised during the 4th edition of Virtual Platform Hot100[1] at the PICNIC conference in Amsterdam[2], that aimed directly at professionals from the media art world: curators and programmers of video and (new) media art.

The questions that create the ground for this research refer to: scouting and research, online and offline ´presence´, distribution, ways to draw back attention to collections and distributors, and methods for improved services.

In general, the result of the survey showed that:

- in terms of researching, professionals are present both online and offline in an almost even way

- in terms of scouting and renting/borrowing artworks, the great majority prefers to visit art venues in order to come in touch with the artists and network with their peers

- the respondents´ profile showed that there is a lot going on in terms of online developments: professionals, increasingly, prefer online updates; they also feel the need to see full artworks on online platforms, but at the same time they are not very open to pay for such online content.

- although NIMk addresses a wide network of professionals it seems that only half of them actually curate new media artworks and are specialised in media art; in

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[1] http://www.virtueelplatform.nl/
[2] http://www.picnicnetwork.org/

the same time an interest is shown in the training courses that the organisation is considering to offer

- online 'presence' and social media platforms are widely spread among professionals; they show interest in such platforms and are open to use new tools that a media artworks collection/catalogue would offer, especially in terms of bookmarking, adding own events and creating login.

During the brainstorm session the discussion was focused on issues related to better ways of promoting the collection, such as: making use of sharing tools – social media networks and own website; promoting artworks to various target audiences; allowing user generated data – from semi-professionals (students' papers, theses, projects) and experts (curators and writers' reviews, papers, presentations); special newsletters oriented on target groups.

This research provided many confirmations and reaffirmed aspects that have been under consideration for some time within the organisation.

Introduction

In recent years we have witnessed a lot of developments involving the digitization of cultural heritage collections. These developments have lead to online dissemination of information and, further, to web 2.0 and public participation. Through online dissemination information can be made more accessible, reachable and visible and web 2.0 provides opportunities to engage the public in active ways. One of the questions raised among cultural heritage holders is how to make the best use of these developments and attract public participation within their online collections. The Netherlands Institute for Media Art (NIMk), formerly known as Montevideo, was founded in 1978 by René Coelho as a studio of production and presentation of media art. From its beginning the studio developed ways to promote and disseminate media art and this is how the building of a collection of single-channel video works and installations started; in the meantime extensive promotion went on and distribution of the collection was done by renting out to art happenings all over the world.

Currently the institute curates an extensive collection of media art, one of the largest collections of its kind in Europe, comprising more than 2000 titles, created by more than 500 artists. In addition, the institute holds a large collection of books and video documentation that can be accessed in the mediatheque of the institute. Promotion, communication and distribution are main activities of the institute. Although until recently the focus of the collection was video-art and installations, the institute is already developing projects that have the newest media at heart such as: net-based art, media installations, software and interactive works. In the past years NIMK has been developing various projects[3] with specific goals: the digitization and online dissemination of the collection. Initially, an important selection of the collection was

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[3]Projects at The Netherlands Media Art Institute, Content in Context, 2002-2005, http://nimk.nl/eng/content-in-context, Play Out, 2007-2009, http://nimk.nl/eng/play-out

communicated online at the end of 2005 and, later on, new digitization projects were developed.

Currently the online catalogue holds three main collections, consisting of 2000 items: NIMk's own collection of media art, and the collections of the Lijnbaancentrum and De Appel. These three collections constitute the distribution collection and online visitors can, upon searching, find information and short previews of the art works. Other collections, consisting of 5000 titles extra, that are not in distribution but can be accessed through the catalogue and be seen in the mediatheque are: NIMk documentation, NIMk archive, ICN (The Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage), Jan van Eyck Academie, Groninger Museum and Kröller-Müller Museum.
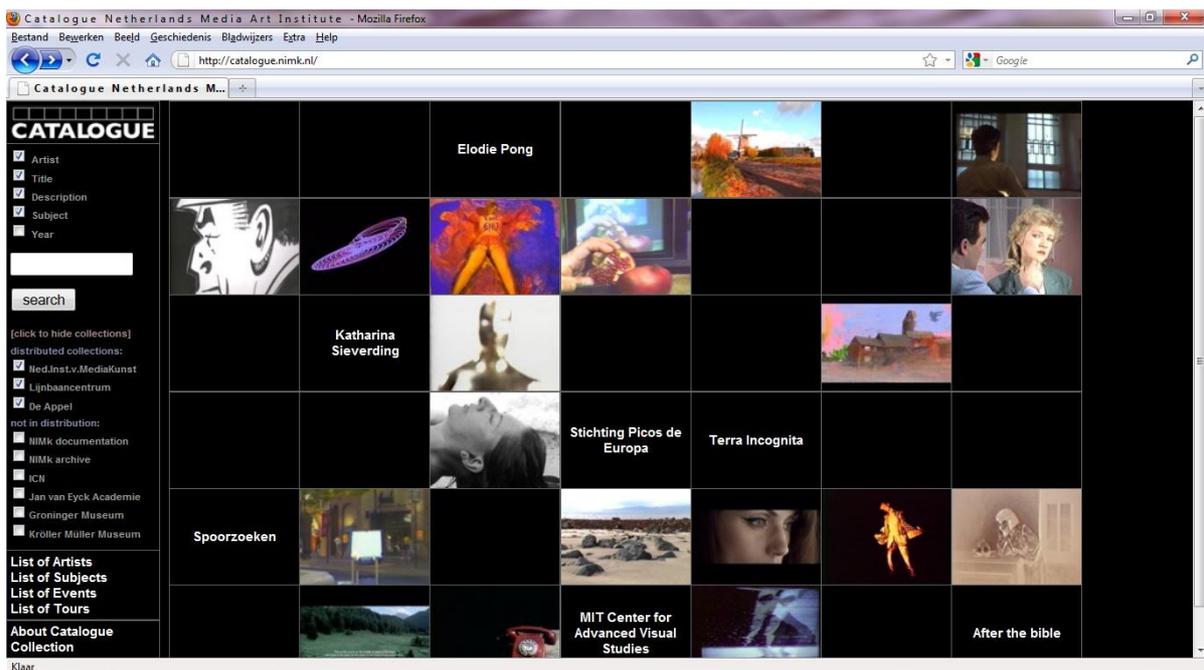
Fig. 1: Screenshot online catalogue (distributed/not in distribution collections: left side, middle)

In 2010 NIMk has taken part in the national RAAK project Culture Vortex, in which various questions related to web 2.0 implications in the cultural heritage collections were raised: How can an active audience be involved in online cultural material?

How can an elaborate network culture be facilitated, in which participants will share, describe, review, tag, reuse or otherwise interact with the cultural works?[4]

Working towards the development and improvement of the distribution services and online dissemination of its wide collection, NIMk proposed in this project to study its current online catalogue and propose a model for renewal and improvement, that can give an example of how a media art and cultural heritage collection should present itself online, to the professional and non-professional public in order to meet all their needs and expectations.

Within the Culture Vortex Project the first user research (Spring 2010) in the program line Public 2.0[5] focused on some important aspects that relate to: current trends and models of online dissemination developed by other media art and cultural heritage platforms and institutions, online behaviour and expectations with regard to cultural heritage collections and business models that could apply to online content, with focus on full length communication of (new) media art. The aim of this study was to evaluate all types of users of (new) media art in order to better define their needs and expectations when visiting an online collection and to discover whether there is need of social media tools within such collections. The target groups referred to were: curators, artists, non-professionals and educators. In general, the results showed that the catalogue is and should remain a tool for providing information. However, improvements should be done in terms of interactivity and online community, communication optimisation between users, better visibility of the catalogue and a fresh look to it. In addition, there was an intense discussion around publishing video artworks online in full length, about the expectations of the public to have video art as accessible as possible online and the reluctance of the artists to make their works publicly available online. Although

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[4] http://networkcultures.org/wpmu/culturevortex/about/
[5] Project conducted over a period of three months, May-June 2010, by Janneke Kamp and Lorena Zevedei under direct supervision of Margreet Riphagen in the MediaLab at the Institute of Network Cultures, Sandra Fauconnier at NIMk and Aske Hopman, external advisor from the BMA Collective.

intended for more target groups, the focus was mostly directed towards the non-professional public, with the recommendation for a further research on the professional target group.

In this current research, a follow up within the Public 2.0 programme, the attention is directed upon the group of professionals: curators and programmers of video and (new) media art. Presently, curating is an important activity and sure enough there is a lot of information available (online). However, it is essential to have a better picture about this group of professionals that make considerate selections, especially when considering the work of curators in art. Firstly, it should be mentioned that NIMk has a close relation with curators in media art and offers a variety of specific services in order to help them perform their work and research. For instance: personal assistance in selecting works, DVDs with previews, specially curated video art programmes, online access to works for screening with educational purposes and direct access to the whole collection, including reference works, at the stations in the mediatheque.
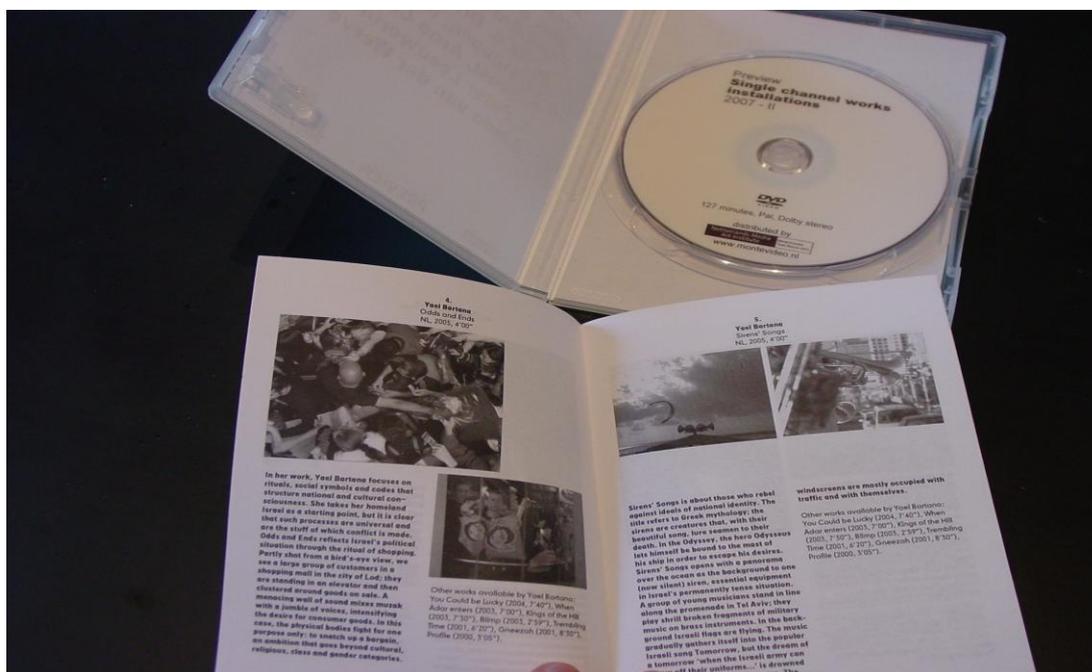

Fig. 2: Preview DVD and booklet (2007)

As distributor, NIMk is renting out works and the curators and programmers of media art are the main users of this service. Therefore, it is important to know how they operate in the online medium in order to reach them better and deliver the best services in the manner that best fits their needs and expectations.

Recently, NIMk participated in the 4th edition of Virtual Platform Hot100[6] at the PICNIC conference in Amsterdam[7]. Here, talented students and alumni proposed by Dutch media/design academies and media studies were selected and invited to participate in an afternoon of workshops where challenges and problems were proposed in seven cases by Dutch institutions and organisations. The theme of this HOT100 edition was related to Life, City, Media and Design, and the students/alumni were asked (previously to the event) to choose one case they preferred and thought they have what it needs to come with a good contribution. Each group workshop had to come up with ideas/solutions and sometimes even design concepts in response to the cases. Each group presented their ideas and concepts to all participants at the end of the afternoon.

The case proposed by NIMk relates very much to this research and the main issues proposed were the distribution of new media art and ways to address it in a creative way.

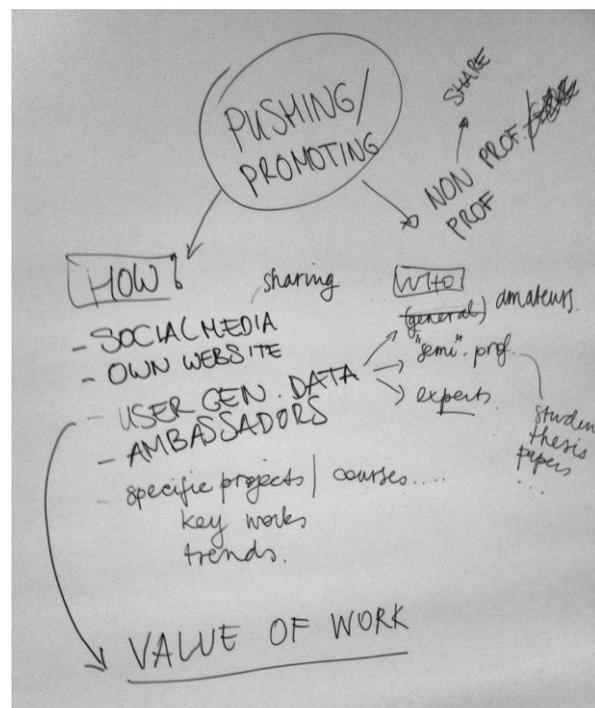During the discussion some interesting ideas and recommendations came up.

Fig. 3: Summary keywords at Hot100 workshop

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[6] http://www.virtueelplatform.nl/
[7] http://www.picnicnetwork.org/

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By adding together all the results from the current research and previous ones NIMk should achieve a basic set of ideas and solutions and be able to design and develop a new innovative and interactive catalogue for its users, both non-professional and professional.

Methodology

This research was based on one quantitative method: an online survey[8], and a qualitative method: the Hot100 brainstorm session.

The questionnaire was designed in collaboration with the distribution department at NIMk and it was carefully designed in order to find answers to various problems that the institute has encountered increasingly in the past years but also to better understand the present tendencies in the online and networking activities within the professional network.

The Hot100 workshop/brainstorm session, organised by Virtual Platform in collaboration with PICNIC, where NIMk proposed its case, was possible through the participation of Sandra Fauconnier and Theus Zwakhals from NIMk, the conductor of this research as part of the group of selected Hot100 students and a number of other alumni and students, interested in media art and selected for the event.

Target group

The present research has focused on one important target group: curators and programmers of exhibitions, screenings and festivals of video art and new media art. As already mentioned, this group is very important for NIMk. There are a variety of special services offered to professionals in order to help their research, and the distribution process – and earning royalties for the artists – depends largely upon their interest in renting works from the collection.

The survey and data collection

The questionnaire was defined as an online survey[9]. A list of names, professionals that have been in contact with NIMk, was provided by the communication

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[8] See Appendix page 32 Online Survey

department at NIMk. An update of the email addresses list had to be done, therefore, a thorough research to find out the correct email addresses was undertaken by the conductor of the research. Finally, a list of 150 names and correct emails addresses was collected. In order to communicate the scope of the research and the proposal to participate in this survey, personalised emails were sent out to each of these contacts. Furthermore, the institute announced the survey on its online platforms – the main website[10], the Media Art Platform[11] (own social networking platform developed for professionals) and the Facebook page of the institute[12]. The survey was also announced on Michelle Kasprzak's popular curating weblog[13], which triggered many responses as well. As a result, a number of 172 responses were received, vastly exceeding the initial expectations.

The information was retrieved in two formats from the survey tool used: statistic results and a table file comprising all answers from the respondents. Both types of data were further analysed manually by the conductor of the research. Correlations and comparisons between related questions were added to the automatic provided statistic results.

Objectives

To begin with, this research is based on the need of a renewed catalogue of NIMk's online collection. Various research projects and brainstorm sessions were conducted in order to better understand the present situation of the institute's online visitors, to discover their needs, requirements and expectations and be able to translate them in a better more efficient, visible and user friendly presence within the online catalogue.

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[9] The survey was published online through services offered by: http://www.thesistools.com
[10] http://www.nimk.nl/
[11] http://www.mediaartplatform.nl/
[12] Made possible by the communication department at NIMk.
[13] http://www.curating.info/archives/366-Questions-A-Survey-by-the-Netherlands-Media-Art-Institute.html

NIMk has a keen interest in how media art professionals, and especially professional curators, are using online content and social media platforms. It is, therefore, important to establish what the current trends for this group are in terms of scouting, renting/borrowing artworks and using social platforms. Furthermore, there is the need to find out where NIMk stands as distribution agent worldwide and to create an overview of what services offered by the institute are best known and used. With regard to the catalogue it is important to understand what would be the best way to disseminate online content within the web 2.0 environment. Last but not least, the question that raises itself continuously: are professionals in media art, and especially curators, willing to pay for online full length content?

Research

Introduction

By developing this questionnaire NIMk wants to find answers to issues that were raised within the organisation, especially at the distribution and communication levels. Lately, various tendencies were observed and NIMk is curious to find out more about these changes. These are a few obvious facts: fewer visits to the mediatheque by the professional public, a general decrease in distribution and less demand for personalised assistance by the staff at NIMk.

Fig. 4: Mediatheque NIMk

Looking at the current trends such changes might be caused by the dynamic increase of online possibilities. It is then a matter of finding out how scouting and research are performed. Is there a higher level of online sources and resources that are used? In terms of distribution, where do curators and programmers rent/borrow works

from? How can we draw them back to distributors like NIMk and how can NIMk's services be improved in order to address their needs in a better way?

Until recently the ideal way to come face to face with curators was via physical meetings, for instance when curators asked for personalized advice or when they visited the mediatheque. Since, nowadays, this happens less often, NIMk would like to develop new ways of networking. The tendency is to do it through the social media platforms, where NIMk is already active. However, to take this step, it is important to confirm the presence of professionals on such platforms. Such issues were proposed in several questions.

Other aspects related to the topic are: studies and specialisations of the respondents, willingness for training programmes, demand and openness for more services, payment models, etc. One final open question is specially designed to provide an idea about actual trends and, also, to picture how the catalogue fulfils its user´s needs and what the expectations for the ideal media art online catalogue are. Initially, the questions in the survey are divided in a few chapters such as: demographical details, studies, sources, NIMk related questions, etc. In order to elaborate on the results this report will also be divided, this time in three phases. Firstly, there will be a presentation profile of the respondents, related to demographical details and studies; secondly, details about the online and offline presence of the respondents will be built on the answers received; lastly, a detailed review of NIMk's position in this scenario will be unfolded.

Results

Respondents profile

Demographics. The total number of responses to the survey came from 172 professionals worldwide, a division of 68 men and 104 women with ages between 20 and 70 years old. Together with this overwhelming number of responses came the various opinions from professionals working currently in 34 countries all around the world. Most input came from The Netherlands (44), Germany (23), United Kingdom (16), North America (12) and Belgium (11). Although there were not very many responses from other continents the existing ones are very valuable.[14]
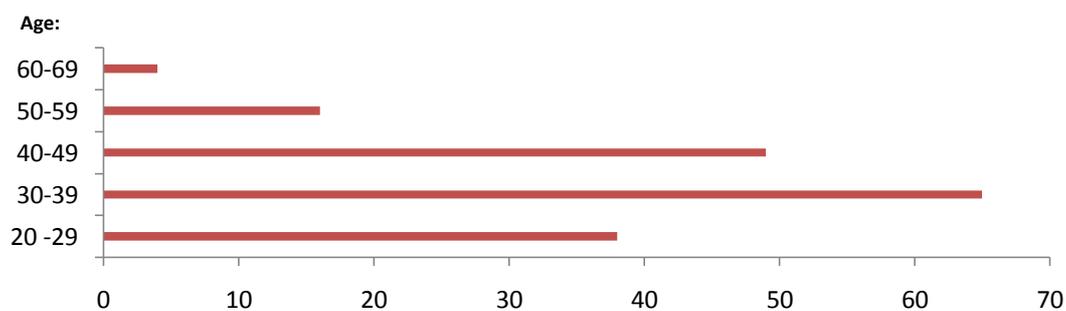
Graph 1: Age variations[15]

Education

Unsurprisingly, the results show that most respondents are highly educated. From the 172 respondents 62% finished a master study, 19% bachelor studies and 18% postgraduate studies or higher. Only three respondents had only finished secondary school (currently 2 are working in the Netherlands and 1 in Thailand).

To illustrate the study fields a few options were provided in the survey: Art academy, Art History, Cultural Studies, Sociology, and Political Science. The results show a variety of combinations. There were a lot of respondents, almost 50%, with a background in art history, and consequently trained as researchers but there were

[14] For a complete list of countries see Appendix page 42
[15] All graphs throughout the document will provide values/names on the vertical axis and number of respondents that chose one certain answer on the horizontal axis.

also quite a number of respondents, approximately 25%, that followed the art academy, which means that they were trained as artists/makers. There were many cases, almost 50%, in which one respondent chose two or more choices of studies. From the total number of respondents only 6% appear to have no actual art and/or media related study. Additional studies that were mentioned by the respondents themselves: philosophy, social studies, curatorial studies, language and literature, journalism, architecture and other art approaches, such as ´bio-art´.

Curatorial studies: 26% participants declared that they followed a specific curatorial study programme, and about half of them would be interested in further training[16] (more about this aspect further in the report).

Specialisations and current activities:

The results show that most respondents are specialised in contemporary art (86%) and media arts (45%). Respondents chose also multiple answers to define their specialisations. In these circumstances, one should notice that, although NIMk addresses to a wide variety of professionals only half of them are actually specialised in media art.
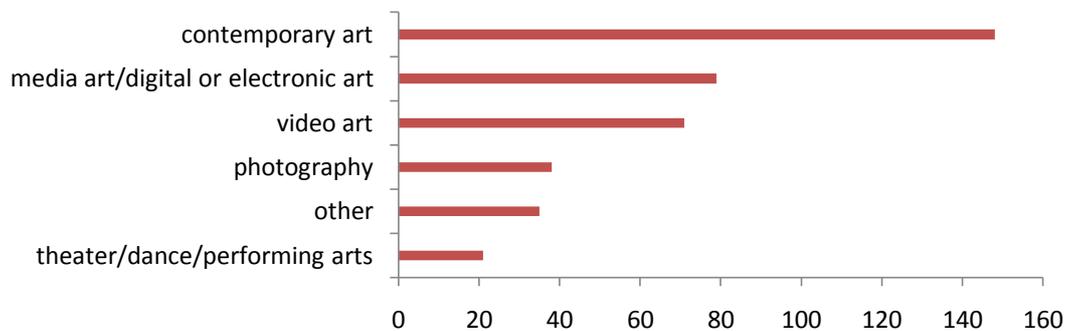
Graph 2: Specialisations

In terms of activities at their present jobs many of the respondents, besides curating and/or programming, are performing other tasks as well. For example,

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[16] See Appendix page 42 List of curatorial studies

writing (theory and art criticism) and research are mentioned in approximately 50% of the cases, management and production in 30%.

The types of media that the respondents use in their work varies: 43% of them use at least all of the following: video art, sculpture/installations and new media art, while 19% use any type of media art as well as photography and painting. There is again the case when although NIMk addresses to various specialised professionals, only 50% of them actually use new media art such as net art, digital art, electronic art and interactive art in their work. Is this because such types of art need more promotion and, if so, what should NIMk do in this respect? Some additional types of works that were mentioned are: bio-art, sound art/installations, electronic music, and public art.

Online and offline presence

Scouting. Exhibitions and word of mouth/networking are favourites in terms of *scouting* for new works, 80% of the respondents are actively visiting happenings and keep in touch with their peers; on second place are galleries and art journals with 60% respondents. Interestingly enough, not so frequently used in scouting are the online sources such as YouTube and Vimeo, only about 20% of the respondents chose these options.
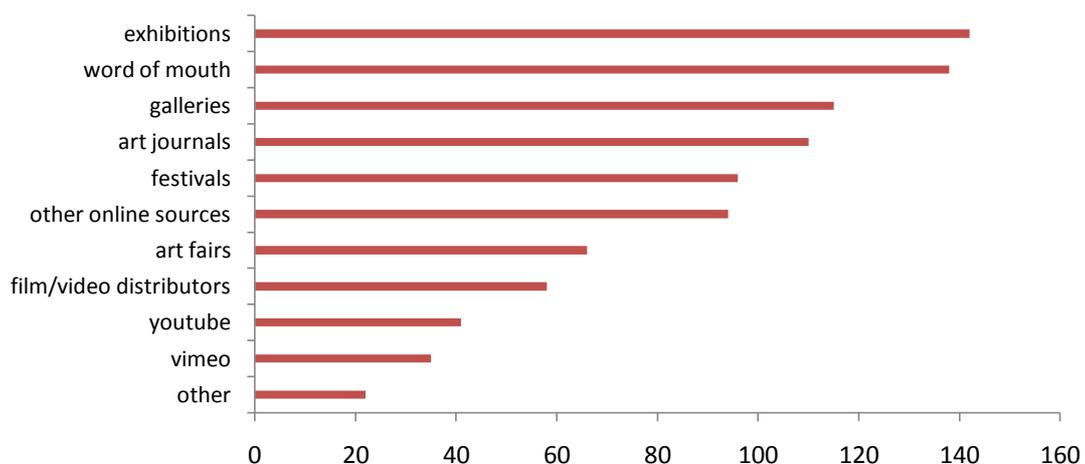
Graph 3: Scouting sources

The numbers show that the most visited *festivals* are Art Basel, Frieze Art Fair, International Film Festival Rotterdam, followed by the Berlinale, Transmediale, and Impakt[17]. Many respondents also mentioned that they visit biennials in general. From the *online and print resources* that were listed in the survey, a few appeared to be widely read/visited: Artforum and Frieze Magazine, both online and print, and Rhizome, predominantly online. Comparing the online and print resources slight tendencies between the two media were discovered. In some cases there was more choice for print, for example Metropolis, Kunstforum, Open (by SKOR) [18]. Overall the results show that both online and print media are used almost equally. *Social networking* was the next issue approached in the series of questions. The presence on networking platforms is a very actual phenomenon and there is a lot of interest on how professionals deal with such platforms, if there is interest and, if any, then in what setting, private or professional. The results show that only 11% of the respondents do not use any type of networking platform (they all are in Europe and their average age is above 35) and more than 30% use at least two of them. One aspect to keep in mind is that in China there is no access to many such platforms. Facebook appears to be mostly used – 60% of the respondents use it both for private and professional purposes, followed by LinkedIn, which 30% of the respondents use only for professional reasons and 10% for both professional and private purposes. Twitter is popular among 30% of the respondents as well (with an almost even choice between professional and/or private use). The tendency of both professional and private use of social media platforms is also confirmed on the Facebook page of the institute.

When these platforms are used out of professional considerations, the most important reason is networking with colleagues; secondly, staying informed about new events and thirdly, networking with artists. Such platforms are not very much

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[17] For a complete list of choices and other festivals mentioned see Appendix page 45 List of festivals
[18] See Appendix page 47 for an online vs. printed resources graph

used for scouting or to get informed about new works of artists in focus. It might also be the case that such services are not yet on the market, because media art distributors and galleries do not promote new works and artists on their social media pages. Additional reasons that were mentioned by respondents were: to inform people about their own activities and researching current trends/ideas/cultural tendencies.
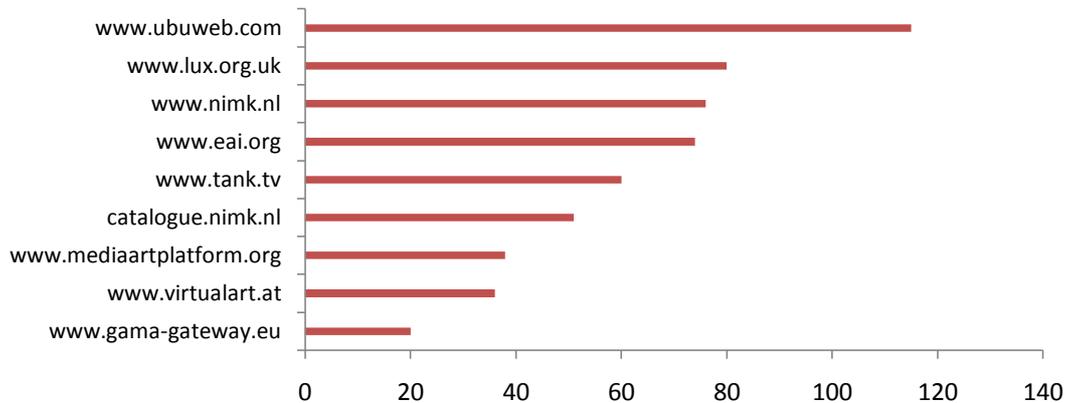
The results until now show that the respondents are online in various ways: by researching and networking online and by using and participating within social media platforms.

The next questions addressed scouting and *sources of renting/borrowing.* The results show that curators and programmers prefer to rent/borrow both video art and (new) media art primarily from the artists. This is a tendency that the institute confirms as well, through the fact that the distribution process has decreased in the past years. Nevertheless, renting from galleries and distributors or other institutions/museums is still happening and it is very important for such institutions to change their approach and find solutions to draw attention to their collections. The numbers show that the *distributors* that were mostly contacted for works in the past three years are: Electronic Arts Intermix (30%), LUX (24%), and NIMk (24%). Some of the most visited media art related *websites* are: UbuWeb (67%), LUX (46%), NIMk and EAI (both 44%). Although an illegal platform for communicating media art, UbuWeb is very popular and this fact suggests clearly enough that professionals feel the need to see art work online full length (for free)[19].

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[19] An Open Letter to the Frameworks Community by UbuWeb at:
http://ubu.com/resources/frameworks.html

Graph 4: Websites popularity

Services offered by NIMk

NIMk offers a variety of services at the moment. The results show that the respondents who do know and have contact with the institute mostly know: the catalogue, the mediatheque, the distribution services of single-channel work (all 43%) and specially curated video art programmes (36%). Other services are less known.
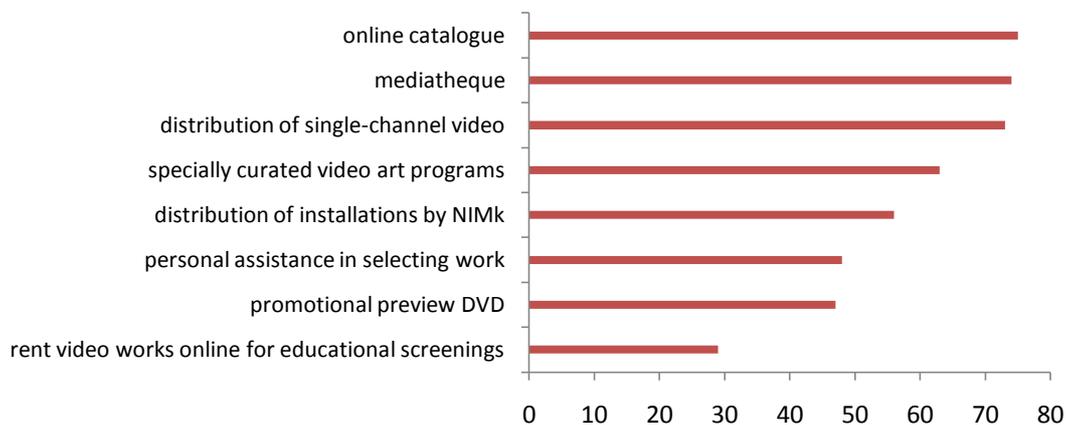

Graph 5: NIMk's services

Furthermore, an analysis with various details and interconnections between the questions will be provided in order to bring into context the actual services and future developments at NIMk.

Firstly, a short review about the respondents that have rented works from NIMk in the last 3 years (24%). The results show that:

- as already expected, these respondents curate mainly video art and sometimes (experimental) film
- the main activities are programming or curating, and writing.
- ⅓ are Dutch and ⅔ are internationals mostly from Europe
- there is NO interest in a printed catalogue, ¾ prefer to receive info online and ½ DVD
- more than half of these respondents (both nationals and internationals) visited the mediatheque in the past three years
- more than half visited the website and catalogue in the past years
- they are interested in new online services – popular are: login possibility, saving selections, add own organized events, not so popular: upload own data, add own data (like biography), create online tours
- more than half would be interested in other types of online data (especially in documentaries and articles/reviews).

How do professionals want to stay *updated*? 84% of the respondents were positive about receiving regular updates about new available works: most preferred an update every 4 months:

- access to the information is preferably given online, with a link via email (65%), and the request for promotional DVD (31%) is combined with online access and sometimes with a printed catalogue (16%)
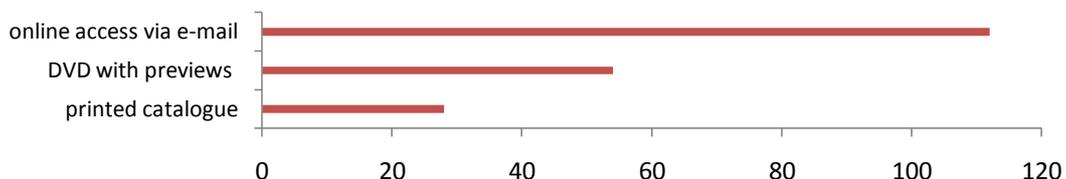
Graph 6: Updates options

- the results also show that the age is no issue, respondents from all categories of age sometimes opted for printed catalogue and each time added the option for online or DVD

NIMk is planning a set of new features within the catalogue, new services and online materials and new in-house training programmes. The institute's interest is to offer exactly the services that professionals are willing to use and that can help them to work in a better online environment and also add value to the online collection.

New features

There most popular proposed new features in the online NIMk catalogue are: saving selections, adding own events and creating a personal login.
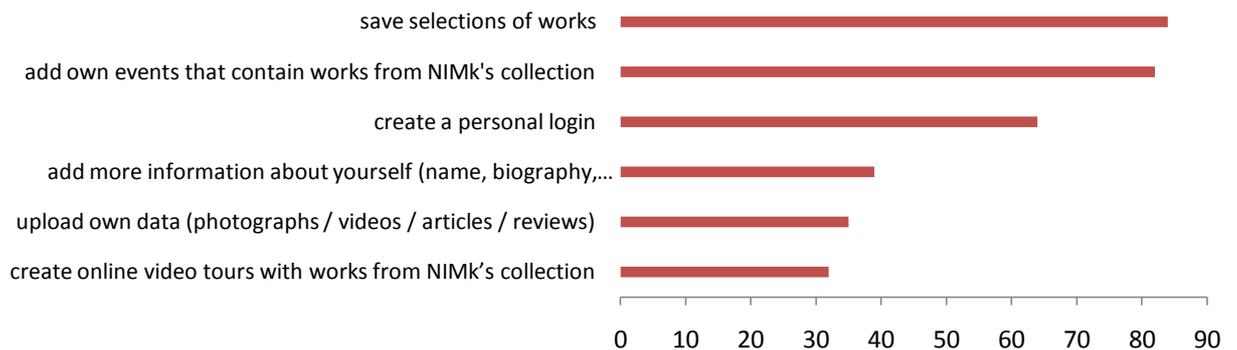
Graph 7: New features options

NIMk is also thinking of taking their services further and is considering two types of educational programmes: (1) an art historical training programme about new media art and (2) a specialised training programme about curating new media art.

The results show that more than 50% of the respondents are interested in both programmes. The interest comes from professionals all over the world and all age categories. From the 26% respondents that have already studied a curatorial programme, half of them are interested in both programmes.
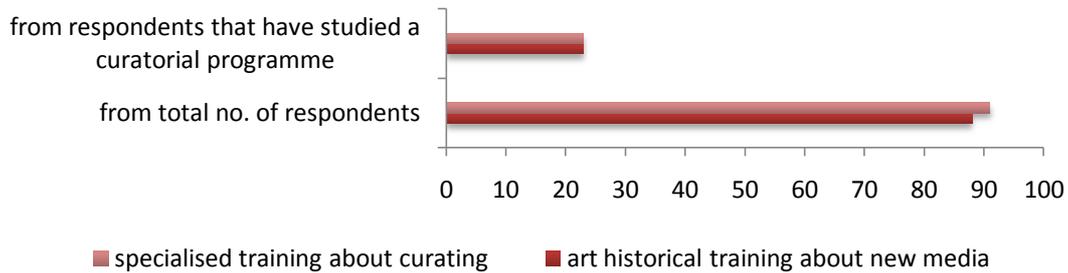
Graph 7: Training programmes preferences

In terms of *online material*, the responses show that curators and programmers wish to be presented more context around the works, such as video documentaries and articles. More than 60% chose these options, while 40% prefer photographs and books as well.

Currently, NIMk communicates its collection through the catalogue by offering information about the artists and their works and also providing short video fragments of 30 seconds.

At the moment, there is a major discussion going on among the professionals regarding online full length works, copyrights and payment models. The issues about online content depend a lot on the attitudes of the artists, which vary from one extreme to the other, from free online access to no online access at all:

> Some artists don't want to have their work available online at all (such as Marina Abramovic). Some publish a lot of their work online, full length, no excerpts, and are eager to use platforms like YouTube and Vimeo (e.g. Lernert & Sander). Some artists withdraw their work from distributors and archives when they become established (e.g. Bill Viola, whose early work was in distribution by NIMk and other international distributors, but was withdrawn from distribution several years ago), other artists offer their whole oeuvre to archives (e.g. Hooykaas/Stansfield). Many artists are convinced that online exposure will help them find more presentations and more income. On the other hand, they fear loss of income as well – they are afraid that

low-quality, pirated copies will lead their own, uncontrolled life online (via pirate and torrent sites, for instance) and that these will take the place of the 'real' work. [20] NIMk is thinking about making certain works in its collection available online in full length in return for a fee. Also, the organization is thinking about producing paid online exhibitions. When it comes to payment models approximately 30% of the respondents agree to paying, preferably per individual work/exhibition or eventually a yearly subscription. The remaining 70%, who do not think online content should be accessed within payment conditions, are tipping the balance to the other side.

The final question[21] in the survey was an open one, where the respondents were asked about what types of work are for them hard to find or discover and also what type of (online or offline) tools or services could help improve their scouting process and research. Overall, there are some patterns that the results reveal:

- the need to have online full length access
- a more powerful classification and tagging system
- possibilities to connect with artists personally, for example: at the artists' studios.
- a general interest in 'lesser-known work': non-western work is mentioned several times, also historical work (plus the possibility to browse by decade)
- upcoming, very young, just graduated artists before they become 'big'
- the difficulty of finding performance work.

Hot100 workshop

Interestingly enough, at the Hot100 event some of these aspects came out as well. There are a few similar ideas that were expressed during the brainstorm session:

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[20] Sandra Fauconnier, *Video art distribution in the era of online video*, paper written for the Video Vortex Reader 2, Institute of Network Cultures, Amsterdam - 2011
[21] See Appendix page 48 Open question: selection quotes from respondents

- find new artists before they become 'big' – find starter artists through the collaboration of the institute with the semi-professionals (media and new media art students) and promote them
- add more context to art works in order to show their unique value in better ways that can reach different audiences
- promote and push the collection more actively via a variety of channels, mainly social networking platforms.

Misconceptions

In every research when you formulate the questions you expect to get certain results that confirm the actual trends and ideas and, of course, at the end of every research you also discover that some of these trends were only misconceptions and you start to analyse how it happened. In this research there were a few issues that were qualified from the start as fixed and the results only proved them quite flexible. These are a few misconceptions that showed up during the process.

Age vs. online presence: the belief was that some of the age categories will be reading more printed resources and will be less present on networking platforms. The results show that there is no definite pattern with regard to age vs. online/offline presence, which might be due to the high education level of the respondents.

Updates: online vs. print vs. DVD – the belief was that the last two might be already obsolete, therefore, not required. Following the current trend the online newsletter's popularity is increasing, the print catalogues are becoming less required but, surprisingly, the DVD remains popular still. And again, this had nothing to do with age. All age categories are interested in both online and DVDs, and less in print, which can probably be explained by the static effect of media art on paper. Professionals read more online, therefore they also scout more online; the belief is that if you are more online, then you start working/finding/seeing/choosing works

online for your programmes, but that proved wrong. Professionals are still out there,

checking the real work by going at exhibitions and meeting the artists.

Recommendations

General

Develop a better system in terms of visibility of the website and catalogue (via Google and other browsers) and, while doing this, pay attention to creating a proper system for searchability of the services and individual works from the catalogue.

Find new solutions for better marketing the collection and the services: develop a special newsletter for the professional audience. There is need for better use of keywords and perhaps user tags.

Contact artists, discuss with them and find a solution for the online full length access to their works.

Create possibilities for personal connection between artists and professional curators and programmers: NIMk could arrange the `Open Day/Night Studio´ event, where local artists open their studio for professional visits.

With regard to the training programmes think of the possibility of online courses as well, for instance with a final practical assignment at the institute; very good ones could even be exhibited at NIMk.

Organise more events that include the public: ask semi-professionals (media / media-art students) to recommend, the professional to select the best and the public to vote.

Finally, there were a few ideas proposed by Hot100 that could be used in the general improvement of the promotion of new media art. One would be to use social media platforms to promote the Institute in a more interactive and spontaneous way. Find and befriend influential people in NIMk's network who can then act as the institute's ambassadors and give them more possibilities to promote works: for instance, one day free online access to a random selection of works.

Another idea that is present in both research results is to ask curators to write and publish articles/reviews and offer open access through NIMk, while giving them the possibility to promote/show the events they organise.

Catalogue

At the moment the NIMk catalogue and the general website are separate sites. It is very important to make the collection more visible within the general website.

The result to this survey shows that people are interested in various new features and services. Therefore, it would be very good to make them available through the new interface where users can have a personal login, save selections of works, announce own events that contain works from NIMk's collection.

It is very important for a higher visibility of the works and for providing more context to mention/add titles of/link online related: reviews, articles, books, video documentaries or simply references to such materials.

The development of a better classification system is very important in order to help the research of the users; the system could also be improved indirectly by offering possibilities of tagging to the users, and using their suggestions to refresh the already existent list.

In the open question there were a few tendencies that should be taken into consideration: the general interest in 'lesser-known work': non-western work and historical work (with browse by decade option), the interest for very young upcoming artists and the access to performance work, which cannot yet be easily found.

Conclusions

This research has explored some important issues about the current changes in the media art professional world. Although the report provides a personalised perspective on the case of NIMk, many of the problems discussed here are present within other organisations in the field.

We know that NIMk holds one of the largest collections of media art in Europe and the report shows that NIMk is one of the distributors most contacted for renting media art. Nevertheless, in the past years some changes were observed; for instance, the general decrease in distribution requests and revenues, and a reduction in professional visits to the mediatheque.

We should emphasize the fact that NIMk is an institution and holder of cultural heritage and its role is to secure the best preservation for its collection. NIMk promotes its collection and distributes it in order to gain income for the artists. The institute likes to have a close relation with its network of curators and programmers. The aim is to increase this network in order to bring forward NIMk's collection and promoted artists into the professional market. At the same time this group of users represents an important source of income for the institute – and, consequently, for the artists.

These conditions lead to the questions that are the basis for this research. What is the current situation of curators and programmers when performing scouting and researching? What is their background and how does it relate to their work? What is their online and offline 'presence'? What are their needs, expectations and problems in the process of accomplishing their projects?

The report showed some interesting findings. For instance, the fact that professionals are very keen at being present at happenings, in order to network with artists and peers. It seems, therefore, that scouting is mostly performed by participating personally in art events. Another discovery was the tendency to rent/borrow works directly from the artists and much less from

distributors/institutions. These facts might explain the changes at NIMk, such as the decrease in the distribution process and the lack of visitors to the mediatheque.

Furthermore, with regard to the online presence, there appears to be an increasing interest in online collections, but such collections must contain a full representation of the art works. An example is UbuWeb which, although an illegal source, is highly praised.

Not surprisingly, the research revealed a high level of interest in various social media platforms. This is an aspect that could be favourably used in a more efficient approach towards the group of interest and drawing attention to NIMk's online collection.

Quite striking in this research was to find out that, although NIMk addresses a large group of professionals, it appears that only half of them are actually specialised in media art and use new media art - net art, digital art and interactive work – in their work. With this in mind NIMk should seriously consider offering training courses on (new) media art and its historical background.

With regard to all of the above, this report provided many confirmations to what the institute already presumed to be causing the issues at hand. The results of this research reaffirmed many aspects that have been under consideration for some time, thus providing a good theoretical basis for the future developments of the online catalogue and a better and active promotion of the collection.

Appendix

Online survey

Dear curator or programmer,

This is an online questionnaire created by the distribution department of the Netherlands Media Art Institute (former Montevideo), through which we want to learn new ways to improve our services.
Your input is highly valuable to us. Completing this questionnaire will take approximately 10 to 15 minutes of your time.
Please note that this questionnaire is specifically intended for professional curators and programmers of exhibitions, screenings and festivals. For other media art professionals it is not relevant.

Demographical information

Gender

-- please choose -- ▼

Age category

-- please choose -- ▼

Country of residence

Highest completed level of education

-- please choose -- ▼

Studies

☐ Art academy

☐ Art History

☐ Cultural Studies

☐ Film or Media Studies

☐ Sociology

☐ Political Science

☐ Other, please specify: [   ]

Did you follow a specific curatorial study programme (e.g. MA, postgraduate)?

○ Yes, name it: [   ]   ○ No

Job related questions

Your specialization(s)

☐ Contemporary art

☐ Video art

☐ Media art / digital or electronic art (experimental) film

☐ Photography

☐ Theater / dance / performing arts

☐ Other, please specify: [   ]

Primary activities and tasks in current job/project

☐ Curating / exhibitions

☐ Programming / (film/video) screenings, other temporary events like workshops, performances

☐ Writing / theory, art criticism

☐ Research

☐ Teaching

☐ Management

☐ Public relations / communications / publicity

☐ Production

☐ Other, please specify: [   ]

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When you curate shows, exhibitions, screenings, performances and such, which types of work do you tend to include?

- ☐ Video art
- ☐ Sculpture / Installation
- ☐ New media art: electronic / digital / net art / interactive art
- ☐ Performative / evolving / project-based work
- ☐ Painting / Drawing
- ☐ Photography
- ☐ (Experimental) film
- ☐ Other, please specify: _____

Source related questions

What are your main sources where you scout for new work for your programmes?

- ☐ Festivals
- ☐ Art fairs
- ☐ Galleries
- ☐ Exhibitions at cultural institutions
- ☐ Art journals and magazines
- ☐ Film and video distributors
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ Vimeo
- ☐ Other online sources: weblogs, online magazines
- ☐ Word of mouth / networking
- ☐ Other, please specify: _____

Have you recently (in the past three years) visited one or more of the following fairs or festivals?

- ☐ Ars Electronica (Linz)
- ☐ Art Basel
- ☐ Berlinale
- ☐ Courtisane (Ghent)
- ☐ EMAF (Osnabruck)
- ☐ Frieze Art Fair (London)
- ☐ Impakt (Utrecht)
- ☐ International Film Festival Rotterdam
- ☐ Oberhausen International Short Film Festival
- ☐ STRP Festival (Eindhoven)
- ☐ Transmediale (Berlin)
- ☐ Other fairs/festivals that are important to you: ☐

Which of the following resources (print and online) do you read/visit regularly?

	print	online
Artforum	☐	☐
Frieze Magazine	☐	☐
Kunstforum	☐	☐
Metropolis M	☐	☐
Mister Motley	☐	☐
Nettime	☐	☐
Neural Magazine	☐	☐
Open (by SKOR)	☐	☐
Rhizome	☐	☐
We make money not art	☐	☐

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Others, please specify:

Networking platforms

Do you regularly use (visit or actively use) the following social networking sites?

	don't use	private use purposes only	professional use purposes only	private and professional use
Facebook	○	○	○	○
LinkedIn	○	○	○	○
Twitter	○	○	○	○
Hyves	○	○	○	○
Mediamatic	○	○	○	○
Other, please specify:				

If you use one or more of these applications for professional purposes, what are the two most important reasons why you use them?

☐ Networking with colleagues

☐ Networking / getting in touch with artists

☐ Be informed about events, exhibitions, screenings

☐ Be informed about new works by artists I'm interested in

☐ Scout for new artists and works

☐ Upload own data (photographs, video, articles/reviews)

☐ Other, please specify:

Distributors

When you present video art, from which sources do you rent/borrow work?

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- ☐ Directly from artists
- ☐ Video art distributors
- ☐ Galleries
- ☐ Other institutes and museums
- ☐ Other, please specify: [   ]

If you chose video art distributors, from which of the following have you rented work in the past three years?

- ☐ Argos (Brussels)
- ☐ Electronic Arts Intermix (New York)
- ☐ Filmform (Stockholm)
- ☐ Heure Exquise! (Mons-en-Baroeul)
- ☐ Lightcone (Paris)
- ☐ Lux (London)
- ☐ Netherlands Media Art Institute / Montevideo (Amsterdam)
- ☐ Sixpackfilm (Vienna)
- ☐ Video Data Bank (Chicago)
- ☐ V Tape (Toronto)
- ☐ Other: [   ]

When you present new media art (interactive works, electronic art, net art) from which sources do you rent/borrow work?

- ☐ Directly from the artist
- ☐ Distributors
- ☐ Galleries
- ☐ Other institutes and museums
- ☐ Other, please specify: [   ]

Have you visited the following websites this past year?

	yes	no	don't know the website
www.nimk.nl	○	○	○
catalogue.nimk.nl	○	○	○
www.eai.org	○	○	○
www.gama-gateway.eu	○	○	○
www.lux.org.uk	○	○	○
www.mediaartplatform.org	○	○	○
www.tank.tv	○	○	○
www.virtualart.at	○	○	○
www.ubuweb.com	○	○	○

NIMk services

Are you familiar with the following activities and services of the Netherlands Media Art Institute?

	yes	no
NIMk's online catalogue at catalogue.nimk.nl	○	○
NIMk's mediatheque in its building in Amsterdam	○	○
Distribution of single-channel video works by NIMk	○	○
Distribution of installations by NIMk	○	○
Personal assistance in selecting work by NIMk staff	○	○
The possibility to request and receive promotional preview DVDs of new work in NIMk's collection	○	○

Specially curated video art programs by NIMk   ⊙   ⊙

The possibility to rent video works online for   ⊙   ⊙
educational screenings

Would you be interested in receiving regular updates about new works available for distribution by NIMk?

[▼]

If yes, how frequently do you want to be informed about new work in NIMk's distribution collection?

⊙ monthly or more frequently   ⊙ approx. 2 times per year

⊙ approx. 4 times per year   ⊙ yearly

In which way do you prefer to be informed about new works?

☐ I prefer to receive a DVD with previews of works

☐ I prefer to receive updates via e-mail and online access to previews of works

☐ I prefer to receive a print catalogue or magazine

☐ Other, please specify: [   ]

Would you actively use the following features on NIMk's (collection) website if provided?

☐ The possibility to create a personal login

☐ A page where you can add more information about yourself (name, biography, cv, url, etc.)

☐ The possibility to save selections of works

☐ The possibility to add events that you are organizing, and that contain works from NIMk's collection

☐ Upload own data (photographs / videos / articles / reviews)

☐ The possibility to create online video tours with works from NIMk's collection

☐ Other, please specify: [   ]

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If provided, would you be interested to actively use other types of online data (media-art related) that NIMk curates?

☐ Photographs   ☐ Video documentaries

☐ Books   ☐ Articles/reviews

Contact with NIMk

Have you visited NIMk's mediatheque in Amsterdam in the past three years?

[-- please choose -- ▼]

Have you been in touch with anyone from the NIMk staff in the past three years?

☐ yes, via email

☐ yes, via telephone

☐ yes, via an appointment / face to face contact

☐ no

Additional services

Would you be willing to pay for (permanent) online access to full-length previews of NIMk's online collection?

○ No, I would not be willing to pay for this

○ Yes, I would be willing to pay a small fee for accessing individual works (max. 3 to 5 euros per title)

○ Yes, I would be willing to pay a subscription fee or membership of 50 euros per year

○ Yes, I would be willing to pay a subscription fee or membership of 100 euros per year or more (which also includes additional benefits like free exhibition access, access to special NIMk programs and activities)

Would you be interested in art historical training programmes about new media art provided by the Netherlands Media Art Institute?

[-- please choose -- ▼]

Would you be interested in specialized training programmes about curating new media art provided by the Netherlands Media Art Institute?

[▼]

The Netherlands Media Art Institute is thinking about creating an online exhibition platform with temporary curated exhibitions with exclusive, high-quality, full-length video artworks. Would you be interested in visiting such an online exhibition platform?

○ Yes, and I would be willing to pay a small/reasonable fee (less than 5 euro) for access to a single online exhibition

○ Yes, and I would be willing to pay a yearly subscription (20 euros per year)

○ Yes, but I would not be willing to pay for it

○ No

Final

Can you think of areas and ways in which scouting for works can be made easier for you? Are there types of work that are hard to find or discover? Do you think about (online or offline) tools or services that would help you in your work?

[   ]

If you want to stay informed about NIMk's collection and distribution activities, please enter your name and email address here: (no obligation)

[   ]

Indicate what you are interested in

☐ Stay informed via e-mail (general NIMk newsletter)

☐ Stay informed via e-mail about collection and distribution (specific distribution newsletter)

☐ Receive promotional preview DVDs via regular mail (we will contact you about this)

Thank you for your time!

Complete list of countries and answers per country

No.	Country	No. Respondents
1	The Netherlands	44
2	Germany	23
3	United Kingdom	16
4	North America	12
5	Belgium	11
6	France	8
7	Spain	8
8	Italy	5
9	Switzerland	5
10	Canada	5
11	Greece	4
12	Portugal	3
13	Austria	2
14	China	2
15	Denmark	2
16	India	2
17	Jordan	2
18	Korea	2
19	Argentina	1
20	Australia	1
21	Brazil	1
22	Croatia	1
23	Georgia	1
24	Hungary	1
25	Ireland	1
26	Israel	1
27	Luxembourg	1
28	Mexico	1
29	Russia	1
30	Slovenia	1
31	South Africa	1
32	Thailand	1
33	Turkey	1
34	Another	1

List of curatorial studies

CCS Bard College, New York

Collecting and Management in Contemporary Art

Communication and Organisation of Visual Arts

Curatorial class at Louvre?

Creative Curating Studies

Curating and Commissioning Contemporary Art, Royal College of Art, London

Curatorial practice EduKult³, Hildesheim

Curatorial Studies, Lisbon University

Curatorial training programme École du Magasin, Grenoble

'de Appel' Curatorial Training Programme, Amsterdam

Fashion Curating Studies

MA Art Museum and Gallery Studies

MA Art of the exhibition

MA Curating Contemporary Art

MA Curating the Art Museum, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London

MFA Curating, Goldsmiths College, University of London

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MA Curatorial Practice, California College of the Arts, San Francisco

MA in Actual Art

MA Preservation and Presentation of the Moving Image, University from Amsterdam

New Media Curatorship, University Ramon Llul, Barcelona

Photographic Studies

Postgraduate Master of Fine Arts

Postgraduate Museum and Gallery Studies

Rookies MA traject showroom MAMA, Rotterdam

Spirit and art Studies

Special Exhibitions Study, Vienna

List of Festivals[22]

Ars Basel (70)

Frieze Art Film (67)

International Film Festival Rotterdam (58)

Berlinale (51)

Transmediale (50)

Oberhausen International Short Film

Festival (41)

Impakt (40)

Ars Electronica (27)

STRP Festival (20)

EMAF (15)

Courtisane (12)

Venice Biennalle (9)

The Armory Show New York (6)

Berlin Biennale (5)

Istanbul Biennale (5)

Manifesta (5)

Art Amsterdam (4)

LOOP Barcelona (4)

Arco Madrid (4)

Art Beijing (3)

KYTN (3)

Art Brussels (3)

ArteBa Sao Paulo (3)

Documenta (3)

FIAC (3)

25FPS (2)

Cimatics (2)

Edinburgh Art Festival (2)

Elektra, Montréal (2)

FID Marseille (2)

Glasgow Art Festival (2)

Holland Festival (2)

Images Festival (2)

ISEA2010 (2)

Mutek (2)

TEFAF (2)

Todaysart (2)

Whitney Biennial (2)

Abandon Normal Devices

Rencontres Internationales

Art Athina

Art Basel Miami Beach

Artissima

Art Moscow

Singapore art fair

Ashkal Alwan

Asia Pacific Triennial

AV Festival

Bienal do Mercosul

[22] The number in brackets represents the number of respondents that mentioned that particular festival. No numbers (in brackets are added for the festivals mentioned once.

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Lyon Biennale

Sydney Biennale

Liverpool Biennial

Contour Biennial

CPH:DOX

Crossing Europe

Internationale Keuze Rotterdam

Dutch Design Week

Festival d'autumne Paris

NFF

Kasseler Dokumentarfilm- und Videofest

Flatpack Festival

Future Everything

Future Sonic

IDFA

India Art Summit

Kampnagel Sommerfestival

Kunsten Festival Brussels

Kunstvlaai

Migrating Forms

Moscow Biennale

Invideo

Locarno

Philladelphia P.O.S.T.

Preview Berlin

Pulse

Recontres Arles

Re:visie

Shanghai Art Fair

SCOPE Art Show

Contact Photography Festival

Shanghai Contemporary

Sonic Acts

SPArte

Hong Kong Biennale

Toronto International Filmfestival

Videobrasil

Videoformes

Viennale
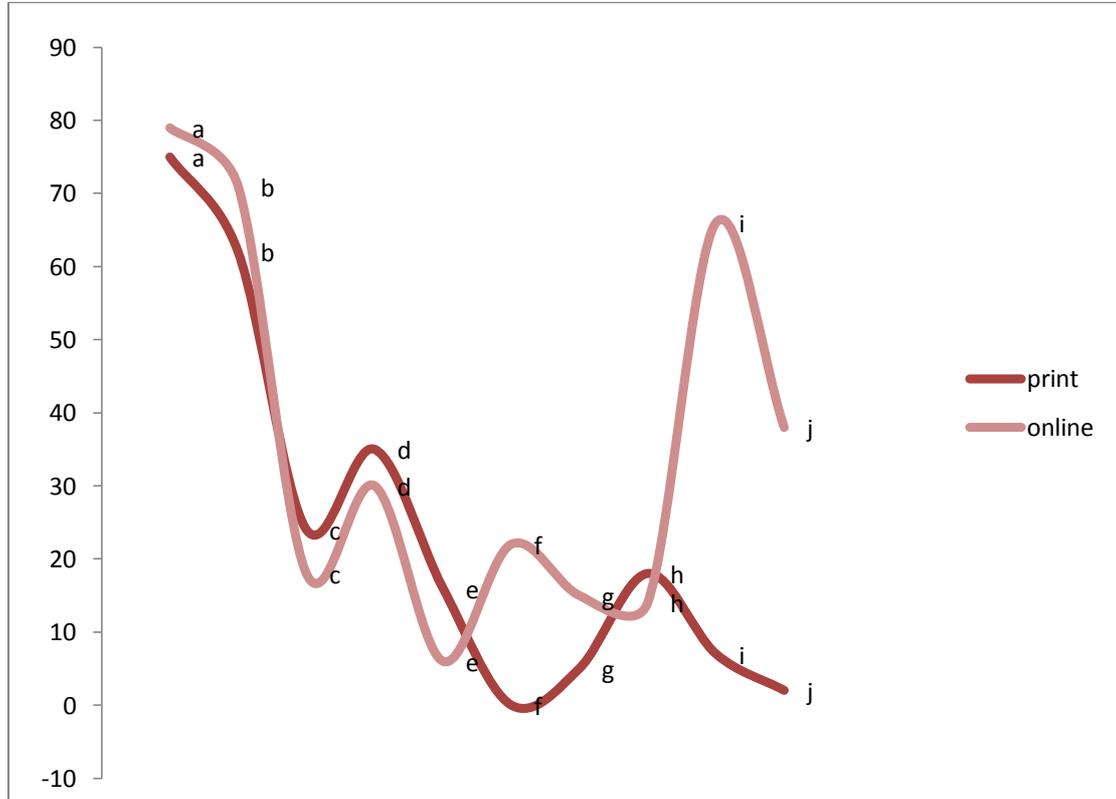
Visions du reel

Volta

ZKM

NYIFF

Online vs. printed resources graph

Legend:

a: Artforum

b: Frieze Magazine

c: Kunstforum

d: Metropolis M

e: Mister Motley

f: Nettime (this resource is online available only)

g: Neural Magazine

h: Open (by SKOR)

i: Rhizome

j: We make money not art

Open question: selection quotes from respondents

"A combined catalogue listing all distributors for individual works would be great, if perhaps unlike!"

"Although it cannot replace the advice of a distributor who knows well his/her collection, it's helpful to be able to browse a catalogue by themes/key words. It's important that those themes and key words are relevant and not too general. There are works that one knows and that are hard to find or to preview them because they still need to be made accessible. There are also works that are theoretically accessible, but that are hard to find because one needs to discover them (for example: works that are not very visible, nor shown at a major festival). In those cases, online or offline curated programmes (or other resources: featuring an article or interview on the website, etc) bringing attention to those works is perhaps the best way to make them visible."

"It is generally hard to find video works (excerpts even) online."

"Providing video-art online is not always the best way to present it (quality and players wise). I would prefer more frequent short exhibitions, or TV screenings."

"I am interested in historic non-western experimental films and video art."

"I don't believe that distributors should curate programmes of works in their collection. Let curators do this, and be at hand to help and answer their questions, listen to their ideas, and sometimes look at new artists based on their recommendation."

"I honestly think that NIMK's website (catalogue) is one of the best designed. It provides a thorough list of subject/matter which is very useful. As curator, however, I may be interested in access to the works by decades which would provide a useful historical point of view. Only with some occasions I have had problems watching the samples of works provided in the web."

"I think studio visits can be incredibly useful, although not always easily applicable to media artists who are not working in a studio setting. If distributors could find ways to facilitate meetings between curators and artists would be great."

"I think that the artist's own sites are the best way to know more about their work. It would be amazing to create a platform where we could find a list of their websites. It is hard to find or discover artist's works without a website."

"In general I think the NIMk does a pretty good job (I cannot say that about all distributors). I'm facing more and more the problem that curated short film programmes are quite expensive (fees & transports & curatorial honorarium) and therefore very often interested organizations are rejecting programmes after reading the budget. For me it would be especially important to keep the transport costs down (as the artists nor the distributors nor the curators earn money here), like using registered mail instead of couriers. Even better would be the possibility of downloading high resolution clips, which would also reduce all handling times drastically. I'm aware of the possibility that the data might remain on the hard drives of the curators/festivals, but copying DVDs is nearly as easy as that. Concerning finding works I appreciate very much background information, especially about 'unknown' artists. Keywords are essential for me (as you have them)."

"It is a pity that the previews DVDs only come out twice a year. "

"It might be an idea to add some more theory about media-art to your website. If there is not much theory to find then I think you should stimulate critici to write more about media-art and its new evolvements."

"It will be very helpful to have all the works tagged with different words, related with their narrative structure, work theme, duration, technique and media. It would be nice if there was a kind of diary-news-letter where people could write about exhibitions or single works, which they have seen, when visiting other venues, shows, festivals etc.

"Media from the Arab world is very rare to find."

"Monthly digests!"

"More differentiation in search options (in keywords); more links to other online video platforms/catalogues, suggestions of similar works tagged; more useful tagging."

"More historical (video & TV broadcast-related) works, as well as documentaries, interviews, special thematic broadcasted programs or recordings of historical value."

"Online previews of works (like those available on Video Data Bank); documentation of installation works or video/film works that incorporate performance. Performance work is particularly hard to discover, especially performance that is not made for documentation."

"Providing preview material seems to me the best way to support scouting, whether by DVD or online. If I search for very specific topics and subjects: keyword search through NIMk's online database and personal recommendations from NIMk staff. To be kept updated about new acquisitions or historical findings by NIMk's collection/distribution would be of good help."

"Semi-legal online archives have been my favorite resource; there are so many limitations on distribution of online video, many of them completely understandable, that it becomes a difficult process to access video work. If I can't find it easily and freely online, I typically get a DVD from an artist or their gallery. Finding ways to make works legitimately available to curators, critics, and artists is a great goal."

"The hardest to discover are young international artists, because one only hears their name once they have made it big internationally. There are very few galleries which promote very young artists at Art Fairs. It would be great to discover young artists straight out of art schools or those who are beginning their career."

"Historical work from non-European contexts."