CREATE: doing Digital Humanities at the University of Amsterdam

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The research program 'Creative Amsterdam: An E-Humanities Perspective' (CREATE) investigates with digital methods and techniques how cultural industries have shaped Amsterdam's unique position in a European and global context, from the seventeenth century until the present day. CREATE researchers collect and enrich digital data on the various cultural sectors of Amsterdam, from book publishing to theater and cinema, link existing datasets, and develop new tools for searching and analysis.

In this presentation we will demonstrate data sets, models and tools that have been developed or continued in the past two years. Among them are ONSTAGE, an almost complete listing of the programs of the Amsterdam City Theater from 1637 up until 1772, and FELIX, a dataset with a substantial part of the nineteenth century programs for concerts in the Amsterdam concert hall Felix Meritis. Both data sets have been enriched with proper identifications and links to external resources. Another dataset that is further developed within the CREATE program is ECARTICO, a comprehensive database of structured biographical data concerning painters, engravers, printers, book sellers, gold- and silversmiths and others involved in the 'cultural industries' of the Low Countries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. All these three databases are accessible through advanced web interfaces that do not only allow for searching and browsing the data but also for further analysis and visualization.

CREATE is also the main sponsor of UvA's 4D Lab which created a 3D reconstruction of the Amsterdam movie theater Cinema Parisien in the 1910's. Other CREATE projects are focused on the digital analysis of texts. One of the larger projects in this field is CAECILIA 2.0. In this project we created a digital index on the nineteenth century music journal Caecilia, which was digitized by the Dutch Royal Library. We developed techniques to semi-automatically detect separate articles in the OCRed text and to recognize concert reviews as a distinct category among them. We used customized named entity recognition techniques to discern the names of composers and places in these reviews.

The presenters are the main developers and data specialists of the CREATE program. They will be happy to demonstrate the aforementioned resources, tools and models, to answer questions, to clarify design issues and to discuss the possibilities for future enhancements.