

European Digital Library to contain all knowledge

Voice-over:

In Haarlem, in the Netherlands, Ewoud Sanders, an historian and journalist, also employs digitisation. He's in the process of creating his own digital library. Separating the pages from the book's binding, he scans them in using a high-speed scanner. So far, he's created a database of one and a half million pages. What once took days to research, now takes minutes.

Ewoud Sanders:

In the old days I had to go to the library, all the way to Amsterdam which is about twenty minutes for me...go there, sit there maybe all day for weeks on end sometimes, and do research. Now I can do most of this behind my desk.

Voice-over:

Ewoud Sanders and Leuven University are both facets of a great enterprise: the creation of a European Digital Library in which our cultural heritage is accessible to everyone, preserved forever.

The National Library of the Netherlands is in the process of digitising its entire collection: thirty million items. Its website already allows access to books, manuscripts, photographs and letters; many of which are locked away in vaults.

The library is currently digitising Dutch Parliamentary Papers. The collection, dating from 1814, numbers two and half million papers. While these books are not the only copies, digitisation requires the parliamentary papers which they contain to be separated from their bindings.

Another of the library's projects is to digitise its collection of newspapers. There are eight million pages, dating from 1618, representing an invaluable source of eyewitness history.

The newspapers are stored in a vault beneath the main library building. Astrid Verheusen is in charge of the project.

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