

Title

Digital technologies and the everyday life of scholars

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Research Theme

New, digital forms of data collection, storage, exchange and representation as found in dynamic databases, simulations and archives as well as new communication possibilities offered by social networking sites offer exciting opportunities to scholars to raise new research questions, to collaborate with others and to reach new audiences. However, much more mundane applications, such as word processing, email and online searching, have also had profound effects on the work of scholars in the humanities and social sciences over the past 20 years.

This project will focus on a particular group of 'information workers', namely researchers in the humanities and social sciences, a group that is deeply affected by the explosion in information and therefore it is interesting to see how they are coping with the challenges to their professional lives. What are the implications of the use of digital technologies for the nature and pace of their work? What is the response of their professional associations or unions? What skills are needed to process information? How do highly educated scholars decide which information is important for their work? How do they reconcile contradictory information? What new forms of inter/mediation are emerging in relation to new technological applications? How are their relationships with colleagues, students and university management changing?

This project will bring together insights from science and technology studies as well as information and library science, and the history of institutions and ideas.

Institutional Setting

This research will be located within the Maastricht Virtual Knowledge Studio, which fits within the theme of 'digital cultures in development'. The PhD candidate will participate in the WTMC graduate school. There will also be possibilities to link with other ongoing work within the Virtual Knowledge Studio (www.virtualknowledgestudio.nl) about the digitisation of scholarly resources.