Technology and the Making of Europe

TENSIONS OF EUROPE

NEWSLETTER

Special issue 'Making Europe Virtual Exhibit'

Contents

Word from the editors

Dear friends of Tensions of Europe,

In the past few years, the pages of this newsletter regularly featured newsflashes about the *Making Europe* book series and the Virtual Exhibit accompanying it. As the developments in both projects are gaining ever more momentum, we felt the need to release a special issue of the newsletter entirely devoted to what's now called the *Making Europe Virtual Exhibit* project. This is not only to keep our readership up to date, but also as an attempt to capture the the project as it matures (as any proud parent would do!). In the future we hope to keep you posted on the project via the Making Europe website which is currently being developed.

Assembling this special issue was quite an editorial challenge. It is hard to capture all that is noteworthy about a project which has a history of nearly a decade and ever more stakeholders involved. We felt we could only give you a fair impression by presenting multiple insiders' views, because it is the people who *make* the project! For that reason we invited a selection of main actors to present their perspectives on the project. As some of them only got involved recently, they were given the opportunity to introduce themselves. In the following pages you will meet one of our international museum partners who has been aboard

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of the project from the start, the project leader, one project sponsor, two book authors, one of our national museum partners, the technical genius behind the virtual exhibit website, our web designer, picture editor, and last, but certainly not least, our new web editors.

After this colourful parade of people, we will treat you to an example of how a virtual exhibit story eventually may look like. Under the heading 'workshop reports', book editors Phil Scranton and Johan Schot will give you a detailed synopsis of a recent three-day project workshop in Wassenaar. As their account mainly focuses on workshop sessions devoted to the book writing, a second report zooms in on the working sessions in which authors and collection holders sat together to explore common grounds. The final piece will tell you how to join the project.

We thank everyone who contributed to this newsletter!

Enjoy your read!

Alec Badenoch & Livia Smits

Perspectives

The meaning of 'Inventing Europe'
As museums digitise their collections, the question of what this is for has become more urgent. In principle, the results can be used to create virtual works which cross institutional and indeed national boundaries. In practice this has rarely been achieved. For Museums therefore Inventing Europe is not just a nice showcase for their collections, it is the beginning of a new world, long forecast but slow in coming.

Robert Bud, curator Science Museum London, UK (Photo: Robert Bud)

Because this has been discussed for a time there is a context. Archaeologists have been in the forefront. The Perseus project based at Tufts University has been exploring integrated libraries since the mid-1980s (www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper). An early exercise in the history of science was the EPACT project in the collective documentation of early scientific instruments launched on the web in 2000 (www.mhs.ox.ac.uk/epact). The software we use, OMEKA, was developed by the group at George Mason University in part to facilitate collaborative exhibitions. An impressive list of websites has been built using this technology (http://omeka.org/codex/View_Sites_Powered_by_Omeka). The European portal 'Europeana' itself has been promising this and indeed 'Inventing Europe' will provide one of the first examples of their journeys. There is another historically minded group, 'Historiana' with a Europe-wide ambition (www.historiana.eu). However the achievement of a pioneering inter-museum collaboration with a cutting-edge international historical project to create works of art in themselves is really new.
For Museums the implications are profound. Such organisations as London's Science Museum have been proudly autarchic. We have of course collaborated on the margins. The success of this project shows, however, how much further we

can go in interpreting our collections collaboratively on a large scale.

Perhaps success is coming because the multimedia initiative is so deeply entrenched in the Tensions of Europe project. As early as November 2002 a multimedia plan was submitted to the Coordinating Committee meeting in Amsterdam. Ruth Oldenziel and I wrote there:

"In collaboration with museums, universities, and other institutions currently participating in our network, we are thinking of the development of ways to integrate existing digital learning environments, develop new web sites and CD-ROM's, mount museum exhibitions, organize public discussions, and sponsor a multi-volume book series. In doing so we hope to reach an audience beyond strict academic walls."

The intervening years have been long but not wasted. The key methods are now becoming clear. We need to integrate the big narratives which are being developed by the historians with the micro histories (with all the theoretical connotations of that word) which are so richly conveyed by the museum objects and pictures and the stories they embody.

It might have taken 9 years and the technological opportunities have been transformed, but the vision of Tensions of Europe has been consistent. The commitment of such a large international group to take a journey together over more than a decade across technological eras is – to use an English understatement - unusual -- and of course so is the energy of the team members who have converted a dream into a blueprint and then a website.

Robert Bud (Science Museum, London, UK)

Leading the project: starting conversations

I normally try to explain my eclectic academic background by describing myself either as a nomad (conjuring romantic images of the reindeer herder on the barren steppe) or simply as having a short attention span (cue image of hyperactive child in front of the TV). Leading the Virtual Exhibit project makes me think about how to tell stories about the movement of things, people and ideas over borders as well as bringing together a huge array of stimulating objects to explore. In short: it speaks (in a good way) to both the romantic nomad and the hyperactive child in me!

Reindeer or no, I've been a typical academic nomad. After studying German Literature and Anthropology in my native US, I did a PhD in modern languages at the University of Southampton (UK) on the role of radio in reconstructing identity in Western Germany after World War II. I became increasingly drawn to the way technologies of connection develop powerful myths of space and time, which I explored further as post-doc on the "Transnational Infrastructures and the Rise of Contemporary Europe" (TIE) project at the Eindhoven University of Technology in the Netherlands. This project opened two important doors for me: first, it allowed me to indulge my short attention span with work on roads, maps, dams, radio, etc. and explore how ideas of Europe, nations, progress, etc. were formed and contested through a

range of technologies; second, it introduced me to the Tensions of Europe network.

Alec Badenoch (Photo: Dindy van Maanen)

The virtual exhibit project brings a number of my current activities together. As a lecturer in media studies (at Utrecht University), I like the challenge of trying to develop media tools for learning and critical engagement with the past. As a historian, it's a platform to try to develop the sort of historiography many of us strive for: rich, messy and working at scales from the single object and split second to the *longue durée* of landmasses and institutions. As a Tensions of Europe member, it lets me do what we do best: start conversations. This project sets dialogues in motion at every turn. It begins with conversations between researchers and heritage institutions, between software developers, graphic designers and historians. Together we begin to assemble multiple voices that work around and through collection objects. Finally, we will turn these voices outward and they will start new conversations: with current projects like those from Next Generation Infrastructures, with students and with people throughout Europe and beyond. Next to the nomad and the hyperactive child, it's great to be the guy with the cup of coffee (or something stronger) saying "Have a seat. Let's talk".

Alec Badenoch (Utrecht University/ Foundation for the History of Technology, Eindhoven, NL)

Sponsoring the project
Next Generation Infrastructures fosters academic research on infrastructures. We are happy to support high-quality research projects that improve infrastructures all over the world. Partially funded by public money from the Dutch government, we encourage our researchers to reach out to a broader public. Therefore, we embrace this initiative of the Foundation for the History of Technology to create a virtual exhibit to bring new stories into view about technologies and their importance in (re)constructing Europe. Of course our special interest lies in the stories and objects that centre around infrastructure. So far, we have been impressed by the project's progress. The interest and enthusiasm of many representatives of international (science and technology) museums and the ongoing solid academic research form the invaluable foundation for the project.

Judith Schueler (Photo: Judith Schueler)

Many of the issues that will be captured in text and image reflect the themes that stand out in the broader portfolio of the researchers in our Next Generation Infrastructures' network. We see similar issues reappearing throughout the different infrastructure sectors. Today, people struggle with processes of

standardization, regulation and robustness of infrastructure networks. We are confident that the virtual exhibit will offer a historical perspective to many of these issues to a widespread international audience.

Judith Schueler (Next Generation Infrastructures, Delft, NL)

A *Making Europe* author's view on the virtual exhibit
Together with Per Högselius and Erik van der Vleuten, I am working on Volume 2 in the book series dealing with the infrastructural transformation of Europe. Since the summer of 2008, we have participated in a series of conferences and workshops planning and preparing the book series, and the virtual exhibit has often been mentioned at these gatherings. But exactly how the exhibit would look like and how the process to produce it would work has been a bit unclear to me.

At a workshop at the Boerhaave museum in Leiden in October 2010 the virtual exhibit became much more concrete to me. This time there were representatives from most of the participating museums present as well as many of the book authors. The workshop clarified the different objectives of the two groups for engaging in the project. For us as book authors, the main value of the virtual exhibit is that it can contribute to making our books more widely known and hopefully give them additional readers. For the museums the exhibit is a way to attract new visitors to their web pages and all the objects, photo's that have been digitalized in recent years.

In addition, I believe that the process of producing the exhibit can be a mutually productive exercise. It turned out to be very fruitful to talk with these museum curators who have a very good knowledge not only of collections in their own museums, but often also of other related collections. For example, I asked a curator from the Maritime Museum in Rotterdam, Wouter Heijveld, if he knew of any material concerning convoys in World War II and in particular about the seamen that participated in them. The reason was that I wanted to write a case study about this in one of our chapters. Wouter knew of a Dutch oral history project in which old seamen have been interviewed, and a few days later he sent me a link to a web page where I could find half a dozen interviews that were extremely valuable to me.

Arne Kaijser (Photo: Dindy van Maanen)

In a second workshop at NIAS in Wassenaar in January 2011 we had a new meeting with museum curators. This time we had small group assignments where the authors of one book sat with a few curators and brainstormed about what kind of objects or photo's that would be suitable for illustrating the six stories that each book author team have to choose for the static part of the virtual exhibit. This too turned out to be a very productive exercise and it made us

authors rethink some of our choices of stories.

We are still only in the beginning of the process of producing the virtual exhibit, but my experience from the workshops makes me hopeful that this process will become both an instructive and productive exercise.

Arne Kaijser (Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden)

Practicing the craft of storytelling
At the Netherlands Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) in Wassenaar we are writing six volumes for *Making Europe*; six volumes, fifteen authors. Usually, I tell general historians or other scholars unfamiliar with technology we are writing a history of material culture of Europe in a global context between 1850 and 2000. This actually best captures what we are trying to do: showing that technology is always part of our daily life, is always political, and deeply embedded socially.

Ruth Oldenziel (Photo: Bart van Overbeeke)

Together with Mikael Hård, I am responsible for a volume on how users are appropriating technology in their daily lives. That can be anything from sewing machines and bicycles to houses and blue jeans. The volume's title, *Technological dramas,* conveys the notion that there are different social actors and social groups participate on the stage where innovations are contested, shaped, and

given meaning. Technologies can only exist if they are used. That's our hypothesis and point of departure. And of course there is always a lot of drama involved, different opinions, about how technologies ought to be made, used, and understood. We take the concept from cultural anthropologist Bryan Pfaffenberger to tell our stories about technology to a broader audience. We are committed to write what publishers call a crossover book, a book that is rooted in scholarly work but is also accessible to a broader audience beyond the scholarly community. For us the challenge has been to practice our historical craft as writers to tell stories about innovations with which people can connect and understand rather than presenting academic prose or big concepts.

The Virtual Exhibit project shares that goal. One of the wonderful experiences we have had here was a workshop with ten museums currently collaborating with the book authors, the virtual exhibit editorial team (Alec Badenoch, Suzanne Lommers, Slawomir Lotysz) and the picture editor (Katherine Kay-Mouat). We were here together in a creative process that is rare on this scale. For our volume, the Finnish museum said "hey we have a fantastic collection on bicycles and an exhibit" and then they showed the catalogue. And we also had the *Dokumentationszentrum Alltagskultur der DDR* pointing us to their packs of old paper patterns that tell you how women were able to copy and to appropriate Parisian fashion. Katherine showed us cartoons and images you easily miss because we're oriented to texts. Such early collaboration is rather unique. Usually authors do their research, write their books, and then the picture editor comes in, contacts museums and a website is mounted at the end of the journey. We have reversed this process:

let's see if we can learn from each other right from the start!

Ruth Oldenziel (Eindhoven University of Technology, NL)

Participating as a museum
Museum Boerhaave is the Dutch national museum for the history of science and medicine, and was founded in 1929. Nowadays it is housed in the former Caecilia hospital, in the centre of Leiden, the place where in the 18th century the famous professor Herman Boerhaave lectured at the bedside of interesting patients.

Jan Korsten (Foundation for the History of Technology) & Dirk van Delft (Museum Boerhaave) sign the consortium agreement (Photo: Dindy van Maanen).

The collections of Museum Boerhaave are among the most important in the world. They include microscopes of Antoni van Leeuwenhoek and a telescope, lenses, a planetarium and the first isochronous pendulum of Christiaan Huygens. The 'Second Golden Age', the period around 1900 in which Dutch scientists won one Nobel Prize after another, is represented by the helium liquefier of Heike Kamerlingh Onnes, the magnet used by Pieter Zeeman, the three dimensional molecule models of Jacobus Hendricus van 't Hoff (the beginnings of stereo chemistry), the string galvanometer of Willem Einthoven, and a lot of other objects.

As a national museum, Museum Boerhaave also collects instruments and devices from non-university institutions like the industrial laboratories of Philips and Shell. The artificial kidney of Dolf Kolff, also a top-class piece, was developed in a provincial hospital in Zwolle during World War II. The collection now has some 40,000 instruments, books, prints, etc. The permanent exhibition contains some 2000 objects, the rest of the collection being kept in the store. The relevance of Museum Boerhaave increasingly rests on the fact that, by displaying the feats of Dutch scientists and physicians, we are showcasing part of Dutch cultural history. We need to build a bridge from the object to the less well-informed audience to express its cultural dimension, its significance for present-day society. So the object has to be taken away from the 'altar'. Rather than an altar, it needs a storyteller – a metaphor for the cultural context that can be added to the object. Of course there is nothing wrong with objects that look wonderful, but an unattractive object like a boiling flask may deserve its place in an exhibition because of the nice story it has to tell. So the Museum Boerhaave staff is looking for compelling storylines to present the instruments as part of an historical epoch or development. Therefore, it works out well that in the history of science and technology community the accent within research has shifted over the past decades, from a history of ideas to more attention for material aspects. Researchers nowadays are also interested in context, in crane grease and lubricant, in the persons behind the scientists or technicians and his or her instruments. Increasingly often, we see initiatives to make the material culture of science the subject of study.

The Making Europe – Virtual Exhibit project offers Museum Boerhaave an attractive possibility to make the next

step, from mostly Dutch stories based on our own collection to European stories in which a number of museums of the history of science and technology is involved. In these days of globalization and of reviving nationalism, it is important to present to a wide audience fascinating, compelling stories that show the interconnectedness of developments in science and technology in European countries since 1850. These stories can be represented in virtual exhibits, but a travelling exhibition of the real thing also would be nice.

The participating museums in the Making Europe – Virtual Exhibit project are fed with ideas for stories by the authors of the books. A successful story is a European story in which objects from collections of as much as possible participating museums can be incorporated. Finding and selecting those objects is a challenge. An even greater challenge is to present them in an attractive (virtual) exhibit, because making an exhibit is quite another profession than writing a book.

Dirk van Delft (Museum Boerhaave, Leiden, NL)

Building the Virtual Exhibit
My research group—the Social Computing Group in the Department of Computing at Imperial College—specialises in large-scale Internet infrastructures for e-

Science—"big science" with big data. Our typical partners are bio-informaticians and physicists. It may therefore seem strange that we are involved with an Arts and Humanities project like "Making Europe". In fact, we see Arts and Humanities as the natural and obvious beneficiaries of the kind of data and services infrastructures we design and we have had a continuous involvement in Art and Humanities projects over many years. For example, we are currently partners in a large-scale international project to bring Internet-scale Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and data analysis to Classics—the Dynamic Variorum Editions project (http://dynamicvariorum.perseus.tufts.edu).

Brian Fuchs (Photo: Brian Fuchs)

We are very excited about participating in Making Europe in particular because of its pioneering role in making Humanities research a collaborative endeavour. We believe that communities for sharing and creating data and services are the future of the internet—our role in helping to create an IT platform for this is at the core of our research agenda.

Brian Fuchs (Imperial College, London, UK)

http://scg.doc.ic.ac.uk

Designing the Virtual Exhibit

Dr Alan Outten is rarely happier than when he is playing with technology in new and creative ways. He is an award-winning interaction designer and technologist whose work has ranged from space research for ESA to recording the imperceptible sounds of human muscle; from crafting designs for some of the world's largest organisations to running nanotechnology workshops for small children. He has degrees in Cybernetics (BSc, University of Reading), Interaction Design (MA, Royal College of Art) and Biomedical and Neural Systems Engineering (PhD, Imperial College). As an interaction design consultant, he has helped produce exhibitions for Sony and Nokia as well as having his own personal projects exhibited world-wide including the 'Design and Elastic Mind' show at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. He has also designed and built over thirty web sites for Channel 4 TV (UK) - gaining awards including an Interactive BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television Arts). As well as working on the Inventing Europe project, he is currently a consultant for the UK government's Trade and Investment department, working with their e-marketing team.

Web designer Alan Outten (Photo: Alan Outten)

Alan designed the prototype website for the Inventing Europe online exhibition and is delighted to be involved in the next phase:

"I am very excited to have the chance to explore ways in which the exhibit can extend and enhance the book series: I'll be initially looking at options for navigating, wrapping and connecting the stories through a larger resource of digital content. I believe it's a fantastic opportunity to bring together more museum collections and to open up more and unexpected routes for further collaboration. Personally, I'm also very keen to learn more about the role technology has played in the making of Europe - particularly finding out what political and societal benefits these technologies have brought about."

You can find out more about Alan and his work at www.alanoutten.com

Alan Outten (web designer, London, UK)

The art of picture editing

As the picture editor for 'Making Europe' I hope to bring pictures that reflect the contents of the text, but also inform and amuse.

I grew up on the tiny island of Alderney in the English Channel. The UK was referred to as the 'mainland' and France was the 'continent'. Alderney is 11 kilometres from France and 100 from the UK. The notion of Europe and European is important to me. I hold two European passports and firmly believe I am European.


Picture editor Katherine Kay-Mouat (Photo: Katherine Kay-Mouat)

I have a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Parsons School of Design in New York. Under the auspices of Arthur Rothstein and Ben Fernandez I studied photojournalism. Later I became European photo editor for *U. S News & World Report*. I covered a huge geographical area and Europe was just part of the 'old world'.

More recently I have worked with the Education sector of UNESCO. I am particularly proud of an exhibition that I produced for them in 2009.
To give you an impression of what kind of images I like, I selected one
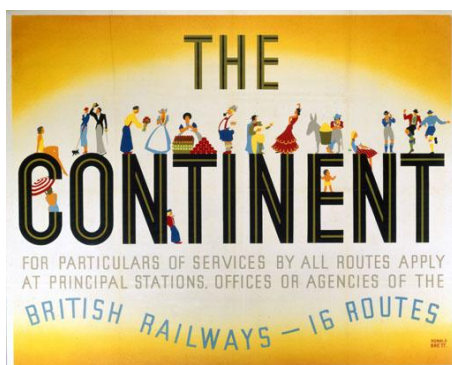
'The Continent', BR poster, 1948-1965. Poster produced for British Railways (BR) to promote rail services to the Continent. Artwork by Ronald Brett. Credit: Science and Society Picture Library.

I believe this image is interesting for a number of reasons. This is poster produced by British Rail 1948-1965, the use of the word 'Continent' means Europe. Europe in its turn is represented by different national costumes. To our eyes this seems a very clichéd representation of different countries but it does evoke a colourful, exciting Europe. I like this sort of imagery because it reflects a period of time and a method of travel that now seems grey and borderless.

Katherine Kay-Mouat (picture editor, Paris, France)

Reaching a wider audience
My name is Suzanne Lommers. After having completed a master in economic history in Utrecht and Bologna and having worked as assistant Planning and Purchase manager at the Royal Dutch Mint, I am currently finalizing my PhD *Europe – On Air: Broadcasting projects during the Interwar Years*. The last couple of years I have been triggered by the, in my opinion, big gap that exists between ruling historical perceptions amongst the general public and scientific findings in particular in the field of history of technology as well as the Tensions of Europe Network. This is why I find the Making Europe Virtual Exhibit project such a fine and interesting initiative!

Suzanne Lommers (Photo: Dindy van Maanen)

At the start of January this year I became part of the Virtual Exhibit development team. I am responsible for the communication side of the project while I also, as one of the web editors, will be writing several stories for the exhibit itself. My main tasks will encompass the internal communications of the project, in particular our contacts with our partner cultural heritage institutions as well as any new potential partner institution. I am looking forward to an exciting half year in which we will be realizing the main body for the exhibit.

Suzanne Lommers (Foundation for the History of Technology, Eindhoven, NL)

Love at second sight!

To be sure, this is not my first encounter with ToE. The first one was at a SHOT conference in 2003, where I met Tom Misa who asked me "Why don't you join our new initiative, Tensions of Europe?" In the meantime, this "new initiative" has grown and matured, and I really don't have an explanation for not joining until now, besides the fact that, back in 2003, I was busy finishing my doctoral thesis on history of pneumatic railways. Before I defended it in 2005, I spent several months in New York as a fellow of the Kosciuszko Foundation. After that, I got engaged with ICOHTEC (International Committee for the History of Technology), taking care of its website from 2006 until now. In 2007 I went to Philadelphia to pursue my research as a Price fellow at the Chemical Heritage Foundation. After my return to Poland in 2008, I was elected as vice director of the Institute of Civil Engineering at University of Zielona Gora, and was buried with work on establishing a new degree program.

Slawomir Lotysz (Photo: Dindy van Maanen)

Finally, last November, a friend from Hamburg asked me "Why don't you take a look at this announcement? People from ToE need a web editor for virtual exhibit?" I considered this as another opportunity to get closer to the Tensions of Europe network. There wouldn't be third chance! The announcement called for a historian of technology with knowledge of web designing. As those are my two passions, the decision to apply was easily made. By joining to the Virtual Exhibit development team I hope to bring as much as I hope to draw from it – enthusiasm, inspiration, and experience.

Slawomir Lotysz (University of Zielona Gora, Poland)

Telling a story

Stories in the Virtual Exhibit will consist of around six "story units" – which will consist of a digital 'object' (meaning reproduction of an object, photo, document, etc. Historians might substitute the word 'source'), a short text placing it within a larger narrative, plus a closer description of the object, which will be accessible when clicked on.

Between the 'story text' and the 'object text' then, we can see both a larger narrative, plus a more localized instance. The object itself helps to drive both stories.

In this case, supplied by Kimmo Antila and Mika Törmä from the Museum Centre Vapriikki in Tampere, we see how a relatively harmless-looking piece of oceanographic equipment was the centre of a number of transnational tensions and opportunities. It serves as one part of a story about how the CoCom (the export restrictions on technology from West to East), but it also shows how such a story can take us from Finland to the coast of Africa, and the importance of a single moment.

The MIR project

The **MIR project** was initiated by the **USSR's Academy of Sciences**. Two submersible **vehicles** were ordered 1986 from **Finnish** company Rauma-Repola Oceanics. The Mir 1 and Mir 2 were delivered to **Soviet Union** in 1987. Planning, construction and production of the **vehicles** required cutting-edge technological solutions.

This was a prime example of Finnish-Soviet co-operation during the last years of the **Cold War**. Original bids from Canada, France and Sweden to construct the submarines had been retracted most likely due to political pressure.

Rauma-Repola had received the permission to deliver the MIR because **CoCom** officials in USA believed it would turn out to be a failure. When the US officials noticed that the submersible was a success and could dive to 6000 meters deep, it started an uproar. Because of the **CoCom** restrictions on technology exports, most of the technology used had to be developed in Finland.

The level of technology flowing into the Soviet Union raised concern in the **USA** and Rauma-Repola was privately threatened with economic sanctions. For example, one concern of the **Pentagon** was the possibility that the Soviet Union would manufacture a pioneering submarine fleet that could clear the **ocean** floor of U.S. deep sea listening equipment. With the possibility of losing its lucrative offshore **oil** platforms market Rauma-Repola yielded, and development ceased in Finland.

(click for larger image and more information)

Picture: MIR submersible preparing to dive off the coast of west Africa,1987

Description: Due to CoCom restrictions, mainly Finnish firms contributed to the development…. (more)

Photo: Rauma Repola Oceanics/Archives of Emil Aaltonen Museum

story:CoCom

Theme path: Cold War

1. Here we see what a 'story unit' could look like – an image next to prose telling a story about the CoCom and its effects. Under the object, you see a summary of the info, and an opportunity to click for more information.

Photo: MIR submersible preparing to dive off the coast of western Africa 1987.

Description: Due to CoCom restrictions, mainly Finnish firms contributed to the development of what might otherwise have been a multinational project. The electronics were developed by Hollming. The syntactic foam was produced in Finland by Exel Oyj, as 3M, the leading producer, refused to supply it. The most important element for the development of the MIR were the metallurgical innovations made in Rauma-Repola Oseanics Lokomo workshop in Tampere.

The photograph shows one of the MIR submersible's first dives in November and December 1987. The tests took place between Cape Verde and Canary Islands and were carried out by a group of specialists from the Russian Academy of Science and Rauma-Repola Oceanics. The tests proved that it was possible to dive to 6000 meters. The vehicles were equipped with cameras and different measuring instruments; they were neither used nor intended for spying or underwater operations but only for scientific ocean research.

Photo: Rauma Repola Oceanics/Archives of Emil Aaltonen Museum

Theme path: Cold War

2. When you click on the digital image, a large version appears; In this case, the contrast between the little men in a rowboat dwarfed by the jolly-looking orange sub, and a text that tells you the importance of the object and its moment.

Workshop reports

Matching museums & authors

On January 12, 2011 a palpable chemistry was caused by a fortunate combination of the following people in one room: most of the authors as well as both editors of the book series, various representatives of museums and cultural heritage institutions from all over Europe, one sponsor of the project, the entire Making Europe Virtual Exhibit project development team, and some committed spectators. The occasion was a workshop to officially seal, and to initiate the cooperation between all of the aforementioned stakeholders. The setting was, not by coincidence, the Netherlands Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) in Wassenaar, which from September 2010 until the end of January has been the shop floor of a first cohort of book authors. The second cohort will take up residence in the NIAS from February to June 2011.

Jan Korsten (Foundation for the History of Technology) & Erzsébet Kócziánné-Szentpéteri (Hungarian Museum for Science, technology and Transport) sign the consortium agreement (Photo: Dindy van Maanen).

After a summary of the state-of-the-art of the Making Europe Virtual Exhibit project and a short discussion of steps to be taken, it was time for all parties to really 'meet' in working sessions in the authors'

offices. These meetings enabled book authors and representatives of cultural heritage institutions to explore each other's domains and to actively look for overlaps between their research and available collections. The exchange was dynamic and engaging, and seems to have effectively initiated a process of cross-fertilization. It was amazing to see how collection holders 'on the spot' delved great objects from their catalogues on the basis of one or two keywords by the authors, while browsing the online collection catalogues also obviously stirred the imagination of the book authors. A creative process, of people from different fields of expertise mutually inspiring each other, began to take shape.

The fruits of these encounters were presented in an afternoon meeting where not only the convergences but also some foreseen challenges were identified, ranging from language barriers (e.g. collections being catalogued in Finnish or Hungarian), too little or absent metadata, to nationally oriented collections and intriguing objects not yet being digitized. Despite these foreseeable hurdles (which, I am sure, will be coped with effectively the moment they arise), the atmosphere remained lively and solution- oriented. In hindsight, I am sure we all feel we have had an interesting and fruitful meeting, which provides a solid basis for further cooperation. On behalf of the Foundation for the History of Technology, I thank the series editors, book authors, collection holders, the ME-VE project development team, and last but certainly not least Next Generation Infrastructures (NGI), for their energetic presence and creative energy. The NIAS is warmly thanked for hosting this wonderful meeting between the museum and science world!

Livia Smits (Foundation for the History of Technology, Eindhoven, NL)

Making Europe workshops Wassenaar
The January 12-14 Making Europe Virtual
Exhibit and book series workshops in
Wassenaar focused on four elements
within Making Europe: the virtual exhibit
collaborations; commentaries on draft
chapters from three of the books-in-
progress; authors' consultations with the
recently-hired picture editor; and
discussion of writing styles for scholarly
crossover books. For the book series
editors Johan Schot and Phil Scranton the
workshops offered the opportunity to
assess the state of the art.

*Johan Schot & Phil Scranton (Photo: Dindy van
Maanen)*

Virtual Exhibit
The museums/virtual exhibit sessions on
Wednesday afternoon were lively and
engaging. Ten European museums
formally joined the project and others are
expected to join. Following the workshop,
the author teams started developing a
series of themes to present to the
museum partners and the web editors as
foundation for the virtual exhibit. A
selection of these themes will be linked to
museum objects in the coming six
months. These objects will be used to tell
the historical narratives. Although input
from book authors is necessary, the actual
development and writing of stories will be
done by a team of three web-editors.

Picture editing and maps
Similarly, collaborative relationships were
initiated between Making Europe picture
editor Katherine Kay-Mouat and the
author teams. In the coming months she
will select several hundred 'candidate'
illustrations for each volume. In the end a
final selection of 75 pictures will be
included in each volume.
In addition to using historical maps, the
possibilities of having custom made maps
produced were discussed. We aim at
targeted depictions of 'change over space'
that can substitute for several pages of
prose. Efforts will be undertaken to
secure contacts with a map-maker.

Book series
In the sessions focusing on work-in-
progress, series editors Johan Schot and
Phil Scranton discussed the series general
introduction. Here a number of key
concepts and ideas will be introduced
such as: transnational, the lens of
technology, Europe, the geographical
reach and periodization (1850-2010),
hidden integration, and our emphasis on
unintended consequences, paradoxes and
tensions. The general introduction will be
published in each volume, but reading of
the volume should not be dependent on
reading the introduction.

One of the working sessions on Wednesday
(Photo: Dindy van Maanen)

Draft chapters
During the workshop tables of contents
and the first draft chapters of the Making
Europe volumes *Governance*;
Technological Dramas; and *Infrastructures*

were discussed. External commentators provided their view on the work in progress. It was fascinating to see how the work is progressing and how the presence of authors at the NIAS in Wassenaar resulted in an intensified cooperation of the authors.

Group picture of book authors attending the workshop (Photo: Dindy van Maanen)

Style discussion
This session explored the necessities for writing a crossover book, which has a scholarly argument and apparatus, but is aimed toward a broad readership. Key elements for style included: simple and direct prose, avoiding jargon (but not concepts); using active voice (not passive), while varying sentence length and structure; keeping methodology out of the narrative; striving for smooth textual transitions between cases or themes (thus minimizing subheadings); being comfortable with generalization. Footnoting should be congruent with our professional standards, but not be used for extensive elaborations and debate.

The forthcoming May 10-11 workshop in Wassenaar will have a different format, mainly focused on small group discussions, with chapters from the second trio of books-in-progress as a focal point. Special meetings on picture development and a general session on writing issues will also be included.

Phil Scranton (Rutgers University, Philadelphia, USA) & Johan Schot (Foundation for the History of Technology/ Eindhoven University of Technology, NL)

Joining the project

While we have a broad and robust coalition of partners, we are also looking to invite additional participation from interested cultural heritage institutions. We particularly welcome heritage collections from Southern and Southeastern Europe, though all suitable collections will gladly be considered. Not only science and technology collections, but also institutions such as national or specialized digital libraries, city or regional museums, archives of relevant institutions, etc. can apply to become a partner.

To be considered as a partner, institutions need to have a relevant digital collection, some of which should ideally be available online. The general conditions for contributing cultural heritage partners in the Making Europe Virtual Exhibit are contained in the standard Consortium Agreement between the participating institution and the Foundation for the History of Technology. These essentially entail making digital material available to the project and providing a liaison that will be able to co-ordinate contacts within the institution.

The degree of participation is flexible: we estimate a minimum time commitment of two working days for one person – although greater commitment of resources will improve both the project and inevitably the institutions presence within it. No financial contribution is required.

Interested institutions are asked to send a short note, describing briefly:

a) the nature and extent of relevant digital collections (size, key themes or topics, how and where it is searchable)
b) any relevant online content/exhibitions (with URLs)
c) roughly the amount of person/hours they would have available.

Please send these, along with any questions to: Alec Badenoch: a.w.badenoch@tue.nl before May 1, 2011.

The "Making Europe" book series

The "Making Europe" Virtual Exhibit Project development team:

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