The Dutch Art & Architecture Thesaurus® put into practice: the example of Anet, Antwerp (Belgium)

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Copenhagen
- Anet = network of scientific libraries in Belgium (Dutch speaking)

- Part of University of Antwerp

- Brocade = Library System

- Approximately 1.5 million records Worldcat
10 libraries with an art or heritage scope, including: fine arts, archeology, architecture, book history, ethnographic art, shipping heritage, photography, product design,…

Most library collections are linked to museums or academic schools

Keep supporting the usage of subject headings/keywords for subject indexing
- Art & Architecture Thesaurus®: art terminology used mainly by museums for object description
- Thesaurus standards
- Translations
- > 43000 concepts
- ‘Mother thesaurus’: by the Getty Research Institute
- Dutch translation: by RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History
| Late Gothic [AAT-term] | 49 |
| Late Horizon [AAT-term] | 1 |
| LATE IJZERTUD | 1 |
| Late Iron Age [AAT-term] |
| LATE IMPERIAL | 11 |
| Late Antique [AAT-term] |
| LATE MEDIAEVAL | 100 |
| Late Medieval [AAT-term] |
How did we come to this?

- Libraries had own systems for subject indexing or no system
- Conversions...conversions!
- Overlapping data

- Switch to one system? Which system?
- 1 year research with project employee
Result = Anet-AAT
Why?

- Keywords are relevant and multilingual
- International standard
- Data quality: LOD potential
- Cross-domain: Brocade has object and archival possibilities
- Handing out management
- Possibilities to participate in improving Dutch and mother AAT
Why is this interesting?

- Breaking with some ‘persistent’ library traditions:
  - AAT is known for ‘object’ descriptions, historically grown because adopted by museums
  - Resulted in general suspicion by art libraries. We had to make it happen!
  - Thesaurus vs complex subject heading strings
  - Highly detailed subject indexing

- It’s still intensive work. We prefer to invest to customize this standard rather than to perfectionize our local subject systems
How are we improving AAT?

- Working groups:
  - general
  - domain of book history

- Report faults/shortcomings to RKD: spelling, scopes, AAT structure

- Adjust AAT structure: adding parents (polyhierarchy)

- Construct new concepts that are missing
How can we assist our users in search?

- Transparency in opac
- ‘Search tree’: browse to broader or narrower terms
- Option to search IN authority files
Search IN authority files

Search term: late gothic

Type
Art & Architecture
Thesaurus (28)
Tentoonstelling (2)

- Andachtsbilder [Concept] (AAT)
- Antiek cursief [Concept] (AAT)
- Antieke schriften [Concept] (AAT)
- Cuzco [Concept] (AAT)
- dolken [maaswerkonderdelen] [Concept] (AAT)
- Early Decorated [Concept] (AAT)
- Early English [Concept] (AAT)
- eerste platerses stijl [Concept] (AAT)
- Emanuelstijl [Concept] (AAT)
- flamboyant [Concept] (AAT)
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