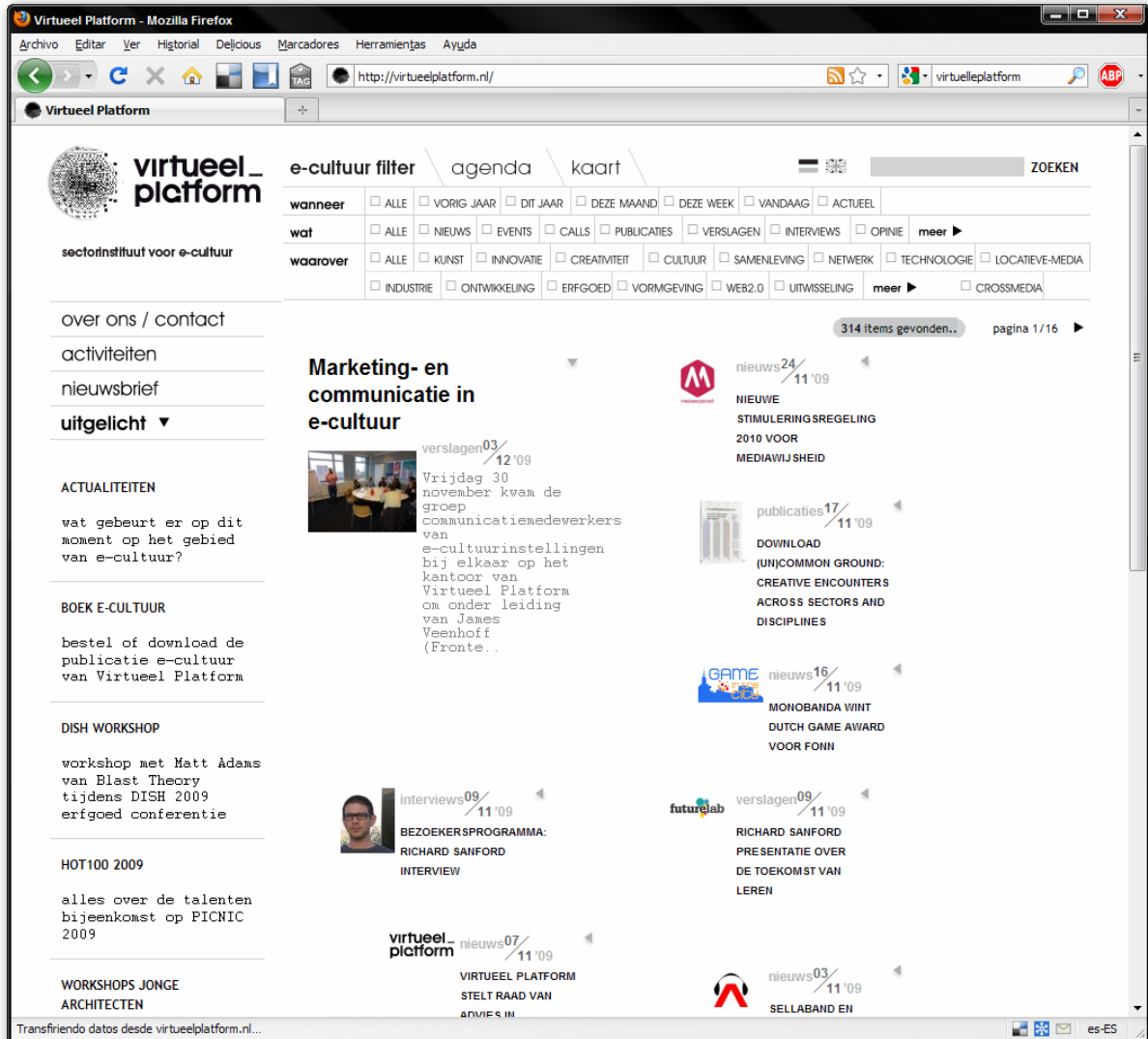


## Case Study

### Virtueel Platform



#### Profile

Website's name / Domain	http://virtueelplatform.nl
Country of origin	Netherlands
Geographical scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National</li> <li>EU</li> <li>Global</li> </ul>
Language/s / tackling of language issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dutch</li> <li>English</li> <li>Whole website in two languages</li> </ul>

#### Website owner

Contact	Floor van Spaendonck Virtueel Platform
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	Damrak 70 - 6.54 1012 LM Amsterdam tel. +31 (0)20-6273758 email: info[at]virtueelplatform.nl
Type of organisation	Non-profit organisation
Description of the owner organisation	Virtueel Platform is the Netherlands' sector institute of e-culture. Virtueel Platform is an independent foundation funded by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
Importance of the website within the organisation structure	Given the nature of the art discipline virtueel platform represents, its website is the main communication tool between the entity and its audience; actions of the initiative in other online and offline media are aimed at enhancing the visibility of its website and the field of e-culture itself in general.

**Description of the website's mission and objectives including the main activities of the website and which domains and disciplines are addressed, as well as how the accomplishment of the mission is facilitated**

Virtual Platform defines e-culture as new developments in the cultural sector arising from cross-pollination between technology and society. Virtueel Platform firmly believes that e-culture makes an essential contribution to cultural, social and economic innovation, and works to strengthen and develop Dutch e-culture at home and abroad.

Aims of the network are observation and documentation of activities (in order to make this knowledge available to all its target groups, and in the hope that these activities will promote knowledge exchange, interconnection and inspiration, facilitation of e-culture organisations (by stimulating the dialogue on new developments that are taking place between e-culture makers and policymakers and between cultural organizations themselves) and broadening the field of e-culture (Virtueel Platform organizes numerous activities which allow people from different sectors to meet).

The website provides several services to inform culture activists interested in the field of new media and enhance the dialogue between them, like a newsletter, a RSS feed, a blog, a shared bookmarks account at del.icio.us, a Twitter channel with real-time updates on Virtueel platform activities, a Flickr account documenting workshops and activities and a [mashup](#) of all this information on the Web 2.0 mashup service Net vibes.

**Website facilities**

Kind of facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information repositories (news, events, documents, downloads)</li> <li>• Online community</li> <li>• RSS</li> <li>• Newsletter</li> <li>• Contact us</li> </ul>
Member / non-member facilities	The website is organised as a resource aggregator and member facilities do not exist on the web per se, although the platform leverages existing online web2.0 services to disseminate/gather its contents such as Flickr Twitter, del.icio.us and Netvibes.
Importance within the website content	Participations tools serve as medium to stimulate the dialogue on new developments that are taking place in

Frequency of usage	the e-culture field.	
	Number of visitors (monthly):	3,300
	Frequency of website updating by the website owner:	20 updates per week
Does the website show any results for working communication and debate on a European / cross-border level?	The site does not have a Netherlands only focus and presents relevant information from the e-culture landscape at a European level.	

### Evaluation of the website

Mission and objectives, accomplishment of mission	Attitude towards the European idea, incorporation of the European idea	The Virtueel Platform mission is to enhance the position of new or digital media in the cultural area.
	Cultural values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dialogue – exchange – debate</li> <li>• Intercultural dialogue and understanding</li> <li>• Equality, inclusion and accessibility</li> <li>• Innovation and creativity</li> </ul>
Presentation, navigation, structure	<p>The website has a very minimalistic design approach with the bare minimum formatting and design elements consisting mainly in black text on a white background and some gray lines and small widgets. Such an approach which might seem confusing and complicated to the average user is welcome in the new media field, where its activists have a special sensitivity for experimentation of new interaction design paradigms.</p> <p>Navigation and structure on this site are derived from the underlying conceptual philosophy of the website: Virtueel platform websites' main mission is to give its audience a view of the state of e-culture in the Netherlands and beyond as detailed and up to date as possible.</p> <p>To accomplish this objective, the website is built around the concepts of <a href="#">syndication</a> and <a href="#">mashup</a>, and has tools that broadcast self generated content (e-cultuur filter, agenda, map) whose source is gathered from several Web 2.0 services and at the same time broadcasts all its contents and activities through the same channels (established, third party Web 2.0 services such as Twitter, Flickr or Del.icio.us).</p>	
Trustfulness	The trustfulness of the information provided is likely to be high since Virtueel Platform is the Netherlands' sector institute of e-culture and an independent foundation funded by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.	
Main strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The innovative design philosophy of the website, built around the mashup and syndication concepts and the exhaustive information about</li> </ul>	

	<p>e-culture it contains.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of state-of-the-art web technologies and user interface paradigms for content presentation.</li> <li>• The wealth of different information channels that can be syndicated it has (Twitter, RSS, Flickr, del.icio.us, netvibes...)</li> </ul> <p>A feature worth mentioning is the real-time state of e-culture section (the logo itself from Virtueel Platform) which shows a pie type chart where the most used tags on the website are represented and take an area of the pie according to the number of times a given tag appears on the website and the number of times a content tagged with this word has been viewed.</p>
Main drawback	<p>The graphic design and architecture of the website assume that the visitor is involved in new media and the website can feel cumbersome and complex for an average user not familiar with some of the concepts the website deals with, for example syndication.</p>
Usage of communication facilities	<p>Virtueel Platform actively searches for tools and online networks to distribute and gather information; online webservices such as Twitter and del.icio.us are being used by Virtueel Platform as mediums both to gather information and distribute it.</p>