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A fork in the alphabet soup: DoeDat a multilingual crowdsourcing platform

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Abstract

Specimen labels are written in numerous languages and accurate interpretation requires local knowledge of place names, vernacular names and people's names. In many countries more than one language is in common usage. Belgium, for example, has three official languages. Crowdsourcing has helped many collections digitize their labels and generates useful data for science. Furthermore, direct engagement of the public with a herbarium increases the collection's visibility and potentially reinforces a sense of common ownership. For these reasons we built DoeDat, a multilingual crowdsourcing platform forked from Digivol of the Australian Museum (Figs 1, 2). Some of the useful features we inherited from Digivol include a georeferencing tool, configurable templates, simple project management and individual institutional branding.
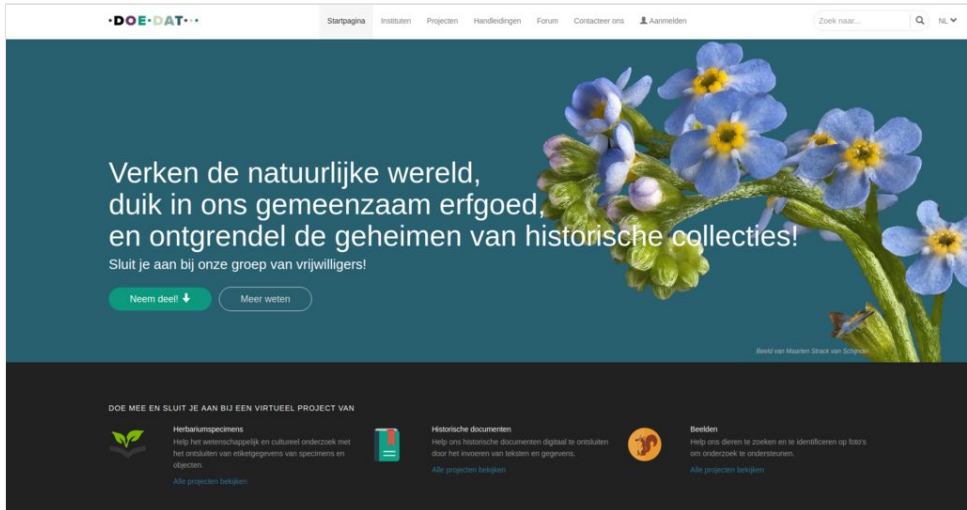
Figure 1.

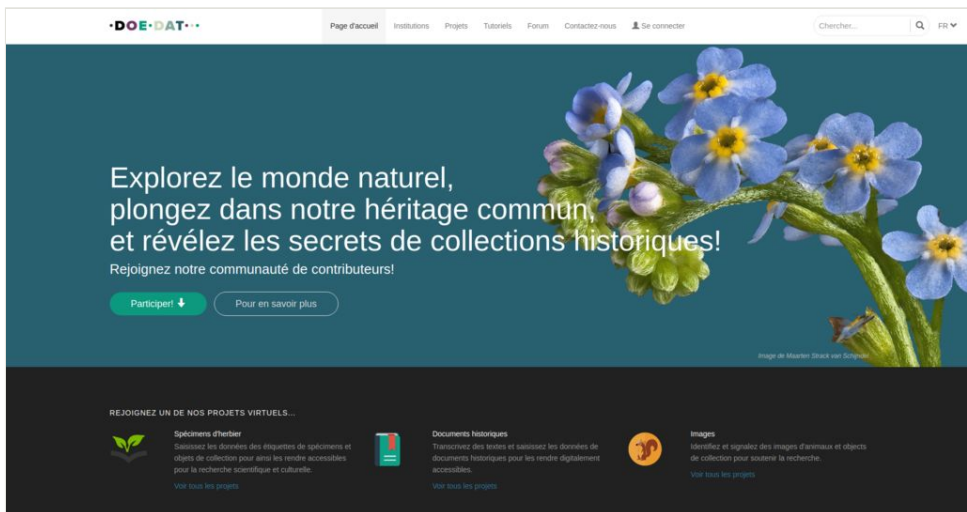The Dutch language home page of doedat.be with the logo and picture of a forget-me-not.

Figure 2.

The French language version of the doedat.be home page.

Running a multilingual website does increase the work needed to setup and manage projects, but we hope to gain from the broader engagement we can attract. Currently, we are focusing our work on Belgian collections were Dutch and French are the primary languages, but in the future we may expand our languages when we work on our international collections. We also hope that we can eventually merge our code with that of Digivol, so that we can both benefit from each other's developments.

Keywords

public engagement, internationalization, citizen science, herbarium, transcription, data capture

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