



PRESS RELEASE

Google and Ghent University Library to make hundreds of thousands of Dutch and French books available online

Ghent, Belgium – May 23, 2007: Ghent University announced today that it has joined Google's Library Project. Working in partnership, Google will digitize the Booktower's out-of-copyright books—bringing some of the greatest works of Dutch and French literature to millions of people globally.

As one of Belgium's largest libraries, the Ghent University Library will greatly increase the number of Dutch and French-language books available through the Google Book Search Library Project. Through this partnership, hundreds and thousands of books will be added to the program, from well-loved classics to rare and special collections previously only available to those able to consult the library's stacks.

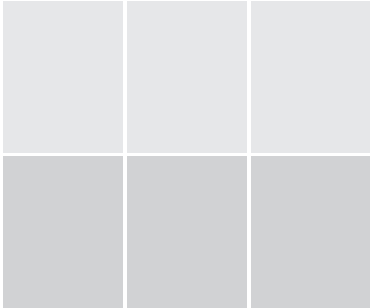
Once the books have been digitized, it will be easy for anyone to discover, search and read them on the Google Book Search™ service. The library's collection also includes numerous out-of-copyright works in German, Latin, Italian, English, Spanish, further enriching Google's multilingual index and bringing more books, in more languages, to more people around the world.

The partnership with the Google Library Project is the result of an ICT-mission from the Flemish Minister of Science and Innovation Fientje Moerman in which the Interdisciplinary institute for BroadBand Technology (IBBT) participated.

Minister Fientje Moerman: "I am satisfied that we have managed to finalize our unique collaboration with Google and Ghent University, thanks to our ICT mission. With this project, we demonstrate that Flanders has numerous assets, both cultural and technological. It is the combination of both these assets that will make the Ghent University collections a unique addition to the Book Search project, which includes such renowned institutions such as Stanford and Oxford. This partnership is a beautiful example of the path we have chosen for our innovation policy, viz. the collaboration between private and public partners in research and development."

Sylvia Van Peteghem, Chief Librarian of the Ghent University Library said: "We are thrilled to open our books and our library to the world through this project. This is an exciting effort to help readers—no matter where they are—discover and access part of Belgium and Europe's rich literary tradition and culture. In addition, we are about to start a multi-year project to renovate our library building, and while our library's doors will be closed, its books will remain open to students and academics through Google Book Search."





Philippe Colombet, Strategic Partnership Development Manager of Google Book Search said: “The rich collection of the Library of the Ghent University is a wonderful addition to the Book Search project, which aims to enable the discovery of the world’s books. The library will further enrich our multi-lingual index, and the news is particularly exciting for Dutch and French readers around the world.”

Ghent University is the fifteenth library to join the Library Project, which also includes Oxford University, University Complutense of Madrid, the Library of Catalunya, Bavarian State Library, Lausanne Cantonal and University Library (BCU), Harvard University, Stanford University, University of Michigan, the New York Public Library, University of Virginia, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Princeton University, University of California and the University of Texas-Austin. Google is also working with the Library of Congress in a joint digitization pilot project.

About Google Book Search

Google Book Search is an historic effort to make all of the knowledge contained within the world’s books searchable online.

Content for Google Book Search comes from two sources: the Partner Program and the Library Project. Partners (typically publishers) give us their books to digitize and put online. Users are then shown a strictly limited number of book pages that are relevant to their search. If it’s of interest they can click through to the publisher’s website, or an online retailer, and buy it.

Libraries also provide us with their books to digitize. If a library book is in the public domain (out of copyright) it is shown in its entirety. If it is in copyright then users just get basic background, at most two or three snippets from the book and information about which library it is in, or where it can be bought. Google and the Ghent University Library will only work to digitize books out of copyright.

About the Ghent University Library

Founded in 1817, Ghent University houses many of Belgium’s rare and ancient books and manuscripts. Ghent University and its library collection were miraculously preserved during both world wars and the Booktower functioned as a good storage place since the thirties.

The collection houses the richest 17th century Dutch books printed in Flanders, as well as a very comprehensive collection of works on the city of Ghent. The library holds impressive public domain works on religion, law, medicine, history, humanism, philosophy, as well on the civil engineering of bridges, houses, and fortresses. Ghent University Library also offers abundant historical collections on botanics and fauna, fashion and lifestyle—notably with a wonderful collection of ephemera.

The library’s generous 19th and 20th century collections pertain to the arts, architecture, literature and overall sciences with many treasures amongst them. The library also boasts a large collection of French works, as classes were conducted in French at the university until 1930, at which point Ghent became the first Dutch-speaking university in Belgium. Today the university counts 28.000 students.



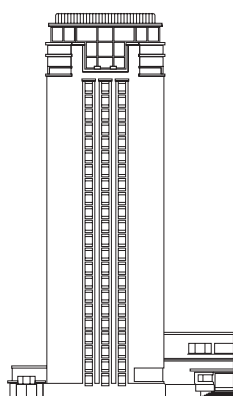
About the Booktower

Henry van de Velde (1863–1957), the famous designer and architect built a concrete tower with a height of 64 meter and the four façades oriented towards the winds of heaven. The building counts 24 floors, of which 4 underground. The whole library—with a closed rack placement—was meant to house 2,500,000 volumes. In 1954 there already were 900,000 volumes, today the tower is almost full.

The building is a real architectural jewel; the firm, pure, linear design, the lighting, the colours and juxtaposition of materials like wood, marble and metal and the golden cut, give the building an imposing yet tranquil radiation. No wonder the reading rooms are full of students from morning till evening.

Thanks to a private individual who drew public attention to its growing deterioration, and the ultimate support from the University Board the tower will be restored. The Google Book Search Library Project will keep the collection available during these years where else it had to be stored away for many years.

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