

Keying Dutch 19th Century ships' logbooks in CDMP (Abstract)

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The successful project CLIWOC (Climatological database for the World's Oceans: 1750-1850), which ran from 2000-2003, was limited to the years 1750-1850 and – due to lack of time – did not succeed in digitizing all available logbooks. Still a lot of ship logbooks sit in various archives spread around the world and the content is anxiously waiting to be keyed.

After CLIWOC there still remained nearly 200 logbooks in the archives of KNMI that needed to be processed quickly because the state of these logbooks is deteriorating fast. These logbooks contain meteorological data from some 325 ships covering the period 1826-1892, worldwide. In total 17,565 images were made and sent to CDMP (Climate Database Modernization Program) in the USA. The next task will be to digitize all these images and convert them into manageable information in a database.

The first thing to do is getting the images into EDADS (Environmental Document Access and Display System), so they can be accessed on the web. Meanwhile the keying format will be developed. Since the logbooks are generally of the extract-logbook type (registers that were filled in ashore from the original logbooks), the structure of them is very constant. We do not expect major problems with that. However, the language used in these logbooks is Dutch. Keying these data needs close guidance, which we are kindly offering to the CDMP program. Collaboration between KNMI (The Netherlands) and CDMP (USA) will help to build the database quickly. The first keying of these Dutch logbooks is scheduled to commence in June 2011.