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Sharing space achievements and heritage: space museums and societies (5)

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CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST PERSON ON THE MOON IN THE
NETHERLANDS

Abstract

On July 21st 1969, the world gathered with friends and family to watch history being made live on television. For a brief moment the world united as an estimated 1/6 of the World's population watched as Neil Armstrong first set foot on the Moon. With only one TV channel, the Netherlands and many others, experienced this as a 'shared experience'. In contrast to the 60's, these days the media landscape has drastically changed and diversified. Many media, societies and others have, or will, pay attention to the 50th landing anniversary. As a consequence, the public can choose from a wide variety of dedicated events, TV series or other ways to celebrate this pivotal moment in human history.

In the Netherlands, the Netherlands Space Society (NVR), the National Space Museum (NRM), Space Expo and the Royal Netherlands Association for Meteorology and Astronomy (KNVWS) decided to combine their efforts to bring this celebration to their members and the general public through one national platform: www.50jaarmaanlanding.nl. Aiming to mirror the 'shared experience' of 50 years ago, akin to the information flow via one TV channel, this website acts as a single portal through which the public can find an overview of celebratory activities and moon-related events in the Netherlands and allows visitors to learn more about the Apollo 11 mission and the space race.

The team also felt that the anniversary is too important to celebrate with only a single event. Therefore it was decided to dedicate a full year to the anniversary, by devoting or rebranding standard events and activities to the space race and the landing anniversary itself. These events include lectures, exhibits, stargazing and movie nights. On top of these events the four partners work together and with other parties to organise special events such as pub quizzes, movie premieres, symposia and many more. These events cover the various aspects of the space race such as the Mercury and Gemini projects, Apollo 8, the Soviet activities, the people behind the lunar landing and also the achievements made with the missions after Apollo 11.

This paper presents an overview of the tens of organized activities dedicated to the Apollo 11 landing anniversary. Furthermore, we will highlight the best-practises and experiences, achieved successes and discuss the benefits and limitations of four partners from different fields and the collaborations with others that contributed to the celebration of the 50th anniversary of Apollo 11.