Annual Report 2020

Activity Report

Vietsch Foundation

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This Annual Report covers the activities of the Vietsch Foundation from 1 January until 31 December 2020.

The Vietsch Foundation fulfills its goal of supporting research and development of advanced Internet technology for scientific research and higher education in two ways.

1. By contributing funding to specific research and development projects that demonstrate potential value to progress European and global research and education networking
2. By awarding an annual medal of honour to people who contributed to the development of a service, technology or approach that will be of lasting value to the research and education networking community and its users.

The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees of the Vietsch Foundation is responsible for the direction of the Foundation and the management of its assets. In 2020 the Board was composed of the following members:

- Valentino Cavalli, Chair (renewed in May for a new three-year term)
- John Dyer, Secretary (renewed in May for a new three-year term)
- Antoinette Vietsch, Treasurer (renewed in May for a new three-year term)
- Andrew Cormack, Member at large
- Lígia Maria Ribeiro, Member at large (until December 2020)
- Kathleen Shearer, Member at large (since August 2020)
- Pekka Kähkipuro, Member at large (since October 2020).

In 2020 the Board of Trustees met on the following dates:

- meeting # 33, 13-03-2020
- meeting # 34, 15-05-2020
- meeting # 35, 12-06-2020
- meeting # 36, 21-08-2020
- meeting # 37, 16-10-2020
- meeting # 38, 11-12-2020

Project funding

In 2020 the Vietsch Foundation selected the following projects for funding.

- *Expanding the EMREX Network to EU and beyond*. The project aims to facilitate student mobility and to decrease the administrative burden of student exchanges for institutions. It builds on EMREX, a technical solution and an international network,
which are available in a number of countries in Europe. The grant allocated to this project was €30,000.00.

- **Science Checker.** With social networks and the advances of artificial intelligence, it is increasingly easier to create fake news and make them circulate quicker and quicker. The project aims at building a free to access search engine, developing a novel approach that verifies scientific claims by means of analysing the pertinent and available scientific literature. The grant for this project was €35,700.00.

- **HowAdTech Works.** This Vietsch Foundation grant supported the publication of “Targeted Online”, a handbook by the European Digital Rights (EDRi), to disclose the internet’s dominant business model, how tech companies use (and abuse) data and why some ads are misleading. The handbook explains how online advertising works, and why a reform of the entire online advertising industry is urgently needed. The grant for this project was €10,200.00.

- On 30-9-2020 the Vietsch Foundation trustees agreed to allocate a €15,000.00 grant for the ETHICSnet project proposal, which was received through collaboration with the NLnet Foundation. Discussion between NLnet and the proposing partner raised some technical doubts and in the end NLnet did not go ahead with the funding, therefore this project was removed from the Vietsch Foundation portfolio as well.

The following projects ended in 2020:

- **Development of a Proposal for a Trusted Student Identification Framework.** This grant funded a study carried out by the European Campus Card Association (ECCA) about requirements for cross-border trusted student e-ID credentials and the formulation of recommendations for a trusted student e-ID framework to support the provision of secure identification and authentication on a cross-border basis in Europe. The study ended in May 2020 with the publication of a report surveying state of the art and business aspects and issuing recommendations for the establishment of a cross-border Student e-ID Project. Total budget consumed was €26,850.00

- **REFEROO.** This project to build a web portal for managing the refereeing tasks of researchers, consumed all its allocated budget but due to increased workload and lack of resources was not able to produce a full implementation. Total budget consumed was €23,875.00

- **Tracking Exposed** was a project aiming to manifest the influence or algorithms on users’ tracking and profiling and while doing so contribute to user’s awareness of the data market and the influence of algorithms. The project ended and reached its objectives. Total budget consumed was €12,600.00

- **Explain.Directly,** was a project aiming at piloting new and more effective access paradigms for Online Open Courseware. The project reached its objectives and consumed little less than its allocated €25,000.00 budget. The total amount requested by the project at the end was €25,000.00 and €5,000.00 was returned to the Vietsch Foundation.
The following projects, which were funded in previous years were still ongoing at the end of 2019:

- *Democratic Sendcomm*, a project to build a user-friendly connected telemetry appliance to teach democratic communication.

- *Second edition of “Free and Open Source: Law, policy and practice”*. This book, edited by Amanda Brock, will be published by Oxford University Press, in 2021, as an “open access title” with pdf, html and e-reader freely available on an attribution basis.

Further details of these projects can be found on the Vietsch Foundation website, [www.vietsch-foundation.org](http://www.vietsch-foundation.org)

**Medal of Honour 2020**

The 2020 medal of the Vietsch Foundation was awarded by unanimous decision to are Erik Kikkenborg and Bartłomiej Idzikowski, as the leaders of the team that broadcasts and records talks from the TNC conferences. Due to travel restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic, TNC2020, as many other conferences and events was canceled. The medal was virtually handed out to the recipients during a special awarding ceremony held online on 11-06-2020, organised by GÉANT.