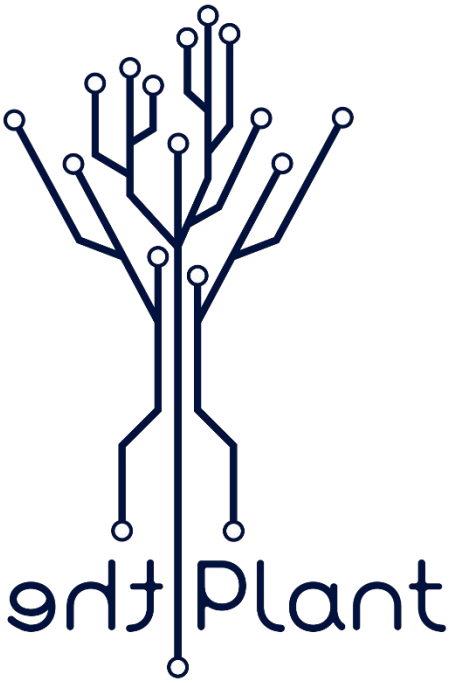

Grants for the Integration of Technology in Research and Education

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Introduction

The Plant is once again delighted to announce grants to support the integration of technology in research and education at FASoS! Colleagues across all research and teaching programmes can apply!

The Research and Education grants are funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Sector Plan and earmarked for digital infrastructure investment. The grants are meant to offer the time, funds, space, and support to explore, experiment, innovate, and learn a new technology or skill as part of your research or education process.

This year, The Plant is offering three types of grants:

- **Research Seed Funding** – up to €15,000
- **Education Technology Project** – up to €10,000, including SOLVER hours for curriculum development
- **Visiting Research Fellowship** – up to €5.000 (This is external and thus FASoS colleagues cannot apply for it. However, you are encouraged to share this opportunity with colleagues from other faculties, universities, or countries).

Projects should (loosely) fall under one of the following themes:

- **Digital Storytelling:** Digital Storytelling integrates technology with narrative techniques to create engaging and multimodal stories. By combining traditional storytelling techniques with modern technologies, digital storytelling provides new ways of developing, sharing, and experiencing knowledge and can be used as part of the research process and/or as a means to present your work. This theme invites colleagues to unlock the potential of digital storytelling to make the research and education process/outcomes more interactive, engaging, and impactful.
    - Examples include interactive geographic narratives that combine maps with text, images, and multimedia to tell spatially contextual stories, visual representations of complex ideas or processes, virtual exhibitions showcasing curated content, audio-based immersive listening experiences, interactive narratives with physical computing devices and sensors, and immersive storytelling through Extended Reality technologies (e.g., Virtual Reality).

- **Unboxing Digital Technology:** This theme emphasises hands-on and exploratory activities to uncover and understand the inner workings of specific technologies. By engaging directly with tools and devices, you develop not only practical skills but also a deeper comprehension of how technology operates and interacts with the world around us. This theme encourages learning by doing and engaging in a hands-on process to demystify black boxed systems and technologies.
    - Examples include using Arduino microcontrollers to build and program devices such as sensors and robots as a means to understand how electronics and coding work; working with makerspace tools, such as 3D printers and laser cutters, to create custom solutions and prototypes; exploring the Internet of Things and smart device

communication through connected systems and networks; and writing scripts and software to control hardware and to simulate specific processes or phenomena.

- **Quantitative/Computational Data:** This theme encourages the use of computational methods to collect, analyse, interpret, and visualise data. This theme invites researchers to explore complex phenomena, identify patterns, and visual complex data, while considering ethical and legal issues when working with data, including privacy, transparency, and bias.
    - Examples included the utilisations of large language models for natural language processing, including text generation, topic and sentiment analysis, and visualisation; developing predictive models and automating processes to uncover insights from complex/large datasets; extracting information from textual and visual corpora through entity and image recognition and semantic mapping; tracking changes in themes or trends over time within complex/large datasets, such as historical archives, social media content, and research publications; and creating visual representations such as interactive dashboards, heatmaps, or network graphs to communicate and present findings and allow others to develop their own insights.

How The Plant Supports You

Each grant includes one or more of the following types of support:

- Up to 20 hours of assistance from our Creative Lab Technologist and Research Software Engineer (€100/hour/person, to be included in the budget).
- Three co-creation sessions with The Plant team (if needed).
- Financial support for SOLVER buy-out, student assistants, software/hardware purchases, or other project needs. These funds can be used to hire additional time from The Plant team only after discussing this with team. Applicants are in charge of the administrative aspects in case (students) assistants are hired.
- If your project needs more resources, The Plant can bring in and fund external partners (developers, engineers, consultants, institutions) to make your project happen. Please indicate this need in the proposal and provide an estimation of the planned cost/hours for this.

Application Process & Selection

If you plan to integrate technology into your research or teaching in 2026-2027, apply for a grant to ensure The Plant team can support your project. If you're unsure how your idea fits, reach out to Jay Simons or Arnoud Wils at **plant-fasos@maastrichtuniversity.nl** before applying.

- No fully developed proposal is required. Works-in-progress and creative ideas are welcome!
- Selected applicants will be invited to meet with The Plant team to refine project scope and planning.
- Researchers and educators are expected to manage the project and remain responsible for the project and its completion.
- Applications will be reviewed by external colleagues and members of The Plant's Executive Cooperative Group. The evaluation panel may request additional information if needed.

General Terms:

- When the grants are used for teaching buyout, the number of SOLVER hours requested should fit in the SOLVER load of the applicant for 2026-27. No transfer of hours to the following year is allowed.
- According to Faculty Board policy, Teaching Fellows cannot use the grants for buy-out from teaching. The requested hours can be received in the form of a one-time allowance. Please note that Teaching Fellows should also discuss their project idea with their Head of Department and receive an explicit permission to apply for it. Staff members with no research component in their portfolios (e.g., Teaching Fellows), cannot apply for a research project.
- Colleagues requesting SOLVER Hours buyout must get in touch with Sanne Winkens-Gärtener at the Finance Office (s.winkens-gartener@maastrichtuniversity.nl) to get their buyout rate based on their salary scale.
- Successful applicants will need to create a brief report in the form of a blog post and testimonial using a template provided by the Plant. They may also be invited to present the results of their projects in a lunchtime talk. Selected projects may also be profiled on various social media channels for The Plant, FASoS, and UM.
- Applicants who have received funding (including hours) for the same or similar project from FASoS or another source are not eligible to apply.
- Successful applicants who will involve human participants or will work with personally identifiable data are strongly encouraged to submit their study protocols to the Ethics Review Committee Inner City Faculties and if applicable to the GDPR compliance office.
- Research data and results should be made openly available as much as possible.
- The proposed projects and activities should take place in the academic year 2026-27.
- Only one application is allowed per staff member.
- Colleagues who have not previously received a Plant grant will be prioritised, however, colleagues who have received a Plant grant and have completed their project, can apply with a proposal to extend their original project.

Conflicts of Interest: The Plant ECG is excluded from applying. Although immediate collaborators of the ECG members and members of the evaluation panel (other than the ECG) are eligible to apply, a conflict of interest and measures to be taken that will ensure the fair evaluation of the proposals should be declared in the application form.

Deadline: Friday 24th April, midnight

Results announced in the week of the 4th of May, before the closing of SOLVER.

For any questions before applying, please reach out to plant-fasos@maastrichtuniversity.nl.

Submission Form: https://maastrichtuniversity.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ezVcAGBlmYpCvKm

The Plant Executive Cooperative Group

Costas Papadopoulos, Claartje Rasterhoff, Jay Simons, Arnoud Wils

Education Technology Project

(incl. SOLVER for curriculum development)

This is a grant to develop an experimental education project and integrate it into an existing FASoS teaching programme in an existing or new (to be developed) course or educational activity. The project, which can range from a very small intervention (e.g., one tutorial session/hands-on activity) to a much larger technological project, should be aimed at experimenting with the hands-on development or use of technologies (in the broad sense of the word).

You can be developing an educational project for FASoS students, collaborating with students who are developing a project, or partnering in an educational project (e.g., with schools, (non-) governmental organisations, or cultural institutions). Welcomed within the grant is time for tinkering, making, and prototyping, as well as time for developing new collaborations. The proposed projects should align with one or more of the three Plant themes for 2026-2027: digital storytelling, unboxing digital technology, and quantitative/computational data.

In light of the PBL reforms, ideas for education technology project could also revolve around different forms of assessment, final work (e.g., thesis or other), research-teaching integration, work pleasure and work pressure, combining skills/methods and substantive courses, scaffolding and diversification in PBL, supporting learning, and supporting staff in helping students to learn. Please note that PBL-reform related ideas, especially regarding their implementation, may be discussed with the PBL steering group. There is no guarantee that such ideas will eventually be implemented as part of the reforms, even when they may shape the ongoing discussions.

The grant comes with one or more types of support:

- Support by the Creative Lab Technologist and Research Software Engineer for up to 20 hours. These hours should be included in the budget (€100/hour).
- Dedicated support from Plant members and colleagues in the form of three co-creation sessions (if needed).
- Financial support for SOLVER buy-out, student assistants, software/hardware purchases, or other project needs. These funds can be used to hire additional time from The Plant team only after discussing this with team. Applicants are in charge of the administrative aspects in case (students) assistants are hired.
- If your project needs more resources, The Plant can bring in and fund external partners (developers, engineers, consultants, institutions) to make your project happen. Please indicate this need in the proposal and provide an estimation of the planned cost/hours for this.
- SOLVER hours for integrating the project (or part of it) into a new course or a redesigned old course. Development of new courses should be done by at least two colleagues. Course redevelopment can also be done individually. Interdisciplinary approaches are strongly encouraged. Please note that colleagues who get SOLVER hours from the Plant for curriculum (re)development will not be eligible to get hours from another source for the same course. Similarly, The Plant will not consider applications by colleagues who have already received hours from the faculty for (re)developing the same course.

- SOLVER hours for this can be requested based on standard curriculum development norm hours at FASoS:
  Development of new course: 120h
  Large course revision: 80h
  Small course revision: 40h
  New skills course: 60h
  Large revision skills course/project: 40h
  Small revision skills course/project: 20h
- Please note that it is not a requirement to integrate the Education Technology project into a FASoS curriculum. However, if this is possible and desirable, this is encouraged.

Important!

1) Ideas for existing or new courses should be discussed with the relevant programme director before submitting the proposal to ensure that the developed teaching material fits within a programme. Applicants should upload a written confirmation by the programme director that indicates that they are aware of this application and approves the integration of the new/redesigned course or educational activity in the curriculum (a screenshot of an email will suffice).
2) In line with Faculty Board policy, Teaching Fellows must acquire prior approval from their Head of Department before applying for this grant. Also, they cannot use the grant for buy-outs from teaching. Requested hours will be give in the form of a one-time allowance.

Examples from previous years' grants and Plant support include:

- Critical AI literacy – series of workshops on Bias in Data, Bias in Models, and Bias in Human Interpretation (Felix Bui and Jairaj Gopalakrishnan);
- Robot Race introduction week activity to warm-up students for the BA DS curriculum (Anna Villarica and Marc Boas);
- Virtual reality tours of museum apps to examine sensorial differences (Emilie Sitzia);
- Integrating automated text analysis / distant reading technologies in Europe and the Global South (EUS4020) MA European Studies (2023-24) (Elsje Fourie) - now continued in a separate skills course Automated Text Analysis (EUS4506) for MA European Studies (2024-25);
- Creative technological artwork project merging surveillance and digital art through the use of Arduinos in BA Arts & Culture (Ruud Hendriks);
- Integration of data wrangling and data visualization tools in Data Analysis and Visualization (HUM2059) (Susan Schreibman);
- Digital mapping using StoryMaps to explore Maastricht via the senses (Emilie Sitzia and visiting fellow);

- Setting up the DSRI environment, including providing documentation to facilitate running Python scripts for students in Machines of Knowledge (DCU4008) for MA Digital Cultures (Monika Barget).

Eligibility: All FASoS colleagues. Teaching Fellows who don't have a UTQ should apply for this together with a more experienced FASoS colleague (e.g., someone with a UTQ).

Evaluation Criteria

- The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates innovative and novel ideas with a (digital) technological angle.
- Alignment with one or more of the three Plant themes for 2026-2027: digital storytelling, unboxing digital technology, and quantitative/computational data.
- The integration and utilisation of digital technologies within the education project.
- The feasibility of conducting the proposed project within the available resources and time frame.
- The justification and relevance of the requested resources in relation to the project's needs.
- Motivation for developing a new or redesigning an existing course, possibly in relation to prior evaluations or feedback, and existing FASoS offerings
- Does the course/programme/applicant benefit from the Plant expertise?

Digital Research Seed Funding

This grant will support FASoS colleagues (individuals or a small group) in developing **experimental research projects** that have a (digital) technological angle. Funds can be used by researchers for purchasing software or any other digital tools necessary for conducting the project, hardware (specialised devices or any other hardware required for data collection, experimentation, or analysis), carrying out research activities (e.g., conducting focus groups, experiments, prototyping, fieldwork, data collection, research assistance etc.) and for SOLVER hours. Please note that purchasing laptops or other personal equipment is not an eligible expense.

This grant is an opportunity to explore pathways for **a (small) future project**. The Plant can offer help with brainstorming, co-creation, or skills transfer through helping with project development and occasional meetings throughout the project to offer feedback or advice. Examples include a chatbot, a digital mapping project, a data visualization (walking through from web scraping or data collection to data cleaning, analysis, and visualization), a small, augmented reality project (soundscape, historic walk, photo project, etc.). The grant offers seed funding to either create a small project or create the seed of a larger project (such as by testing a pilot) and is meant to offer space to dream more creatively about the kinds of research that we do.

There are three strands for the Digital Research Seed Funding applications:
(a) explore innovations for applicants' own research agenda;
(b) explore a project through interdisciplinary collaboration (across faculties);
(c) explore a collaboration with non-academic stakeholders (in the region).
In the case of an interdisciplinary project, we would like to see proposals with at least one other UM faculty involved. In the case of a project with a non–academic partner (in the region), please include how the research will benefit the partner as well as FASoS. When applying for digital research seed funding, you will be asked to identify which of these objectives your project addresses.

The grant comes with one or more types of support:

- Support by the Creative Lab Technologist and Research Software Engineer for up to 20 hours. These hours should be included in the budget (€100/hour per person)
- Dedicated support from Plant members and colleagues in the form of three co-creation sessions (if needed).
- Financial support for SOLVER buy-out, student assistants, software/hardware purchases, or other project needs. These funds can be used to hire additional time from The Plant team only after discussing this with team. Applicants are in charge of the administrative aspects in case (students) assistants are hired.
- If your project needs more resources, The Plant can bring in and fund external partners (developers, engineers, consultants, institutions) to make your project happen. Please indicate this need in the proposal and provide an estimation of the planned cost/hours for this.

Examples from previous years' grants and Plant support include:
- Computational transcription using computer vision models of hand-written personnel card of former miners in Limburg (Nico Randeraad);
- Computational analysis (data collection, cleaning, classification, visualisation) of geoeconomic trade and investment measures of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Clara Weinhardt);
- Computational analysis (web scraping, data cleaning, AI for analysing rhetoric) of crowdfunding websites which collect donations for local communities in Somalia (Ana Lopez Garcia);
- Data collection support (web scraping, API's) (Jacob Ward);
- Project design and prototyping of a new version of a crowdsourced geolocation app for the heritage sector (https://rijekafiumeinflux.com/) (Brigitte Le Normand);
- Support for the design and set-up of a portfolio website for Global Studies (Joris Boonen);
- Support for learning how to design, create, and implement your own website (Laura Ogden) or interactive fiction explorer (Simone Schleper);

Eligibility: All FASoS colleagues with a position that includes research time.

Evaluation Criteria

- The extent to which the proposed research project demonstrates innovative and novel ideas with a (digital) technological angle.
- The proposed projects should align with one or more of the three Plant themes for 2026-2027: digital storytelling, unboxing digital technology, and quantitative/computational data.
- The integration and utilisation of digital technologies within the research project.
- The feasibility of conducting the proposed research within the available resources and time frame.
- The justification and relevance of the requested resources in relation to the project's research needs.

Visiting Research Fellowship (External)

This fellowship is intended to welcome a colleague as a member of The Plant during the year 2026-2027 for a duration of (up to) four months. The successful researcher may be part of a) another faculty in Maastricht University; b) another university in The Netherlands; or, c) another (higher education) institution in the world. The visiting research fellow will become embedded in a Department, a Research Group, and in The Plant to develop and share their own research agenda, working with the Creative Lab Technologist and Research Software Engineer to develop/continue a research project. They will also have the time and support by the Plant team, including computational resources, to develop their own research project. The visiting fellow is also expected to develop a series of seminars, workshops, and hands-on sessions about their research topic. This fellowship is another step in The Plant's aims to increase digital and technological knowledge transfer.

The grant will cover the cost of the visiting fellowship at the designated Department, and a research budget up to 5.000 euro to cover travelling expenses, purchasing for equipment and other resources for carrying out the research project and running events and workshops. Accommodation expenses and subsistence cannot be covered by the Plant budget.

Eligibility: All non-FASoS colleagues

Evaluation Criteria

- The integration and utilisation of digital methods, technologies, and/or tools within the fellowship activities.
- Alignment with one or more of the three Plant themes for 2026-2027: digital storytelling, unboxing digital technology, quantitative/computational data.
- The potential benefit of the fellowship to the applicant, the Plant, and FASoS as a whole.
- The feasibility of the proposed fellowship activities within the allocated time frame
- The justification and relevance of the requested resources in relation to the fellowship's needs.

2025-26 Visiting Fellowship

Dr. Tim van der Heijden, Assistant Professor Media Studies at the Open Universiteit of the Netherlands. Tim is a media historian specialized in the history of amateur media technologies, experimental media archaeology and digital film historiography. During his fellowship (February – April 2026) he turns The PLANT into a laboratory for "digital experimental media archaeology": a playful and experimental space in which participants can thinker (a combination of thinking and tinkering) with media heritage objects and explore the value of 3D digitization and modelling technologies for documenting and enriching media heritage collections through digital storytelling practices. Furthermore, the fellowship grant will be used to develop two 3D scholarly editions for the Pathé KOK 28mm film projector and Ernemann Kinox 35mm projector for the PURE3D project 'A Genealogy of Home Cinema'.