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Searching for Watermark Identification in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Papers

Marking watermarks as a type-specific sequence of points allows the creation of overlay videos for examining potential watermark matches and permits the automatic search of a database of similar-marked watermarks. In this presentation, the authors will describe how open-source software introduced in an article for the *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* is being used as the foundation for a searchable library of watermarks in 17th-century Dutch papers. A demonstration of the utility of this searchable watermark library will focus on modules for foolscaps with five- and seven-point collars popular in 17th-century Dutch papers. The watermarks cataloged are drawn from Erik Hinterding's catalogue of watermarks in Rembrandt's prints, and from the Laurentius catalogues of watermarks in historic documents in the Zeeland archives (1600-1700). The presentation will begin by describing a collaborative process which was undertaken with a typical researcher who had a suitable image of a foolscap watermark and if it was a match for one of the 100-plus catalogued foolscaps or a 'new' foolscap not yet in the library. Following a procedure annotating the watermark at a set of precisely locatable points (using a *watermarkPointMarker*) and then using the library search module (*watermarkLibrarySearch*) the closest match within the database would be revealed. An overlay video can then be rendered to assess the identity of the trial foolscap. If it is a new variant, the researcher will be encouraged to add it to the database. It is planned to build an ever-expanding library of watermark types across media including prints, drawings, and other documents. The presentation will conclude with examples of the benefits such analysis can offer through a variety of new results on watermark matches among 17th-century Dutch papers.