

Curriculum Vitae

The author was born in Drachten in the Province of Friesland, on 4 September 1969, as the son of Henk and Lenie van Dongen and the brother of elder sisters Diana and Iris. Drachten is part of the rural district called Smallerland and this is the official place of birth¹⁶. After various moves across the country and a one-year intermezzo in Sant'Ambrogio, Italy, the family settled in Eindhoven in 1973. This is where the author finished secondary education, Gymnasium β , at the Van Maerlantlyceum in 1987. He then went to the Technical University in Eindhoven, where he completed the mathematics propaedeuse in 1989 and his cum laude master's degree in mathematics in 1994. His specialization was Discrete Mathematics and computer algebra in the setting of algebraic number theory. As a conscientious objector he was fortunate to perform his alternative community service at the *Centrum voor Wiskunde en Informatica* in Amsterdam, carrying out a variety of small programming jobs.

After this one-year assignment the author became a PhD student at the same institute, pursuing the subject *Concept Building from Key-Phrases in Scientific Documents*. In 1996 he devised a cluster algorithm for graphs, motivated by research in the twin project *Bottom Up Classification Methods*. This led quickly to the Markov Cluster Process and a shift of focus towards cluster analysis in the setting of graphs. During the course of this research he studied topics from the rich collection of disciplines known as *matrix analysis*. In 1998 the author was one of the founders of Eidetica, a company making text-mining software. The turmoil of this start-up in its first tottering steps, combined with the task of completing a PhD thesis, proved to be too taxing. Mid-1999 saw him leaving Eidetica to work full-time on the thesis which you are now reading. The author's favourite pastime is the game of go. He participated four times in the Dutch Go Championship, his best performance so far ranking 7th in the 2000 edition.

¹⁶Because the name of Drachten is much better known than that of Smallerland, voices are now heard to change the name of the district to Drachten. The author is opposed against this, as he likes the rythm and ring of 'Smallerland' much better than that of 'Drachten'.