The Digital South Asia Library (DSAL)
Design and implementation of an international digital library project

Reference Resources
Pedagogical books and a link to full text dictionaries at Digital Dictionaries of South Asia (DDSA).

Images
Photographs, miniatures, and manuscripts are arranged in databases organized by the original collections.

Maps
Catalog of maps and maps themselves, ranging from historical to topographic.

Statistics
Includes statistical information from the colonial period through the present.

Bibliographies and Union Lists
Electronic catalogs and finding aids for dispersed resources and collections.

Indexes
Included are periodical indexes and document delivery mechanisms.

Books and Journals
This section includes electronic books and journals covering the colonial period to the present.

Other Internet Resources
A link to SARAI, South Asia Resource Access on the Internet.

DSAL is a project of the Center for Research Libraries

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<http://wwwcrl.uchicago.edu/dsal>

Overview. This session will offer an introduction to the Digital South Asia Library (DSAL), a project sponsored by the Center for Research Libraries, the University of Chicago and Columbia University. DSAL is currently funded by a grant from the Department of Education. The current project builds upon a successful two year pilot project funded by the Association of Research Libraries' Global Resources Program with support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

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Principles. DSAL is a federation of institutions holding principle South Asian collections around the world. DSAL focuses on creating and improving access to core resources for the study of South Asia. The selection panel, advisory board and project directors determine what resources are required and digitize them or effect access. The emphasis is on the most valuable reference and scholarly resources. An underlying principle of the project is to realize benefits in South Asia nations as well as western countries.

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Partners. Librarians interested in universal access tend to naturally group together around specific areas of interest. Our experience with DSAL has been a case in point. The active nature of participants increases the odds that significant results will be achieved. The program is adaptive and fluid. Word of the project travels informally through various networks and invitations to collaborate our extended on a regular basis.

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Web site. The approach in building the project Web site was based on several principles. The interface should be simple, placing the resources we created in the foreground and keeping details about the project itself in the background. We should be in compliance with standards for delivery of data over the Internet. We should protect the resources we have developed. We should incorporate new Web technology into our site only when it is required to serve a specific purpose. While doing this we have kept the site simple, using a minimum of graphics, avoiding frames, and not deploying computer scripts. As a consequence, the Web pages download quickly and readers are not required to have the latest Web browsers installed. Resources on the DSAL website are organized under the headings:

1. Bibliographies and **U**nion **L**ists
The bibliographic databases include over 176,000 records. DSAL provides original cataloging for improved access to rare scholarly resources.

2. Indexes
We will soon mount over 60,000 index for periodical articles held in the subcontinent. DSAL is also developing the infrastructure for delivery on demand of periodical page images from South Asia.

3. Books and **J**ournals
The current focus of the books section of DSAL is on pedagogical resources for language instruction. Three scholarly journals will soon be added as full-text resources along with several books in South Asian languages.

4. Reference **R**esources
DSAL is closely affiliated with another Federally funded project, the Digital Dictionaries of South Asia (DDSA). The full-text of dictionaries for each of the twenty-six modern literary languages of South Asia are being mounted on the DSAL website for free and open access.

5. Images
Our current photographic database project includes two different collections, one numbering over 180,000 images while the other includes over 240,000 images.

6. Maps and **C**artographic **I**nformation
We will soon be offering unique access to historical map records, as well as images of historical and topographic cartographic images of South Asia.

7. Statistics
DSAL is currently making available historical statistical data from the *Statistical Abstract Relating to British India.*

8. Other **I**nternet **R**esources
DSAL is linked with SARAI, a web portal designed to facilitate wider access to Internet resources on South Asia.

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Further information. For questions or comments on the Digital South Asia Library, or its sister project, the Digital Dictionaries of South Asia, please contact:

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