

**RECENT INTERNET-BASED ASIAN STUDIES INITIATIVES:
NEWS AND CONCLUSIONS FROM
THE ASSOCIATION FOR ASIAN STUDIES
ANNUAL MEETING, CHICAGO, USA, MARCH 1997**

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I am truly grateful for a generous EALRGA grant-in-aid which permitted me to travel to USA to take part in a 12-16 March meeting of the Association for Asian Studies (AAS).

The ASA meeting is the largest annual congregation in the world (over 1500 participants) of North American, and to some extent, European Asian, and Australian researchers, lecturers, librarians and publishers involved in the work on the Asian continent, its countries and regions, as well as in the myriad of Asia-related affairs and developments.

During that conference I was invited to give a keynote address for the plenary meeting of the Council on East Asian Libraries (CEAL). The title of my presentation was "Towards Collaborative Infostructures for Asian Studies". Electronic slides with materials for the address are available from URL <http://coombs.anu.edu.au/~tmc407/CEAL/CEALTop.htm>

In the course of my visit to the Chicago conference, and also during subsequent whistle-stop study visits to Middlebury College, Vermont, and the University of California, Berkeley, I learned about a number of Asian Studies initiatives involving electronic publishing and global networked communications. These developments can be summarised as follows:

H-ASIA WWW RESOURCES Project

Status: Initial Planning phase

Location: to be determined, USA

Objectives:

- to support activities of Asian History electronic discussion group (700 subscribers)
URL <http://h-net2.msu.edu/~asia/disclist/h-asia/>
- to provide future research/teaching tools of use to the members of the group.

Notes: above activities are very likely to take place in collaboration with the Asian Studies WWW VL project. URL <http://coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVL-AsianStudies.html>

Contact: Prof Frank Conlon <conlon@u.washington.edu>
Prof Marilyn Levine <mlevine@lsc.edu>

ASIAN STUDIES ONLINE Project

- Status: Online Test phase
(currently access is via password, by invitation only)
- Location: Ohio State University, USA
- Objectives:
- to provide online peer-reviews of online electronic resources of interest to members of the AAS.
- Notes: above activities are very likely to take place in collaboration with the Asian Studies WWW VL project. URL
<http://coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVL-AsianStudies.html>
- Contact: Assoc. Prof Maureen Donovan <donovan.1@osu.edu>

AAU/ARL JAPANESE JOURNAL ACCESS Project

- Status: Advanced Production Phase
- Location: Ohio State University, USA
URL <http://pears.lib.ohio-state.edu/NCC/jpnproj.html>
- Objectives:
- to provide an online catalogue of Japanese journals;
 - to provide an online catalogue of links to electronic Japanese journals.
- Notes: Project sponsored by the Association of American Universities/Association of Research Libraries (AAU/ARL)
- Contact: Assoc. Prof Maureen Donovan <donovan.1@osu.edu>

ELECTRONIC CULTURAL ATLAS Project

- Status: Advanced Planning phase
- Location: University California, Berkeley, USA
- Objectives:
- to collect data which can be used for generation of historical and cultural maps (CD, online, print outputs as required) from a Geographic Information Systems (GIS)-like information system.
- Notes: Areas for which cooperation with other scholars/universities has been agreed on: China, Japan, Korea, the Silk Road, Mezo-America, Circumpolar region, Meseopotamia, Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome. An interest in the project was also expressed by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, Dharamsala, India. Other partners in the project, especially from Australia (Aboriginal and Australian history materials) and Oceania are warmly welcome.
- Contact: Prof Lewis Lancaster <buddhst@garnet.berkeley.edu>

**ASSOCIATION FOR ASIAN STUDIES
Working Group on Electronic Resource Development**

Status: Advanced Planning phase

Location: - not applicable -

Objectives:

- to create an official chapter of the AAS dealing with Association's electronic publications and development of electronic research/teaching tools for the Asianists;
- to develop a set of minimal standards for the contents of scholarly WWW documents published by the members of the AAS.

Notes: members of the AAS Working Group include
Prof Lewis Lancaster, U. Cal., Berkeley, USA
<buddhst@garnet.berkeley.edu>
Dr T.Matthew Ciolek, Australian National U., Australia
<tmciolek@coombs.anu.edu.au>
Prof Frank Conlon, U.Washington, USA
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Mr Kent Mulliner, Ohio U., USA <mulliner@ohiou.edu>
Ms Carol Mitchell, U.Wisconsin, USA
<Mitchell@doit.wisc.edu>

Contact: Assoc. Prof Maureen Donovan <donovan.1@osu.edu>

EAST ASIA WWW VIRTUAL LIBRARY Project

Status: Advanced Planning phase

Location: Council on East Asian Libraries (CEAL), Univ.of Oregon, USA
URL

<http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~felsing/ceal/welcome.html>

Objectives:

- to provide an online clearinghouse for information dealing with the region;
- to coordinate online activities of country-specific WWW virtual libraries for China, Japan, South Korea, North Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau.

Notes: above activities to take place in close collaboration with the Asian Studies WWW VL project. URL

<http://coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVVL-AsianStudies.html>

Contact: Mr Robert Felsing <felsing@oregon.uoregon.edu>

THE INTERNATIONAL DUNHUANG (IDP) Project

Status: Advanced Production phase
Location: British Library, UK
URL <http://portico.bl.uk/oioc/dunhuang.html>

Objectives:

- to provide an online clearinghouse for information dealing with the Dunhuang and other Central Asian sites manuscripts and artifacts;
- to coordinate research and document preservation activities of London, Paris, St. Petersburg and Beijing libraries with Dunhuang and related materials;
- to construct a large scale database with detailed images of and information about over 70,000 Dunhuang manuscripts and artifacts, including information about physical, historical and textual analyses of these materials.

Contact: Dr Susan Whitfield <susan.whitfield@bl.uk>

Conclusion

These seven projects, and possibly many others which I did not have a chance to learn about, take place against the background of (1) ever increasing global demand for timely, trustworthy and detailed facts/intelligence dealing with the region and its countries; (2) the growing emergence of networked publishing systems capable of automated delivery of information on 24 hours per day, 7 days per week basis. They are also symptomatic of a third powerful trend, namely, (3) the fast growing synergy, interchange and integration of knowledge and skills of three discrete sets of professionals: academics and researchers; librarians, cataloguers and indexers; IT workers, online knowledge navigators and electronic publishers.

In March 1997, an overall sentiment of the informed individuals in Illinois, Vermont and California was that in the early years of the forthcoming century (and, simultaneously, the new millenium) it is unlikely that any of the leading North American colleges, universities and research libraries will be of much relevance on the scale of a country - let alone on the scale of the world as a whole - if they do not wholeheartedly foster and cultivate (a) expert; (b) small scale, (c) task-orientated, (d) trans-institutional and (e) trans-professional alliances and partnerships aimed at production, organisation, storage, retrieval and networked dissemination of timely, trustworthy and relevant knowledge.

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