RESEARCH

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Charles E. Jones
John C. Sanders

Introduction

Both the quantity and quality of the electronic resources that the Oriental Institute makes available to scholars and the general public continued to grow during 1996/97. A brief summary of these resources will serve to illustrate this point and to bolster the notion that the Oriental Institute, through its various electronic resources, has become a major supplier of ancient Near Eastern materials on the Internet and a important stop on the "Information Superhighway."

1. At this time last year the number of "hits" on the Institute's World-Wide Web site averaged between 30,000 to 38,000 per week, but had not yet reached 40,000 per week. At present, the Web site averages between 60,000 to 75,000 "hits" per week, and we have had five weeks of 80,000 "hits" in the past three months.

2. The total size of the Institute's Web site, in bytes, is currently over 250,000,000, and growing each week. These bytes of information are distributed among well over a thousand documents. Each week our Web site serves between 3,000 to 3,500 separate Internet domains (or ca. 5,000 separate computer users) from between 50 to 60 countries around the world, distributing over a gigabyte (1,000,000,000 bytes) of information per week in the form of 7,500 to 8,000 files per day.

3. Currently we have 748 images (photographs, maps, building plans) available on the Institute's Web site, illustrations that either accompany text articles or are photographic exhibits in their own right, as in the case of the Museum's Photographic Archives or Tom Van Eynde's Theban Photographic Project. This number of images is equivalent to at least one or perhaps two full "Plates" volume(s) that accompany many of the research reports published in the Institute's series entitled Oriental Institute Publications (OIP).

4. The Web site is the on-line home for the Oriental Institute Museum, with such major components as the "Virtual Museum," the Museum's Photographic Archives, and its original component, "Highlights From The Collection." The Web site also contains information on current and former Institute research projects: nineteen archaeological projects and eight philological projects, as well as the individual scholarship reports of the Institute's faculty and research staff. The Publications Office and the Museum Store (*Suq*) are using the Web site both to announce new merchandise and accept on-line orders. Every year we post the entire *Oriental Institute Annual Report*, which summarizes the research and other Institute events throughout the year.

Internet Gateways

Ancient Near East (ANE) Mailing List

After slightly more than three years of service, it was determined that the ANE list no longer served the function for which it was intended. Consequently, on 22 July 1996 we decided to close it pending a reassessment of how it might again provide a useful, interesting, and productive means of communicating ideas and information on the ancient Near Eastern world. We spent six months working on a new set of technical as well as behavioral rules for a new ANE list, and Charles Jones determined that a second, parallel list that only contained news pertaining to the fields of ancient Near East research was a valuable addition to the traditional ANE list (nothing appears in ANENEWS that does not also appear in ANE). On 9 December 1996, two Ancient Near East lists were activated, ANE and ANENEWS, both available in regular and digest form.

RESEARCH

The revised ANE, ANENEWS, ANE-Digest, and ANENEWS-Digest lists currently have between 1,100 and 1,200 subscribers world-wide, with a daily average of 10 mailings to each subscriber and a peak output of 20–25 messages. A wide range of topics are discussed on the ANE list: new discoveries and publications in the field, public debate on controversial issues of policy and scholarship, job placement information, and other musings by subscribers.

To subscribe to the ANE mailing list, send an electronic mail (e-mail) message to:

majordomo@oi.uchicago.edu

In the body of your e-mail message, include one of the following lines:

subscribe ane

subscribe anenews

subscribe ane-digest

subscribe anenews-digest

You will receive a return e-mail immediately confirming your subscription. We welcome either active or passive participation.

The Computer Laboratory and the Research Archives collaborate in the running of the ANE discussion group. John Sanders oversees the Majordomo computer program which automates the routine administration of Internet mailing lists and Charles Jones administrates the ANE list itself.
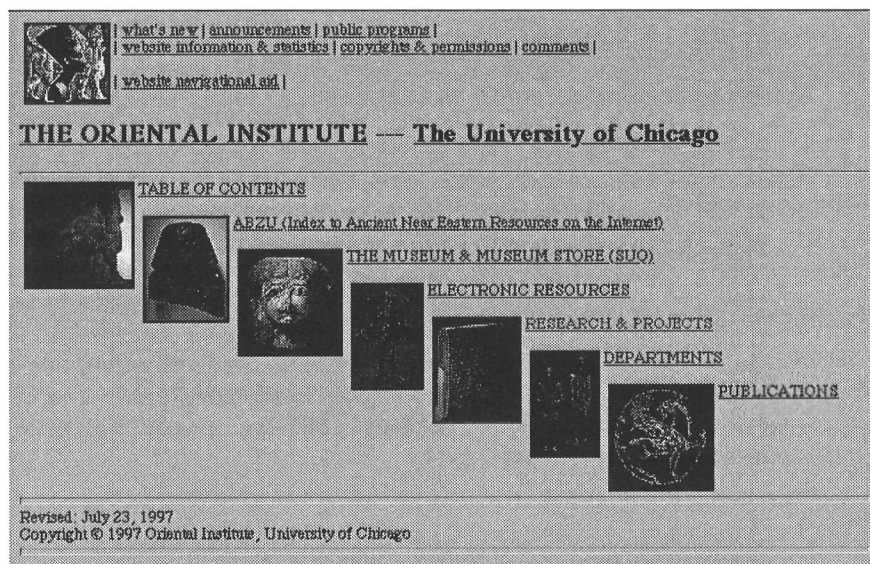
World-Wide Web Database

Thanks to a generous grant from of the University of Chicago's Women's Board, we installed a new Sun SPARCstation 10 computer as our World-Wide Web (WWW) server on 21 March 1997. This new, more powerful computer system has allowed us to consolidate most of the Institute's electronic resources on one machine, yielding faster access to this information for both scholars and the general public. It also provides a better computer platform for future expansion of our electronic publication efforts as we approach the twenty-first century.

At the same time that our new WWW server went on-line we completed a redesign of our entire Web site, changing the "look and feel" of the Institute's Web pages. Considerable experimentation and extensive consultation with the faculty and staff concerning the visual presentation and navigational tools on the Institute's Web site preceded its first major renovation since the site started in April 1994.

New Structural Elements of the Web Site

John Sanders designed a standard header that was added to each major Web page. All of the documents on the site were given a unified design and editorial organization, intended to provide the Institute's Web site with greatly enhanced consistency, ease of visibility, simplicity of viewing, and most of all, ease of navigation. The primary role of the new standard header was to provide a navigation bar allowing the viewer to move freely and easily between several of the more popular public information pages on the Institute's Web site; for example, What's New, Announcements, Public Programs, Copyright Information.

Figure 1. The redesigned home page of the Oriental Institute's WWW server, including the new standard header at the top and the image icons of Museum artifacts used as links to the various major sections of the Web site

A completely redesigned home page for the Web site now provides a simplified set of options for accessing all of the Oriental Institute's on-line publications and follows intuitive, logical, interesting, and varied pathways connecting and integrating the reports on Institute projects, publications of individual research, and visual (photographic) resources (fig. 1).

During the summer of 1997, three structural components were integrated into the Web site, a guest book, a new table of contents, and a new directory.

A new Guest Book allows visitors to post public comments which are available for viewing by all of the Web site visitors. As the site continues to develop, we intend to add more of these Guest Books, particularly in specific areas where interactivity and response are important to the development of the resource (such as some components of Museum Education programs, or teacher's resources), or where such responses are traditionally solicited (such as exhibitions). We are excited by the potential of this feature, and the ways such forms of interactivity can be used to develop the electronic resources of the Oriental Institute. Visit the Guest Book at:

http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/INFO/OI_WWW_Comments.html

A new Table of Contents Search program now allows on-line visitors to target areas of particular interest on the Institute's Web site without having to resort to external search engines, without having to read through our entire Tables of Contents file or directories, and without having to decipher the increasingly complex structure of the Web site. It is designed for those visitors who know what it is they are looking for (a particular project, author, subject), but may not be sure exactly where to find it on the server. When used in conjunction with the rest of the Web site's

suite of navigation tools, it gives very broad and easy access to the resources we seek to provide. Visit the Table of Contents Search program at:

> http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/OI_TOC_Menu.html

A new (and regularly updated) staff and faculty directory provides, in a single place, all of the e-mail addresses and telephone numbers needed to contact researchers and projects at the Oriental Institute. Visit the directory at:

> http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DIR/Staff.html

New Material on the Web Site

In addition to the many items reported on and added to the Oriental Institute's World-Wide Web site last year, we provided a home for ten new Oriental Institute projects and continued to add new material for the Museum, Membership Office, and Research Archives (see separate report).

Projects

1. Achaemenid Royal Inscriptions Project, Matthew W. Stolper

   > http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/PROJ/ARI/ARI.html

The aim of the Achaemenid Royal Inscriptions project is to create an electronic study edition of the inscriptions of the Achaemenid Persian kings from Persepolis, where the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago carried out excavations between 1931 and 1939, presenting the texts in all of their versions — Old Persian, Elamite, Akkadian, and, where appropriate, Aramaic and Egyptian — and showing the inscriptions in their architectural contexts. The edition is to be accompanied by translations, glossaries, grammatical indexes, basic bibliographic apparatus, basic text critical apparatus, and some graphic apparatus (plans indicating provenience of the inscriptions, general views of inscribed buildings and building elements, images of exemplars, excavation photographs); the texts will be available for downloading and printing. This project will be featured in *News & Notes* 157 (Spring 1998).

2. Amuq Valley Regional Project, K. Aslıhan Yener and T. J. Wilkinson (see separate report)

   > http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/PROJ/AMU/Amuq.html

3. Directory of Institutions and Scholars Involved in Demotic Studies, Janet H. Johnson and Alexandra A. O'Brien

   > http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/PROJ/DEM/Demotic_Directory.html

4. Diyala Miscellaneous Objects Publication Project, Claudia Suter and McGuire Gibson (see separate report)

   > http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/PROJ/DIY/Diyala1.html

5. Introduction to Ancient Egypt: An Adult Education Course on the History and Culture of Ancient Egypt Conducted on the Internet, Peter Piccione (The Oriental Institute Museum Education Program)

   > http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/COURSES/EGYPT101/egyptpub.html

6. Sumerian Lexical Archive, Miguel Civil, editor

   http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/PROJ/SUM/SLA/SLA1.html

7. Swords, Armor, and Figurines: A Metalliferous View from the Central Taurus, K. Aslıhan Yener

   http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/PROJ/GOL/BA_95/BA_95.html

This article originally appeared in *Biblical Archaeologist* 58 (1995) and is made available electronically with the permission of the editor. The electronic version corrects two erroneous site references on page 103 as well as correcting site labeling errors with the map of Turkey in the print version.

8. Tall-e Bakun Project, Abbas Alizadeh

   http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/PROJ/BAK/Bakun.html

Tall-e Bakun is a twin site located in the fertile Marv Dasht Plain of Fars, Iran near Persepolis, the Achaemenid ceremonial capital. Bakun has played a prominent role in the understanding of the prehistory of Fars, partly because it was the first large-scale excavation of a prehistoric mound there, though primarily for the richness of its finds.

9. Thebes Photographic Project, Thomas Van Eynde (several new installments of the photographic exhibit by the former Epigraphic Survey's staff photographer)

   http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/TVE_TPP/TVE_TPP.html

10. Twenty-Fifth Annual Meeting of the North American Conference on Afro-Asiatic Linguistics, Miami, Florida (21–23 March 1997) (we hosted the on-line version)

    http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/RA/ABZU/NACAL_1997.html

Museum

Oriental Institute Virtual Museum: Mesopotamian Gallery

   http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/MUS/QTVR96/QTVR96_Image_ME_Menu.html

As last summer (1996) began, the final component of the first version of the Oriental Institute Virtual Museum appeared on the Web site:

Faces of Ancient Egypt: Ancient Egyptian Art from the Oriental Institute Museum

   http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/MUS/INFO/Special_Exhibit_Brochure.html

In January we posted an illustrated brochure and synopsis issued in conjunction with the special exhibit of the Oriental Institute Museum, *Faces of Ancient Egypt*, which was on display at the University of Chicago's David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, from 10 September 1996 through 9 March 1997.

RESEARCH

Membership Office

News & Notes

"Excitement on the Luxor-Farshût Desert Road Survey," John Coleman Darnell and Deborah Darnell (*News & Notes* 149, Spring 1996)

http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/PROJ/DES/NN_Spr96/NN_Spr96.html

"Etymology and Electronics: The Afroasiatic Index," Gene Gragg (*News & Notes* 149, Spring 1996)

http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/PROJ/CUS/NN_Spr96/NN_Spr96.html

"Oriental Institute Museum Renovation Moves Forward," Emily Teeter (*News & Notes* 150, Summer 1996)

http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/MUS/INFO/NN_Sum96/NN_Sum96.html

"Aqaba Work Defies Mother Nature," Donald Whitcomb (*News & Notes* 149, Spring 1996)

http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/PROJ/AQA/NN_Spr96/NN_Spr96.html

Annual Report

1995/96 Annual Report (the entirety of the text and images, including some fifty-three articles and ninety illustrations)

http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/AR/95-96/95-96_AR_TOC.html

This brings the total number of *Annual Reports* on-line to five, and together they form the solid core of content of the Oriental Institute electronic publications.