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# Iraqi Virtual Science Library (IVSL) Leverages Internet to Rebuild Civil Infrastructure of Iraq

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 Fosters Re-Development of Iraqi Scientific Community by Delivering More Than 1 Million Key Scientific and Engineering Documents

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WASHINGTON, May 3 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- The Iraqi educational and scientific infrastructure is in disarray. Thirty years of neglect by an oppressive regime compounded with looting have left Iraqi scientists, physicians, engineers and students without many of the basic resources they require to rebuild their country.

A team of American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Science & Technology Policy Fellows at the Departments of Defense and State has led the way in developing an initiative to modernize Iraqi libraries. The team has leveraged the active

support and \$360,000 in seed money from the Advanced Systems Concept Office in the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) to develop a Web portal -- the Iraqi Virtual Science Library (IVSL) (<https://ivsl.org>) -- that allows Iraqi engineers and scientists to easily and safely access key information necessary in the Iraq rebuilding effort.

Consulting with Sun Microsystems, Inc. [SUNW](#) and others, the team of scientists was able to build a strong public/private partnership for the digital library. The first phase of the portal is now complete and Iraqi scientists, engineers, physicians and students across the country can access more than 1 million articles from 17,000 journal titles from leading scientific publishers including The American Chemical Society, The American Institute of Physics, The Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers and the American Society for Civil Engineering, to name a few. The portal also provides access to online courses, funding and research opportunities, and other tools necessary to find the information they will need to rebuild the country and the scientific community.

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Other agencies and companies participating in the private/public partnership include the U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Elsevier Publishing, EBSCO Publishing, Science.gov, SpringerLink and Thomson Scientific.

"The IVSL is a shining example of how today's Internet technologies can enable people even under the most difficult situations," said Dr. Susan Cumberledge, a former AAAS Science & Technology Policy Fellow and co-founder of the IVSL project. "We need to ensure that the blueprint developed here is used to ensure that all developing countries have a basic library system that allows them to connect with the international scientific community and build an operational infrastructure that fosters better lives for their citizens."

The first phase of the IVSL project involved the evaluation of Internet connectivity for partner universities, negotiations with publishers, system and software development and, ultimately, the launch of a centrally-controlled and managed portal. After receiving seed funding, the IVSL team worked with the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research and the Iraqi Ministry of Science & Technology to form a public/private partnership. The consortium built the technical infrastructure needed to develop a secure portal, where engineering publishers can share their content, and Iraqi engineers could reconnect with their profession.

The IVSL project leaders are committed to helping Iraqi scientists re-integrate into the international community and empower Iraq with the tools it will need to meet its upcoming rebuilding challenges and foster open, transparent communication networks needed to fight global terrorism.

"The IVSL project is indicative of how eliminating the digital divide enables positive improvements to both the online and the offline world," said Kim Jones, vice president of Education and Research at Sun Microsystems. "This project underscores Sun's commitment to enable developing countries to take advantage of leading edge technologies, improving lives and opening new markets."

The initial phase of the IVSL will serve as a foundation for a full re-build of the IVSL. Currently, the IVSL is being managed by the US Civilian Research Developer Foundation (CRDF). Within two years, the IVSL team plans to transition the IVSL project entirely to Iraqi ownership and support.

The team plans to develop a new Web site using Java[™] technology and standard digital library development protocols for journal access. The IVSL also plans to move from a U.S.- hosted portal to eight locally-hosted portals running on Sun Fire(™) T2000 servers. In addition, the IVSL will allow the local portals to act as regional access points, allowing Iraqi universities to strengthen their academic community and manage license fees and reduce costs.

"The Iraqi scientists we have worked with are very smart and are eager to reenter the international scientific community," Dr. DJ Patil, a former AAAS Science & Technology Policy Fellow and co-founder of the IVSL project. "They are grateful for the resources the IVSL provides and are enthusiastic about working together to make the IVSL a long term success."

Sun is working closely with the AAAS fellows and the CRDF to create a journal access "portal in a box" that can not only be launched and maintained by Iraqi universities, but also leveraged to

break information-sharing barriers in other developing countries across the globe.

About Sun Microsystems, Inc.

A singular vision -- "The Network Is The Computer" -- guides Sun in the development of technologies that power the world's most important markets. Sun's philosophy of sharing innovation and building communities is at the forefront of the next wave of computing: the Participation Age. Sun can be found in more than 100 countries and on the Web at <http://sun.com>.

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