

**Arab Culture and Civilization.** Access: <http://arabworld.nitle.org/>.

The Arab Culture and Civilization Web project was initiated by the National Institute for Technology and Liberal Education (NITLE) as a resource to develop American understanding and knowledge of the region after the attacks of September 11, 2001. This Mellon-funded collaborative effort, also referred to as the NITLE Arab World Project, includes contributions from faculty, librarians, and technology experts. The project went online in 2002, with its main audience being college and university communities.



The main menu takes the visitor to 11 “modules” centered on themes, which are cross-referenced with internal links throughout each module. Themes include such topics as “Ethnicity and Identity,” “Islam,” “Popular Culture and the Performing Arts,” and “Family and Society.”

Each module contains an introduction with relevant readings, audio and video segments, and a bibliography, all of which are exceptionally thorough. Since this is designed as an educational resource, the modules are loaded with permission-granted copyrighted materials. For example, users will find an incredible compilation of resources ranging from the *Oxford History of Islam* to a video clip of the 1963 Egyptian movie, *Saladin*. The breadth and scope of this site is of value to academic institutions; the site conveys the diversity of Arab culture, civilization, and progress.

Taking a closer look at the topic “Islam,” one finds that this module does not address

Islam in the usual fact-based format (sects, pillars, politics, etc). It uses the works of authorities in each field as a jumping-off point for further information. If a researcher is interested in Islamic law, the site directs the user to Mohammad Hashim Kamali’s chapter on the topic in full text from the *Oxford History of Islam*. Throughout this site users will find contributors from all over the world, and not just a Western authorship or perspective of the region.

The site has a passable search function using natural language only. The results page has a legend, where results are color coded by category with rather small text. A very narrow navigation bar located at the top returns the user to the main menu from the search page.

The NITLE Arab World Project is an excellent site designed to broaden one’s knowledge and understanding of the region.—*Nikbat J. Ghouse, University of Kansas, ngthouse@ku.edu*

#### **ECAI: Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative.**

Access: <http://www.ecai.org/>.

The Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative (ECAI), established in 2000, is an international project to develop and distribute digital data on historical and archaeological resources. It is comprised of an international consortium of scholars in the humanities, social sciences, and history. The Web site is managed by International and Area Studies at University of California-Berkeley.

The ECAI Cultural Atlas, the heart of the site, serves as a tool for visualizing and analyzing historical and cultural phenomena. It provides the ability to create customized and interactive digital maps based on a theme, era, or region, and facilitates tracking of patterns in cultural data over time and space. The Atlas is multimedia in nature, incorporating text, images, and videos; the interactive maps feature dynamic timelines.

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Joni R. Roberts is associate university librarian for public services and collection development at Willamette University, e-mail: [jroberts@willamette.edu](mailto:jroberts@willamette.edu), and Carol A. Drost is associate university librarian for technical services at Willamette University, e-mail: [cdrost@willamette.edu](mailto:cdrost@willamette.edu)

The site and its resources can be used for research, teaching, cultural advocacy, and resource discovery. Affiliated projects include ECAI Iraq, ECAI Silk Road Atlas, and the groundbreaking Valley of the Shadow. Research topics include religious pilgrimage sites along the Silk Road and regional variation in mortality in 19th-century Britain.

The ECAI purview is multifaceted. It serves as a specialized metadata and digital map clearinghouse, gathering all necessary tools and infrastructure, such as ECAI's TimeMap GIS viewer, in one virtual location. ECAI tools are made available to scholars or groups, with the understanding that any resulting body of work will then be made available over this site. Researchers and educators with primary cultural data in hand can make use of the cultural mapping tools to reveal patterns over space and time.

One of the ECAI's most prominent offshoots has been the ECAI Iraq Project. Building on the vast amount of information on Iraqi antiquities already on the Web since the first Gulf War, the project seeks to assess damage done by the current war in Iraq and at the same time urge for the protection of existing antiquities.

While centered on the task of creating global cultural resources, this Web resource is an excellent vehicle for teaching and learning. Particularly exciting are the opportunities offered for cross-disciplinary and cross-institutional collaboration. While essential for inclusion in all online map collections, ECAI can be used in any context where digital mapping and digital presentations of cultural phenomena are needed, whether for teaching, research, or cultural policy/advocacy efforts.—*Genevieve Innes, Western Connecticut State University, innesg@wcsu.edu*

**The Vincent van Gogh Gallery.** Access: <http://www.vggallery.com/>.

Canadian David Brooks has created the first and possibly only online catalog raisonné of an artist's work. In so doing, he has published an organized and comprehensive research tool with value beyond its usefulness

to Van Gogh scholars. With the inclusion of commentaries and analyses of the paintings (still under construction), and all of the 874 extant letters written by Van Gogh and friends and family, the site serves as a model of the historical and psychological approaches to art history methodology, as opposed to the pure, connoisseurship approach.

With considerable research, travel, and painstaking effort, Brooks respects the traditional approach to art history scholarship as well by providing—in addition to the title, origin, and date of each work—the current location, the provenance, and the exhibition history of each of the 864 paintings, 1,037 drawings, 150 watercolors, 10 graphic works, and 133 letter sketches that comprise the gallery.



The organization is simple. Despite the extensive material, the site is easily navigable and user friendly. There are three comprehensive areas: "The Gallery," "Categories," and "Resources." "The Gallery" contains the complete works, arranged in A to Z order and searchable. This section also contains an overview of the paintings, commentary and analysis, all of the letters in PDF, and a world map of paintings. "Categories" presents paintings chronologically or by subject. "Resources" is rich in research material and contains biographical information, a chronology, a helpful FAQ, a discussion of the fakes controversy, and more. "Resources" also includes information about Van Gogh exhibitions, auctions, and cultural events.

The analysis of the paintings is off to a promising start. Paintings are described, given context, and compared to other Van Gogh works. References to works in the letters are provided, if available. Scholars will appreciate Brooks' thoroughness. For example, for "The

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Iowa, where he had served as the director for information systems since 1991. Over the years, he also served as the primary administrator for the branch libraries, technical services, and the Hardin Library for the Health Sciences. His technical expertise, flexibility, and good humor made him an invaluable member of the libraries' administrative team. He oversaw the implementation of the InfoHawk system and has been an international leader in the field of library automation.

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## Deaths

**Robert W. Evans**, retired director of the library at State University of New York College-Purchase and lifelong member of ALA, has died. From 1955 to 1961, Evans was head librarian at Muskingum College in New Concord, Ohio. From 1961 to 1968 he was head of technical services and associate librarian at Oberlin College. In 1969 he became the first director of the library at SUNY-Purchase; he retired from that position in 1989. Evans served as president of the Westchester Library Association and the SUNY Council of Head Librarians, and he served on the boards of *CHOICE* and METRO, the 3R's Council headquartered in New York.

**Marcia Grimes**, public services librarian at Wheaton College, died March 15, in Xian, China, from apparent heart failure. At the time of her death, Grimes was touring with a delegation of American academic librarians to conduct bilateral exchanges with their professional counterparts in China, under the auspices of People to People Ambassador Programs. Grimes worked in several libraries throughout her career and was responsible for a wide variety of library services, including circulation, reserves, interlibrary loan, and reference. She joined the Wheaton library staff in 1985 as a reference librarian. In addition to her library re-

sponsibilities at Wheaton, Grimes served as an administrative mentor to first-year Wheaton students and was a member of the campus American's with Disabilities Act committee.

**Jim Skipper**, retired librarian and lifelong member of ALA, died on November 4, 2005. He had a long, distinguished career, shaped by an early interest in automation, a passion for building great collections, and an enduring belief in the value of cooperation. Skipper was acquisitions librarian at Ohio State University Library (1950), director of libraries at the University of Connecticut (1959), executive director of the Association of Research Libraries (1963), associate university librarian at Princeton (1967), chief librarian at the University of California-Berkeley (1968), executive vice president of Kraus-Thomson (1971), director of the Research Libraries Group (1974), and executive director of the Midwest Regional Library Network (1980). He received a Carnegie Fellowship in Advanced Library Administration at Rutgers University (1958). Skipper also enjoyed consulting on many library building and renovation projects over the years. He retired in 1983. *zz*

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*("Internet Reviews" continued from page 319)*

Café Terrace on the Place du Forum, Arles, at Night," Brooks notes that Van Gogh tells his sister that there is a description of a similar café in the book *Bel Ami* by Guy de Maupassant. Brooks tells us in the footnote that "Vincent is mistaken—in fact, the Maupassant reference he is thinking of is found in the novel *Yvette*."

Brooks has created a site of serious scholarship that enjoys critical and popular success. The Vincent Van Gogh Gallery is endorsed by the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam and is available in 17 languages.—*Shannon Van Kirk, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, svankirk@calpoly.edu zz*