

**YALE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
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YALE LIBRARY NEWS RELEASE

July 31, 2002: US Department of Education Funds Library's Middle East Database Project

New Haven, CT. The Yale Library announced that its proposal to lead and coordinate a collaborative database project that will make available important Middle Eastern resources has been awarded a U. S. Department of Education Title VI grant under the "Technological Innovation and Cooperation for Foreign Information Access" program. Project OACIS (Online Access to Consolidated Information on Serials) will be funded for three years, at a level of \$145,000 in the first year and comparable amounts thereafter. The Library is adding its own staff and technology resources to this significant cost-sharing arrangement.

Associate University Librarian Ann Okerson described the project as one that will create a publicly and freely accessible, continuously updated listing of Middle East journals and serials, including those available in print, microform, and online. The listing, which will be available on the Web, will identify libraries that own the materials as well as exact holdings, initially for Arabic and English language titles and then for an ever-expanding group of Middle Eastern languages. As it develops, Project OACIS will also serve as a gateway to those serials by enhancing content delivery of those titles.

Project OACIS is international in scope. While initial titles reports will be contributed by US partner libraries, the database will expand to include titles and holdings of targeted partner institutions in Europe and the Middle East. The project design includes interactions with teachers of foreign languages and with librarians in Middle Eastern countries who will offer input on design and functionality. The records will be searchable in non-Roman alphabets.

Yale Library staff, along with faculty of the Middle East Studies Council of the Yale Center for International and Area Studies, have been developing Project OACIS over several years, in a commitment to provide access to the literature of this increasingly important region of the world for a wide range of educational, government, and commercial institutions. The aim is to develop a better understanding of the varied economies, politics, languages, and cultures of the Middle East.

Yale University was one of the earliest higher education institutions formally to study the Middle East, and its Library collections and other educational resources -- and faculty -- are among the strongest in the world.

The leadership of the project will be shared by AUL Ann Okerson as Principal Investigator, Kimberly Parker as Co-PI and Technical Director, and Simon Simon Samoeil, Near East Curator, as Project Manager and Director of Networking and Relationships. The US libraries committed to participating in the project include: Cornell, University of Michigan, Ohio State, University of Pennsylvania, University of Texas, and University of Washington. The principal European partner is the Universitäts-und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt. Middle Eastern partners have been identified in Tunisia, Egypt, and Syria.

Information about the OACIS project will be available at <<http://www.library.yale.edu/oacis/>>

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