

A Web portal ... and much more:

Iraqi Virtual Science Library will help rebuild Iraq for the 21st century

July 2006

Thirty years of being cut off from the international scientific community. Deterioration of the scientific, technical and educational infrastructure. Extensive looting of university libraries, classrooms, and laboratories. These are the challenges Iraqi researchers — scientists, engineers, physicians and students across the country — face as they engage in scientific pursuits that will benefit the Iraqi people and rebuild the country.

Closing the digital divide

One crucial step toward bringing Iraqi researchers up to date — easy and safe access to scientific knowledge and developments — has been taken, with the launch of the Iraqi Virtual Science Library (IVSL) in May. A broad public/private partnership led the way in building this digital library for Iraqi researchers, with participants from several U.S. government agencies, private companies, professional scientific associations, technology companies, scientific publishers and information providers.

The library is available to seven Iraqi universities, one research institution and the Ministries of Higher Education and Science & Technology. IVSL provides nearly 80% of Iraq's scientists and university students with access to full-text technical articles from major publishers, training, online educational materials, and information on funding opportunities — the same level of scientific content available at top-tier universities in the United States.

ISI Web of KnowledgeSM featured at launch

The launch ceremony, held at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C., was attended by members of the U.S. scientific and library communities, U.S. government officials, and the press, as well as the Iraqi ambassador to the United States, Samir Shakir Mahmud Al-Sumaydi.

Dr. DJ Patil, a former AAAS Science & Technology Policy Fellow and co-founder of the IVSL project, used *ISI Web of Knowledge* to demonstrate some of the IVSL's content and capabilities. While conducting a search on earthquake-proof architecture and engineering, Patil stated that "Iraqi scientists have been out of touch with the world of research for 30 years, and *ISI Web of Knowledge* is an important tool that allows them to focus on the most relevant, timely information they need to rebuild their country."

“A vital tool for Iraq’s economic growth”

Sumaydi, with a background in engineering, well appreciated the significance of this event, and stated that the library “provides us an important step toward rebuilding our scientific community. This tool offers Iraqi scientists, researchers, doctors and engineers access to a wide body of scientific research in fields critical to Iraq’s reconstruction effort. It ... can serve as a vital tool for Iraq’s economic growth and the betterment of Iraqi’s society for many generations to come.”

The *ISI Web of Knowledge* resources *Web of Science*[®] and *Journal Citation Reports*[®] are important elements within the IVSL, and Thomson Scientific is pleased to be a contributor to this important initiative that will help rebuild the scientific and higher education communities in Iraq.

See what IVSL members will be able to access:

- Full-text coverage of more than one million documents from over 17,000 scientific journals: https://ivsl.org/journal_database_listing.html
- A large collection of online educational materials: https://ivsl.org/subject_listing.html
- International and U.S. resources: https://ivsl.org/international_resources.html and https://ivsl.org/subject_listing.html

Find out more about IVSL:

IVSL community space:

<http://educationcommons.org/projects/display/IVSL/Home;jsessionid=0B96DAE947FF651FEE31A5E987378D88>

More about the background/launch of this project:

<http://www.sun.com/smi/Press/sunflash/2006-05/sunflash.20060503.1.xml>

<http://www.aip.org/pt/vol-58/iss-11/p24a.html>

http://www.dtra.mil/press_resources/fact_sheets/display.cfm?fs=IVSL