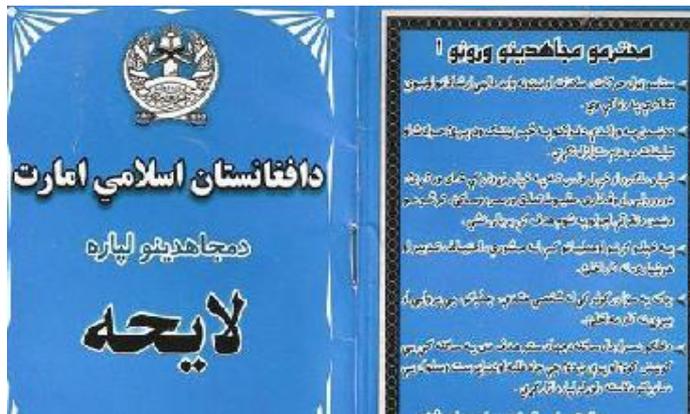


Inter-institutional collaboration between the University of Arizona Libraries and the Afghanistan Centre at Kabul University on preservation and digitization of a unique Afghan collection



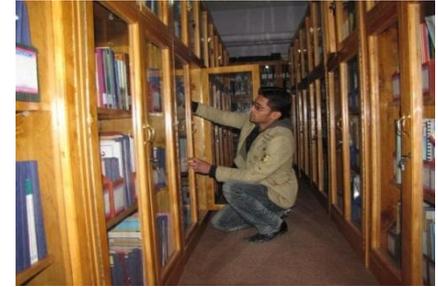
Atifa Rawan and Yan Han
University of Arizona Libraries
MELA, November 15, 2012



Background

- ▶ The University of Arizona Libraries (UAL) have been collaborating with the Afghanistan Centre at Kabul University (ACKU) on Preserving and Creating Access to Afghanistan Literature from the Jihad Period since 2007.
- ▶ Initially the project received \$300,000 grant from the National Endowment for Humanities in 2007.
- ▶ ACKU's physical collection is located at Kabul University.
- ▶ The primary objectives: a) to build preservation infrastructure in Kabul; b) to provide the essential equipment and train staff in standardized cataloguing, metadata creation, and digitization.

Collection



- ▶ ACKU's permanent collection (<http://www.acku.edu.af/?p=Home>) is the most extensive in the region covering a time of war and social upheaval in the country, with most of the documents in their official languages.
- ▶ The collection consist of over 22,000 titles (over 70,000 volumes) in grey literature unpublished materials, articles, official publications, reports from NGOs and others mostly from 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s.
- ▶ About 60-70% of ACKU's holdings are non-commercial material produced during Jihad period by NGOs, mujahedeen groups, INGOs etc.

Cultivating Collaboration and Partnership Opportunities

- ▶ Cultivated relationship and communications with Nancy Dupree, the custodian of the collection.
- ▶ Obtained support from the Dean of libraries and Library administration
- ▶ Acquired support and communicated with faculty on campus who were involved in Middle Eastern Studies, especially Afghanistan
- ▶ Received support and communicated with the Director of Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the UA campus
- ▶ Obtained support and communicated with other Afghanistan studies' scholars outside of Arizona
- ▶ Wrote the initial partnership grant for NEH and involved ACKU staff in grant writing process
- ▶ Involved ACKU Director and its staff in setting goals, objectives and outcomes for the project .



Opportunities / Strategies

- ▶ Partnership
 - Important to build respect and trust with partners.
 - Develop connections with higher-level officials in the country
 - security and support
 - get things done quicker if needed
- ▶ Funding
 - Aware of grant opportunities
 - Develop relation with private donors
- ▶ Supports:
 - Keep your institutions/administrators informed
 - Important to have your institution's supports
- ▶ Project Activities:
 - Try to have permanent project members (instead of training of students)
 - Be flexible in work schedule regarding communication and travel
 - Start the project with a smaller task first (test and trial)
 - Expect delays and interruptions in services and Infrastructure (buildings, IT etc.)
- ▶ Marketing the collection

Challenges

- ▶ Long-distance communication and collaboration
 - Delays (time zones)
 - Communication: emails
 - Delivery of products: lack of good IT infrastructure: slow network; hard-disk shipping
 - ▶ Staffing
 - lack of skillful staff for digitization and IT.
 - requiring local training and practices for building new skills
 - languages barrier (both)
 - Training & re-training: challenge to maintain good students & graduate students seasonal. Various levels of expertise.
- 

Challenges –Cont.

- ▶ Cultural sensitivity & awareness
 - ▶ Lack of sufficient funding and sustainability
 - Outdated IT equipment (scanning machines, backup servers)
 - ▶ Travel & safety in a war zone
 - ▶ Institution buy-in & ROI
 - ▶ Unanticipated delays
 - implementation / executions
 - unanticipated events could happen
- 

Challenges Related to Technology

- ▶ Equipment (e.g. scanner, computers, storage)
 - ▶ Alternative solution for technical capacity (e.g. Cloud Computing, etc.)
 - ▶ Workflow and system procedures and standards to facilitate long-distance issues
 - File naming
 - File transfer
 - Digitization management and tracking system
- 

Outcomes/Accomplishments by UA

- ▶ Developed successful partnership with ACKU
- ▶ Secured funding initially and after the completion of the grant fund
- ▶ Acquired equipment (IT hardware, software, etc.) for both the University of Arizona and for ACKU facility in Afghanistan
- ▶ Trained ACKU staff
- ▶ The largest Afghan digital collection:
 - ACKU: over 2,800 digitized titles (about 350,000 pages) are currently available online at - <http://www.afghandata.org/> (More will be added later)
 - UA Prof Adamec & UAL: Two newspapers are being loaded (about 100,000 pages)
- ▶ Marketed and publicized the project by writing articles, presentations, local newspapers and also talking to other organizations such as CRL and others.
- ▶ Monitoring use and keep statistics. The number of users worldwide is increasing every month.
- ▶ Met various times with Afghan officials from the Ministry of Higher Education and universities' officials and libraries while traveling to Afghanistan

Outcomes/Accomplishments – Cont.

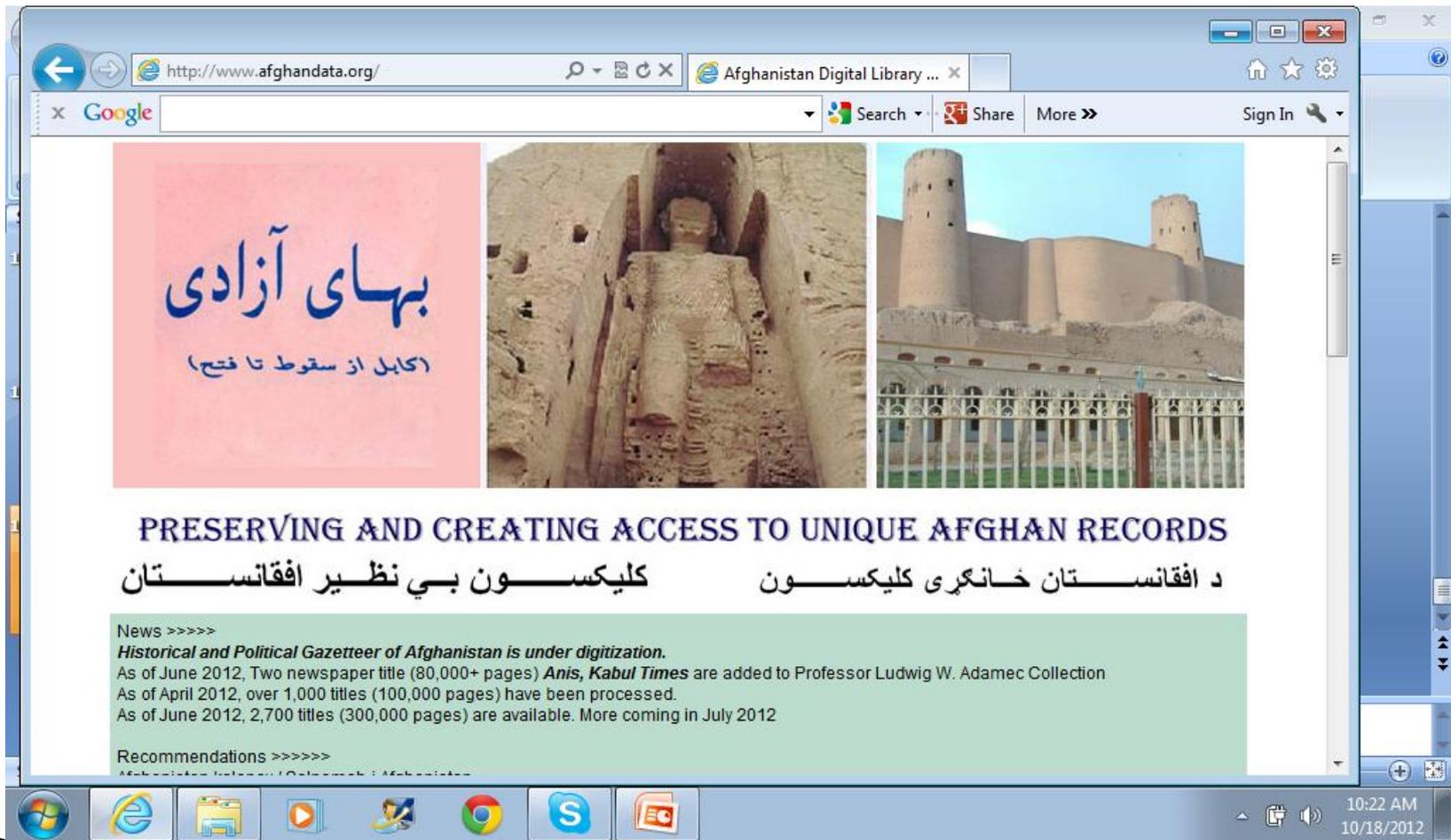


- ▶ UA digitized and made available other major sources such as Sulanamah (also known as the Afghanistan Kalanay -1932-1990), and major historical newspapers such as Anis (1946-1984), Kabul Times (1973-1980), and Historical and Political Gazetteer of Afghanistan
- ▶ Via this digital open access project, providing access worldwide to a large body of unknown and invisible hidden collection
- ▶ Supporting research and teaching needs of local community (i.e. Center for Middle-Eastern Studies at University of Arizona) and other international institutions and scholars in the field.
- ▶ Preserving the collection (no longer one copy, but many digital copies saved in multiple locations)
- ▶ Building local digitization /preservation capacity for Afghanistan

Outlook and Next Steps

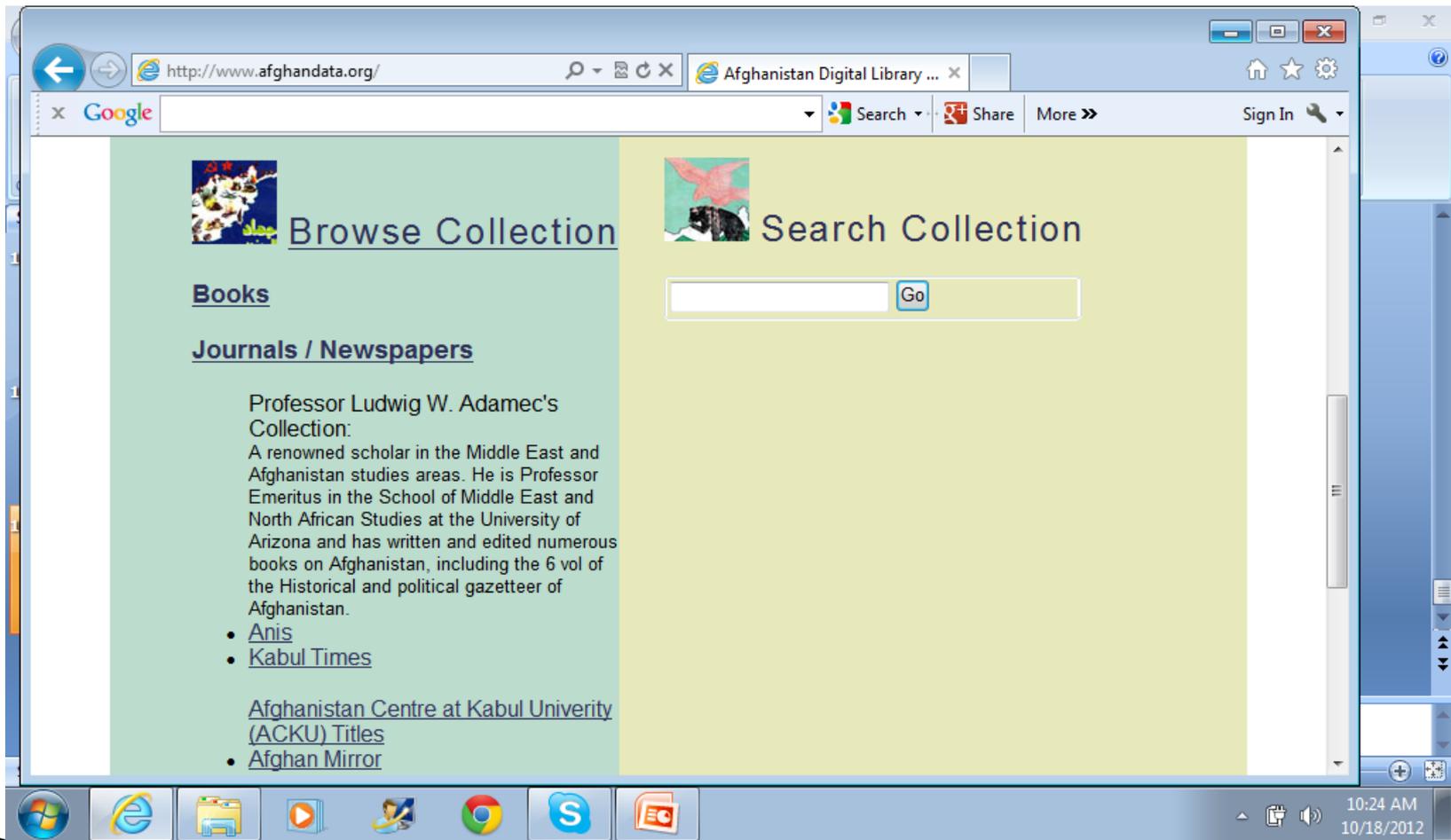
- ▶ The site link is available from the ACKU main page to further help user outside of Afghanistan
 - ▶ ACKU staff is now fully trained to do their own QC and convert scanned materials to PDF and upload them into their online catalog
 - ▶ Additional 1 million pages of materials in different formats including maps and video documentaries will be selected, scanned and digitized by ACKU
 - ▶ UA is exploring further partnership with CRL, Internet Archives, etc. for enhancing access, search capabilities, and preservation/archival
 - ▶ UA is committed to digitize more materials from other scholars and private collections as part of this project
- 

http://www.afghandata.org/



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Afghanistan Digital Library website. The browser's address bar shows the URL <http://www.afghandata.org/>. The page features a header with navigation icons and a search bar. Below the header, there are three main images: a pink box with the title "بهای آزادی" (Bahi Azadi) and the subtitle "(کابل از سقوط تا فتح)" (Kabul from fall to conquest); a photograph of a large, ancient stone Buddha statue carved into a rock face; and a photograph of a large, multi-towered mud-brick fortification. The main content area is titled "PRESERVING AND CREATING ACCESS TO UNIQUE AFGHAN RECORDS" in blue capital letters. Below this title, there are two lines of text in Pashto: "د افغانستان خانگري کليکسون" (Afghanistan's National Archives) and "کليکسون بي نظير افغانستان" (Unparalleled Archives of Afghanistan). A green box contains news updates: "News >>>> Historical and Political Gazetteer of Afghanistan is under digitization. As of June 2012, Two newspaper title (80,000+ pages) *Anis*, *Kabul Times* are added to Professor Ludwig W. Adamec Collection. As of April 2012, over 1,000 titles (100,000 pages) have been processed. As of June 2012, 2,700 titles (300,000 pages) are available. More coming in July 2012." Below the news box, there is a "Recommendations >>>>" section. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows various application icons and the system clock indicating 10:22 AM on 10/18/2012.

Contents



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Afghanistan Digital Library website. The address bar shows the URL <http://www.afghandata.org/>. The page is divided into two main sections: 'Browse Collection' and 'Search Collection'.

Browse Collection

Books

Journals / Newspapers

Professor Ludwig W. Adamec's Collection:
A renowned scholar in the Middle East and Afghanistan studies areas. He is Professor Emeritus in the School of Middle East and North African Studies at the University of Arizona and has written and edited numerous books on Afghanistan, including the 6 vol of the Historical and political gazetteer of Afghanistan.

- [Anis](#)
- [Kabul Times](#)

[Afghanistan Centre at Kabul Univerity \(ACKU\) Titles](#)

- [Afghan Mirror](#)

Search Collection

Search bar with a 'Go' button.

The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the system clock as 10:24 AM on 10/18/2012. The taskbar includes icons for Internet Explorer, File Explorer, Windows Media Center, Skype, and a folder icon.

Status

Home

Standard Reporting

Custom Reporting

Admin

Help 

Visitors Overview

Apr 1, 2012 - Jun 30, 2012

Compare to: Apr 1, 2011 - Jun 30, 2011

Advanced Segments | Email | Export  | Add to Dashboard | Shortcut **BETA**

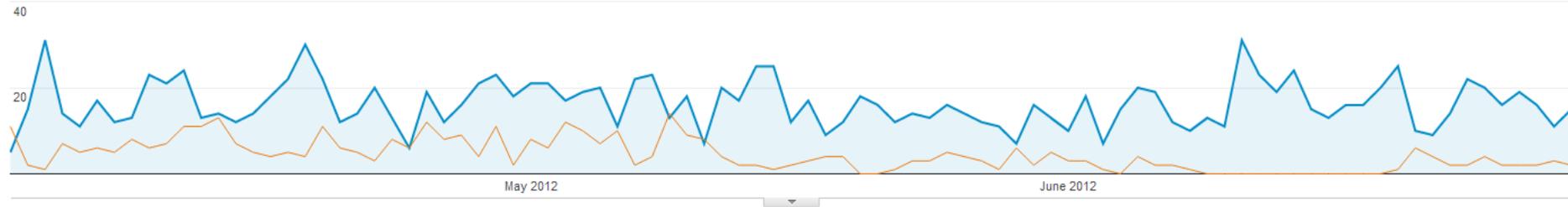
  change in % of visits: +0.00%

Overview

Visits  VS. [Select a metric](#)

Hourly **Day** Week Month

 Visits (Apr 1, 2012 - Jun 30, 2012)  Visits (Apr 1, 2011 - Jun 30, 2011)



1,281 people visited this site

 **Visits: 276.90%**
1,485 vs 394

 **Unique Visitors: 383.40%**
1,281 vs 265

 **Pageviews: 964.95%**
5,804 vs 545

 **Pages / Visit: 182.55%**



85.25% New Visitor
1,266 Visits

Questions / Comments

