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Book Review

[Digital preservation of cultural heritage collection: Among libraries of India and Iran: A comparative study](#). Leili Seifi, & C.P. Ramasesh. Koln, Germany: [LAP Lambert Academic Publishing](#), 2012. 173 p. Paperback. ISBN-13: 978-3-659-11691-9; ISBN-10: 3659116912; EAN: 9783659116919; \$84.00.

Digital libraries universally have emerged in two ways. One, they are born digital (also known as electronic resource). Two, they are converted to become digital-by scanning or other data capturing techniques –from printed, microform, manuscripts, etc.. The converted digital resources demand greater attention by decision makers with regards design, plan and implementation– i.e., in the process of preservation of cultural heritage collections. The book depicts both the types of digital collections, albeit in a limited way, viz., a) sample population for libraries based on heritage resources and level of digitization, and b) two developing countries.

This book is an attempt to identify and analyze challenges for digitization and digital preservation in India and Iran. For example, a major challenge is lack of standards for storage procedures of digitized materials. Interestingly, the authors observe that Indian and Iranian libraries do not differ significantly in digitization of most collections such as manuscripts, rare books, microfilms and microfiches. Hence, both face almost similar challenges in many ways.

Digital Preservation of Cultural Heritage Collection is divided into six sections, viz., introduction, review of literature, objectives, hypotheses and methodology, profile of libraries in India and Iran, summary of findings, recommendations and conclusion, and bibliographical references.

The book provides an extensive profile of libraries (for their specific orientation towards digital content and services), discussion of strategies and analysis of data collected using quantitative and qualitative techniques. The eight Indian libraries, included are: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (New Delhi); Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library (Patna); National Archives of India (New Delhi); National Library of India (Kolkata); Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (New Delhi); Oriental Research Institute (Mysore); Rampur Raza Library (Rampur); and The Asiatic Society Library (Kolkata).

The seven Iranian libraries included are: Central Library and Documentation Centre (University of Tehran); Central Library of Tabriz (Tabriz); Library, Museum and Documentation Centre Parliament (Tehran); Malek National Library and Museum (Tehran); National Library and Archives of Islamic Republic of Iran (Tehran); Organization of Libraries, Museums and Documents Centre of Astan Quds (Mashhad); and the Grand Library of Ayatullah al-Uzma Marashi Najafi (Qom).

Another strength of *Digital Preservation of Cultural Heritage Collection* is that it serves as an excellent reference tool for instructors, and searchers--with its extensive references to

fifteen major library resources, analysis of the data relating to these resources and a long list of references for further study. Discussing '*Infrastructure for Digitization of Heritage Collection*' the authors state their findings:

"Considering the tools and equipment used for digitization in India and Iran, it was found that, tools and equipment for Indian libraries adapted were: computer systems 60, servers 14 and scanners 10. As far as Iran libraries were concerned, it was found that they adapted: computer systems numbering 60, scanners 27 and servers 23. Therefore, a large majority of Indian and Iranian libraries adapted good numbers of computer system for digitization. However, it is important to note that, Indian and Iranian libraries used very few scanners and servers. This clearly indicates that, there is a lack of sufficient facilities for digitization." (p. 126)

A major drawback of the book is the absence of an index. A book without an index is like a treasure without the pathfinder. The authors may consider this for the next revision of their work.

This book, however, is a very useful source to visualize the emerging trends in digital cultural heritage collection building in India and Iran. Librarians, information professionals, historians and researchers will find it thought-provoking and useful as a guide to core research issues.

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