

ANNUAL REPORT TO CDNL 2014

Name of Country: Israel

Name of Library: The National Library of Israel (formerly the Jewish National and University Library)

Name of Director General: Oren Weinberg

Contact Person: Michal Moav, assistant to the Director General
Michal.Moav@nli.org.il

General Overview of Recent Major Developments: **Accessibility and Collaboration**

- The National Library of Israel (hereinafter NLI) is in the midst of a comprehensive renewal process driven by the principle of open access and marked by innovative cultural, educational and technological initiatives in addition to the building of a new state-of-the-art facility to be completed in 2019.
- The inaugural convening of the bi-annual Global Forum of the National Library of Israel took place in fall 2014. The Forum is comprised of prominent leaders and creative thinkers from throughout the world with the purpose of drawing inspiration from the wisdom contained in the NLI's collections in addressing the pressing issues facing Israel, the Jewish people and the global community. The Forum's meetings will assist the NLI in defining cultural and universal aspects of its activity; creating cooperative projects to advance its vision; locating and procuring relevant collections; securing material resources; and creating a dialogue with international organizations from various nations, religions and cultures.
- Following a two-year project planning stage, NLI launched the International Digital Library of Hebrew Manuscripts, an initiative undertaken in partnership with the Friedberg Jewish Manuscript Society (FJMS) and collections across the world, which will enable global centralized digital access to the complete corpus of existing Hebrew manuscripts. The images

will be preserved long-term using state-of-the-art technology, and the collection will be accessible using innovative research and discovery tools to international communities of researchers and users. In addition to continued planning and development of the project's designated online portal, over 5100 manuscripts from six collections were scanned and uploaded to the NLI server in 2014. Leading institutions which have already committed and begun to partner in this initiative include the Vatican, the British Library, the Palatina Library in Parma, the Jewish Theological Seminary, Bibliotheek Ets Haim in Amsterdam and the Austrian National Library.

- Numerous developments in the field of information technology including the launch of new viewers and tools for digital objects and video, improved synchronization between the online catalogue and digital objects, improved cataloguing system for born-digital publications, optimized digitization process for major daily newspapers, building of a number of designated portals on NLI website for various projects, collections and collaborations.
- Bridge to Europe, in partnership with the Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv) Europe, has been launched to provide opportunities for exchange and enrichment between the NLI and European scholars, library and museum professionals, and educators working within Jewish settings. The programme offers a range of opportunities for increasing collaboration with European institutions, including: Training courses for library and archive professionals in memory institutions across Europe; cooperating with Jewish communities to collect ephemera, and capture daily Jewish life in Europe; providing teaching materials based on the Library's resources, tailored for teachers and educators across Europe; internships at the National Library for young European professionals; mapping Jewish archives in Europe and integrating them into the Israel Archives Network.
- Swiss architectural firm Herzog & de Meuron has been chosen to design the new NLI facility in central Jerusalem, which is

currently in the schematic planning stage. The central design principles including providing open access for the greatest number of users; presenting an array of venues suited in size and infrastructure to cultural and educational programming; and maintaining secure and sustainable environmental conditions that will ensure preservation of the collections.

- NLI continues to expand and diversify its cultural and educational programming. The year's programming included a ground-breaking series exploring Arab Israeli culture in addition to a range of other concerts, lectures and events. Educational initiatives included an expanded online education portal containing curated digitized primary source items and materials for teachers to build lesson plans based on themed digitized collections, as well as programs specially designed for various populations in Israel and abroad.
- The Historic Jewish Press (JPRESS) project, a partnership between NLI and Tel Aviv University, presents a digital gateway to historical Jewish newspapers and journals. The project provides access to 54 periodicals from 15 countries, representing over 120,000 issues and over 1,500,000 scanned pages. The newspapers span the years 1843 to 1987, in 8 different languages, including Hebrew, Yiddish, Hungarian, and Judeo-Arabic. Nearly 112,000 pages and 23 new titles were added to the project in 2014.
- The collections and catalogues of the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People (CAHJP) continue to be systematically integrated into the NLI. CAHJP holds archival material from 1,600 Jewish communities, organizations and individuals throughout history in Central and Eastern Europe, the Americas, South Africa and East Asia, among other locations. These holdings include 60,000,000 pages in archives and on microfilm, as well as ephemera, photographs and books.
- NLI is continuing a multi-year project to catalogue over 500,000 items that were historically part of the NLI collections but had not yet been catalogued.

- The multi-year Time Travel Project, in conjunction with UCLA and the Arcadia Fund, entailed collecting, scanning and making digitally accessible 150,000 Israeli ephemera items from NLI collections and from over 50 private archives and collections throughout Israel. The items are in a variety of languages with partner collections ranging from Arab and Druze communities to *kibbutzim*, some of Israel's largest companies, leading cultural institutions and more. A crowdsourcing initiative was also launched as part of the project in order to enrich the collection metadata.
- Completion of the initial stage of the Israel Archives Network project, including development of project infrastructure with Google-based search capacity and securing participation commitment from 99 Israeli archives. A project-wide archive management system was chosen, and the project pilot phase including the first 3 archives was launched.
- The National Library of Israel (NLI) joined forces with JSTOR, the world's leading non-profit organization providing online access to academic journals, in pioneering the provision of global Internet access to Hebrew-language academic journals. The NLI provides access to approximately 50 Hebrew language journals from a wide range of academic disciplines through the JSTOR platform, to serve over 120,000 college and university students as well as thousands of researchers locally and internationally.
- "Curated Collections: Toward a Digital Jewish Culture", the Second International Conference of Judaica Collection Curators, gathered professionals from over 20 countries to share their experience and expertise. The conference focused on the growing place of digital information in the 21st century, particularly as it relates to the curation of Judaica collections, as well as providing an opportunity for fruitful discussion and strengthening of bonds between conference participants and their institutions.

Relationship to the government and related legislation

In 2007, the Israeli Parliament enacted the National Library Law, providing for the change in status of NLI from part of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem to an independent, not-for-profit institution. The Parliament's mandate has charged NLI with collecting, preserving, cultivating and endowing treasures of knowledge, heritage and culture, with an emphasis on the Land of Israel, the State of Israel, and the Jewish people around the world. The Law also established the Library as the nation's main research collections in the Humanities, and in particular, in Judaic studies, Islamic studies and the Cultures of the Middle East. In 2008, in accordance with statutory provisions, the newly renamed "National Library of Israel" was established under the joint ownership of the State of Israel (50%), Hebrew University (25%) and additional public bodies (25%).

Key Facts and Figures

- **Collection:** The NLI collection includes 5 million titles. The collection increases by approximately 50,000 titles annually.
- **Digital objects:** More than 10,000,000 collection items digitized
- **Budget:** The 2014 total operating budget was 26.5 Million US\$ (decrease of 0.4% from the 2013 budget of 26.6 Million US\$).
- **Staff:** The NLI has a total staff of 330 full time employees, and approximately 30 volunteers.
- **Users:** Approximately 160,000 annual visitors to NLI building and 1,000,000 unique website visitors.