World Digital Library Grows to 10,000 Items

Brett Zongker, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The World Digital Library reached a milestone on March 6, 2014, surpassing 10,000 items with the addition of ancient manuscripts from the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore.

Officials said the digital library's collection has grown to include 10,037 digitized manuscripts, maps, books, prints, photographs, films, sound recordings and other cultural items. The ongoing effort, led by the Library of Congress, is a collaborative project that includes contributions from 102 institutions in 46 different countries.

The content can be accessed online in seven languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.

The latest contributions include an early 16th-century Gospel manuscript from Ethiopia and a manuscript containing an Ottonian Gospel book fragment believed to have been made in a German monastery in the 10th century. There is also a church calendar in Greek that was created in Byzantium around 1025 to 1041.

The Walters Art Museum has been using a grant from the National Endowment of the Humanities to digitize its manuscript collection.

Librarian of Congress James Billington said the digital library is making important and beautiful content available to a global audience.

"This project is of enormous benefit to students, teachers, scholars and lifelong learners, and I am gratified to see that it continues to grow," he said.

The World Digital Library began to take shape in 2005 with a $3 million gift from

Google. It was formally launched in 2009 at UNESCO's headquarters in Paris with content from national libraries around the world. Since the launch, Spanish language users have been the largest group using the digital library's resources.

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