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## Decolonizing Knowledge Structures in Open Access and Scholarly Publishing

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One of the agenda questions for the Internet Researchers Conference (IRC) 2017 scheduled to be held at IIT, Bengaluru India is: “What research tools and infrastructures are needed to study, document, annotate, analyze, archive, cite, and work with (in general) digital objects, especially those in Indic languages?” However, before we get to this core question in the research arena we need to confront the fundamental gap in the conversation– that there are as yet very few digital objects that are created, developed and preserved in Indian languages. Shodhganga, a digital repository for dissertations and theses from universities in India, is a national digitization project that has now grown substantially as a scholarly resource. Similarly, we have the National Digital Library, a project that plans to make curricular access electronic. However, both extraordinary projects are still limited to works that are primarily written in English. This is especially unfortunate in literature research. Literature departments across universities in India have a robust scholarship agenda and have some niche publications that focus on the works of literatures of the different languages as recognized in the 8<sup>th</sup> schedule of the constitution of India. What is missing is a bridge or a platform that enables a conversation between the scholarships in these languages. Certain university department structures– those lacking a department of Literature hospitable to comparatist conversations– have to take some responsibility for this lack of conversation. There are complicated economic and social factors beyond the scope of this discussion that are at play in this disproportionate representation of Indian literatures. It suffices to say, we need specific digital tools that recognize and fill this gap.

At the Open Access Scholarly Publishing project at IIT Indore, we have tried to identify and fulfil what we see as two scholarly imperatives: 1) a commitment to open access environment as crucial for research accessibility and 2) providing a platform for

multilingual scholarly production with an emphasis on Indian languages. The Digital Humanities and Publishing Research Group at IIT Indore has a two-pronged approach to what we see as a fundamental infrastructure problem: the absence of a polyphonic platform for a scholarly kitchen! The publishing project KSHIP was born from deliberation over these crucial issues challenging scholarship publishing in India.

KSHIP or Knowledge Sharing in Publishing recognizes this gap and advocates a philosophy of open access as crucial to a cooperative global knowledge production network. In its initial pilot/launch phase, KSHIP includes 1) a project of database development of scholarship and criticism in Indian languages. (we are starting with three languages, with the eventual goal of making KSHIP a crowd sourced platform with more languages to be added soon), and 2) we will be a consciously multilingual publishing house soliciting (and specifically targeting) scholarly monographs and translations in Indian languages, while also inviting scholars to host journals in multiple languages. In this session we would like to discuss some of the technological challenges of the project and possible solutions with an emphasis on collaborations across institutions and scholars in India.

The database development project addresses the first issue of dissemination and access to scholarship in regional language literatures in India. We have started a pilot with four languages with citation data from three different languages being uploaded. This will truly be a crowd sourced project in the future and we are in discussion with journals/publishers about uploading data to the platform. At least in the beginning, this platform will also be a part of KSHIP. We are looking for scholars from different languages to contribute to and be a part of this project. The project will be collaborative in the largest sense of the term.

The project also includes a prototype of a translation plug-in tool. This is a crowd-sourcing translation tool developed as part of an UG project and directed by myself and my colleague from Computer Science, Dr Abhishek Srivastava. We hope to finesse the initial prototype of the tool over the coming months (and may even have a final prototype ready by the conference in Montreal!). The translation tool is designed to slice a scholarly paper/article so that one paper can potentially be translated by more than one person, and then moderated and collated at the publisher’s end. There are several challenges posed by such a crowd sourced model. These include, among

others, issues of author/translator attribution, for which we are currently discussing and thrashing out different options. The interface will also offer the option of solicited translation, especially in the case of literature scholarship. We will experiment with the crowd-sourced translation using scientific and engineering essays.

In this short paper I will discuss: 1) The infrastructure gap in scholarly publishing in India, 2) the need for this to be addressed with a focus on multilingual publishing, and 3) the technological challenges specific to an ambitious long-term project. These questions will inevitably lead to discussions on digital preservation and the transforming and transformative role of technology in that process.