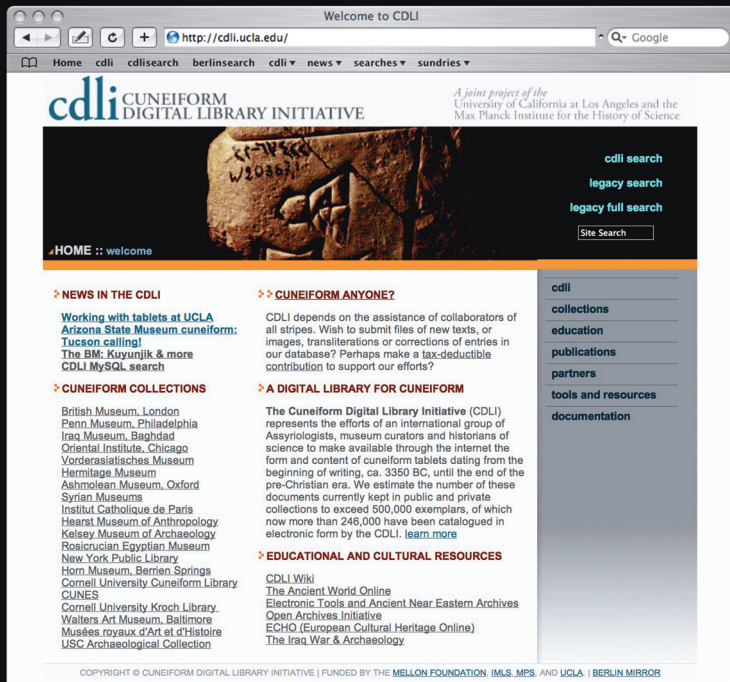


Cuneiform anyone?

In an ongoing Humanities collaboration known as the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI; <http://cdli.ucla.edu/>), linguists, museum curators, historians of science and information technology experts led by research and library science teams at the University of California, Los Angeles and the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin, are making available through the internet the form and content of cuneiform inscriptions dating from the beginning of writing, ca. 3350 BC,

until the end of Babylonian civilization in the mid-first millennium BC. With funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Max Planck Society and UCLA, CDLI is pursuing the systematic digital documentation and electronic publication of these unique witnesses of earliest history. This international effort will implement scalable access systems for a wide array of users, including researchers, museum staff, internet users, and even law enforcement officials.



Lead page to the digital library of cuneiform with a fisheries account from ancient Uruk, now in the collection of the National Museum of Iraq, Baghdad.

By creating a unified access to a highly representative corpus of early writing and using computing technology to facilitate its semantic interpretation, the project is fostering an unprecedented scholarly cooperation between researchers and cultural institutions. At the same time, "lines of communication" to the heritage of pre-scientific civilizations dead many millennia are being opened to a networked public. As a result, we believe that modern culture achieves a deeper appreciation and understanding of its own roots.

Principal investigators:

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This proto-cuneiform tablet now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum, New York, dates to the 31st century BC.

The account records the distribution of barley by an archaic brewery to members of its staff. The seal impression depicts a ruler with his dogs engaged in a wild boar hunt.

