Editorial

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Digital libraries all over the world initially started as mere digital repositories of books. With the remarkable advances in storage, retrieval, and communication technologies, digital libraries have also become as versatile as the conventional libraries and have started to provide universal access to heterogeneous contents, demanding larger storage capacity and bandwidth. It has become possible to imagine a memory and bandwidth unlimited world wherein rich multimedia contents and high-resolution images have become an integral part of digital libraries. The digital libraries have also grown to become specialized in the contents that they hold and the way they deliver these contents.

Recognizing the growing importance of the challenges, this issue of the World Digital Libraries presents six articles that show case solutions of high practical utility to the technical and organization challenges that the modern digital libraries demand.

Many digital library initiatives have been taken in India. These are reviewed by Bhatt. He also elaborates the functions, opportunities, and challenges in the development of digital libraries. Ghosh, Harit, and Chaudhury present a new approach towards distributed digital libraries with multimedia contents and propose a new scheme for media feature based concept modelling to address the limitation of traditional ontology-based multimedia retrieval systems. Amrou, Maly, and Zubair developed Freelib, a P2P-based digital library, which is self-sustainable and supports evolving communities with diverse interests. Freelib is based on the existing work in the area of OAI (Open Archive Initiative), and peer-to-peer and social networks. Sanyal, Raj, Gupta, and Verma describe the digital library workflow and repository management system (DLworm) to manage the repositories and to automate the workflow for digital library at any institution/organization. Seadle states that copyright and risk go hand in hand. Apparently, legal uses of copyright-protected materials have some degree of risk associated with them. Gobinda and Nicholson provide a brief overview of an ongoing EC (European Commission)-funded large-scale digital preservation project called SHAMAN. It is a collaborative 'integrated project' involving 18 international partners developing a next-generation digital preservation framework for archiving and managing digital information, together with developing tools for enabling its implementation. It focuses, in particular, on ensuring its ability to facilitate long-term access to digital information for users in memory institutions, the domain of engineering and re-engineering, and eScience.

We hope that you enjoy reading while gaining useful insights about digital libraries and the technologies associated with their implementation. We wish that this issue will inspire experts to come up with the next generation of digital libraries. We also hope that this journal will provide an appropriate platform for sharing knowledge in the field of digital libraries so that those aspiring to build digital libraries will benefit immensely.