

Digitization of Ancient Sri Lankan Inscriptions – An RASSL Initiative

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The RASSL launched a project to publish the available inscriptions of Sri Lanka on the Internet. This presentation will briefly state the scope, challenges faced, and the current status of the project covering its charter, mission and approach. The presentation will give a brief overview of the proposed web site. This will cover its building blocks - illustrating typical inscription pages and their contents. The process flow of converting the content of inscriptions as in the current books of inscriptions to a set of web (HTML) pages that can be viewed on the Internet will be shown. The criteria on which the site will be indexed, and its search capabilities will be demonstrated. The challenges faced so far in the project, both technical and non-technical, will be discussed. The critical factors for successfully building a knowledge base of this nature and the requirement of a multi-disciplinary approach will be emphasized. The value added potential to the body of knowledge on Sri Lankan inscriptions by building up a Wikipedia-like layer, and also the presentation of new findings for peer-discussion via Internet mechanisms such as Blogs and Discussion Forums will be shown. The future of all forms of record-keeping is digital and it is hoped that the present effort will evade the risks of deterioration in earlier fragile media like velum, papyri and palm leaf manuscripts (*Puskola Poth*).

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