



The WiderNet Project
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FACT SHEET

The eGranary Digital Library delivers millions of Internet resources to institutions lacking adequate Internet access. Through a process of copying Web sites and delivering them to intranet Web servers inside partner institutions in developing countries, this digital library delivers educational materials for instant access over local area networks (LANs).

Few schools in the developing world have adequate connections to the Internet and those that do are spending enormous amounts of money for their connectivity. For those without an Internet connection, this library is a phenomenon. Those who already have an Internet connection experience the resources opening 5,000 faster from the eGranary Digital Library and save tens of thousands of dollars in bandwidth costs every year.

With installations in more than 100 educational institutions in Africa, Bangladesh, India and Haiti, the eGranary Digital Library provides lightening fast access to educational materials including video, audio, books, journals, and Web sites, even where no Internet access exists.

The eGranary Digital Library represents the collective efforts of hundreds of authors, publishers, programmers, librarians, instructors and students around the globe. Some of the many authors and publishers who have granted permission to distribute their works via the eGranary include: U.S. Centers for Disease Control, Columbia University, Cornell University, MIT's OpenCourseware, UNESCO, Wikipedia, World Bank, the Virtual Hospital and WHO.

Developed in 2001, the eGranary Digital Library is expanding its installations to schools, hospitals, clinics and universities. The eGranary needs more authors and publishers to help grow its collection to 10 million documents, volunteers to help collect and categorize new materials and librarians and teachers to help get the library installed in thousands of schools.

How It Works

Here's how the eGranary Digital Library works:

- 1.** Web sites with rich educational content are identified. Since the beginning of the World Wide Web, millions of individuals and organizations have digitized their information to share with the general public over the Internet. Capitalizing on this phenomenon, the eGranary Digital Library looks for Web sites with pertinent digitized academic information (often guided by requests of its African partners) to add to its 'wish list.'

- 2.** Securing the author's or publisher's permission to copy their materials is done by email. The request is to replicate materials for educational institutions in developing countries with inadequate Internet connectivity. Depending on the content area, 50-90% usually agree.

3. The permitted materials are copied to a hard drive. Website "scraping" software is used to make a duplicate of the permitted materials on the eGranary Digital Library server. Sometimes an entire Web site is copied; sometimes just the portions containing the most useful information.

4. Copies of the collection are made and distributed to subscriber universities. Using large hard disks, copies of the eGranary Digital Library are delivered to subscriber universities, most of which already have servers and local area networks in place, so they simply add the eGranary hard drive to their existing server.

5. The WiderNet Project has developed ways to use various technologies, like CDs, flash memory, DVDs, and satellite digital radio, to update the collection on an ongoing basis.

Endorsements of the eGranary Digital Library

"I thank you immensely for your gigantic contribution to education at Usmanu Danfodiyo University (UDU) through the wonderful eGranary Digital Library. Now both the staff and students of UDU are hooked and completely in love with the library. It is comprehensive and fast; now most of our staff and students visit the internet less and less because of the library, thereby saving a lot on bandwidth."

*--Ahmed Isah Chafe, Director, MIS and Coordinator, Nigerian University Network
Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Nigeria*

"The eGranary Digital Library has helped our students and lecturers in accessing academic materials which were not easily accessible due to limited bandwidth. The concept is very good for those with limited or no bandwidth and should be supported. **It has become part and parcel of our e-learning platform.**"

*--Nyaga Gacheru, Network Administrator
Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya*

"The **eGranary Digital Library concept is the solution** for creation and distributing online content challenges currently facing most African countries."

*--Mr. Jacob Mtui
Research and Development, University of Dar Es Salaam*

"**The idea is simply GREAT!** We are trying to promote it in Bangladesh, especially educational institutions providing higher studies in remote areas."

*--Mr. Mizanur Munna
Positive Bangladesh Initiatives*

"eGranary Digital Library has been a great bridge in the digital divide for us in the University of Jos in Nigeria. It has served the purpose of bringing the Internet to our doorsteps. We've had problems with bandwidth cost, paying about \$6,000 monthly for a bandwidth of 128/64 (that's about the speed of two phone modems being shared by dozens or hundreds of people). We've had to put other expenses on hold in order to pay for bandwidth that is not very reliable. It is still costly (based on our GDP and general income) for staff and students to pay for Internet access. So, the eGranary has been a great asset for us. We have it up and running on our intranet with no bandwidth cost and it's accessible at the speed of lightning! What better motivation for academics! **The eGranary holds great promise for developing economies where bandwidth and the cost of Internet access is high.**"

*--Dr. Stephen Akintunde
Deputy University Librarian, University of Jos, Nigeria*