

**NEW TOPIC PROPOSAL: DIGITAL CULTURE
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DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES ARE REVOLUTIONIZING THE COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION. INTELLECTUALLY, WE ARE ONLY NOW BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND THE SCOPE OF THIS REVOLUTION AND HOW IT WILL EFFECT OUR LIVES. AS DIGITAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGY MERGES WITH THE INTERNET, IT WILL BECOME THE MEDIA OF EDUCATION, RESEARCH, COMMERCE AND PERSONAL INFORMATION. WE WILL BE ABLE TO EXPLOIT NEW MEDIA FOR HUMAN WELL-BEING WITHOUT MANY OF THE CONSTRAINTS THAT WE EXPERIENCE TODAY.

WITH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY ADOPTED AS OFFICIAL POLICY OF BOTH THE JAPANESE AND US GOVERNMENTS, CULCON HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE HOW THESE TECHNOLOGIES CAN BE USED IN THE FIELDS OF EDUCATION, THE ARTS, CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION, AND HOW THEY MIGHT CHANGE OUR CULTURES. DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY WILL ALLOW RELEVANT CONTENT TO BE DISTRIBUTED IN VARIOUS FORMATS INVOLVING SOUND, VIDEO AND TEXT, THAT IS TO SAY, THROUGH MULTIMEDIA TECHNOLOGIES.

CULCON NEEDS TO FOCUS ON THE PRODUCTION AND GLOBAL DISSEMINATION OF DATA IN THE DIGITAL FORMAT. IT WOULD SEEM THAT A GOOD STARTING POINT WOULD BE TO ESTABLISH A NEW WORKING GROUP THAT WOULD EXPLORE BEST USES OF THESE NEW TECHNOLOGIES THROUGH THE DIFFUSION OF DIGITIZED MATERIALS INCLUDING VISUAL MATERIALS, SCHOLARLY RESEARCH, PRIMARY DOCUMENTS AND POPULAR CULTURE. THE WORKING GROUP MIGHT ALSO CONSIDER FOSTERING BINATIONAL DIGITAL CONVERSATIONS AND CONFERENCES.

WE WOULD PROPOSE THAT THE PRIMARY FOCUS OF THE EFFORTS OF THIS NEW WORKING GROUP IN IDENTIFYING AND COLLECTING MATERIALS FOR DIGITAL ARCHIVING WOULD BE ON THE RECORD OF JAPAN-US RELATIONS IN THE PAST FIFTY YEARS. ITS WORK WOULD INCLUDE DIGITIZING COLLECTIONS OF PHOTOGRAPHY, FILM, ART, TEXTS AND DOCUMENTS, SOUND RECORDINGS, AND OTHER IMPORTANT SOURCES OF THE CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND ARTISTIC UNDERPINNINGS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES' RELATIONSHIP. SUCH A RECORD, CREATED AS A JOINT EFFORT OF JAPANESE AND AMERICAN MEMBERS, AS WELL, PERHAPS, AS ADVICE FROM EXPERTS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES, WOULD FOR THE FIRST TIME PROVIDE AN OBJECTIVE BASE FOR THE PURPOSES OF RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS. SCHOLARS AND OTHER USERS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD WOULD HAVE AN AGREED-UPON SOURCE ON WHICH TO EXPLORE INTELLECTUAL ISSUES AS WELL AS

DIVERGENT AND THEORETICAL ANALYSES OF THE HISTORY AND NATURE OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP IN MODERN TIMES.

TO BEGIN, THE PROPOSED DATABASE WOULD PROVIDE IMMEDIATE BENEFIT TO ACADEMIC AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN BOTH COUNTRIES. IT WOULD PROVIDE RESOURCES FOR TEACHING MATERIALS AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT. BUT BEYOND SUCH CONCRETE CONCERNS, SUCH A DATABASE WOULD PROVIDE A RICH SOURCE FOR NEW AND FRESH INSIGHTS IN SUCH FIELDS AS JOURNALISM AND POLICYMAKING AS THEY DEAL WITH THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. FINALLY, AND PERHAPS MOST MEANINGFULLY, IT WOULD PROVIDE TO PEOPLES AROUND THE WORLD A TANGIBLE RECORD OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF WHAT IS PERHAPS THE MOST SUCCESSFUL AND REMARKABLE INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP IN THE MODERN ERA.

IN RECENT DECADES, THE MEDIA IN BOTH COUNTRIES HAVE CONSISTENTLY CHARACTERIZED THE JAPAN-US RELATIONSHIP AS SOMETHING MARKED EXCLUSIVELY BY ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SECURITY CONCERNS. RELYING ON THIS REPORTING, THE WORLD AT LARGE ALSO SEES THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP IN THE SAME TERMS. THE EQUALLY IMPORTANT CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL AND ARTISTIC LEGACIES OF THIS RELATIONSHIP HAVE BEEN OVERSHADOWED. CULCON'S ROLE MUST BE NOT MERELY TO SHORE UP THESE AREAS, BUT IN FACT TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR STRENGTHS. THERE COULD BE NO BETTER WAY, NO RICHER MEANS, OF DOING SO THAN BY PROVIDING THE NEW DATABASE WE PROPOSE TO AN UNSUSPECTING WORLD.

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS WOULD, OF COURSE, INCLUDE ONE OR MORE MEMBERS OF CULCON FROM EACH SIDE, AS WELL AS RECOGNIZED EXPERTS IN THE SUBJECT AREAS AND IN THE TECHNICAL AREAS. THE FIRST TASKS OF THE MEMBERS OF THIS WORKING GROUP WOULD BE TO DEFINE THE UNIVERSE OF MATERIALS TO BE INCLUDED IN THIS DATABASE AND TO PROPOSE A NAME FOR IT. THEY WOULD NEED TO EXPLORE THE SCOPE OF TECHNOLOGIES TO BE APPLIED TO THE TASK. THEY WOULD ALSO NEED TO EXPLORE EXISTING DATABASES TO SEE WHERE SUCH EFFORTS HAVE ALREADY BEGUN. THEY WOULD NEED TO ENCOURAGE THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO CONTINUE THE EFFORT OF DIGITIZING APPROPRIATE MATERIALS FOR POSSIBLE INCLUSION, TO HELP STIMULATE THE PRODUCTION OF NEW MATERIALS AS AGREED UP BY WORKING GROUP MEMBERS AND TO PLAN ON THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO MARKET THE DATABASE AND CONSIDER ALL ITS POSSIBLE USES.

FURTHERMORE, THEY WOULD NEED TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES FOR APPROPRIATE SITES FOR THE WORKING GROUP ACTIVITIES. THE SITES WOULD NEED TO HOST TECHNICAL EXPERTS AS WELL AS THE NECESSARY HARDWARE. THEY WOULD BE SELECTED FROM AMONG MAJOR INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN DIGITIZING INFORMATION ACROSS A

RANGE OF FIELDS. ON THE JAPAN SIDE, WASEDA UNIVERSITY AND THE NATIONAL DIET LIBRARY, AMONG OTHERS, MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE. ON THE U.S. SIDE, THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS AND NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY MIGHT BE INCLUDED AS CONTRIBUTING COLLECTIONS OF MATERIALS ALREADY DIGITIZED, AMONG OTHERS, WITH WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY OR THE JAPAN CONNECTION, FOR EXAMPLE, AS POSSIBLE ORGANIZING SITES OF U.S. ACTIVITIES. FINALLY, HAVING MET AT STAFF, COMMITTEE AND PLENARY LEVELS AS APPROPRIATE, THE WORKING GROUP WOULD PRESENT TO CULCON XX A PLAN TO BE ADOPTED AS THE FIRST MAJOR INITIATIVE OF CULCON IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY.

I INVITE ALL OF YOU TO CONSIDER THE TREMENDOUS IMPACT THAT THE NEW MEDIA BEING DEVELOPED TODAY WILL HAVE ON OUR LIVES. IN MY WORK I AM OFTEN INVITED TO GLIMPSE TECHNOLOGIES THAT ARE BEING INVENTED TODAY FOR USE TOMORROW. I AM NOT AT LIBERTY TO DISCUSS THE SPECIFICS OF THESE TECHNOLOGIES, BUT I ASSURE YOU, THEY WILL BE BREATHTAKING IN THEIR IMPACT ON OUR LIVES. I ALSO ASSURE YOU THAT THEY CAN AND WILL HAVE ENORMOUS BENEFICIAL EFFECT ON DEEPENING OUR MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING, AND UNDERSTANDING THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, IF HARNESSSED TO THIS TASK BY CULCON.

I BELIEVE THERE IS IMPORTANT SYMBOLISM HERE AS WELL. THIS WILL BE CULCON'S FIRST WORKING GROUP TO BRIDGE THE NEW MILLENNIUM. HOW APPROPRIATE THAT IT SHOULD RELATE TO OUR USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY, WHICH WILL PROPEL US INTO THE NEXT MILLENNIUM! THIS TOPIC DEMANDS OUR ATTENTION NOW SO THAT WE CAN BEGIN TO IMAGINE OUR FUTURE.