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To: Participants of the 2009 International Greenstone Workshop at IIMK

Dear Participant,

I am writing to wish you well at the 6-day International Greenstone Workshop that Dr Sreekumar is organizing at IIMK.

As you probably know, I believe that digital libraries are a key aspect of civil society in India and elsewhere. Their importance grows with every passing day. I frequently write and speak of the dangers of relying on one or two giant universal search engines for access to our society's treasure-house of information — which constitutes our entire literary, scientific and cultural heritage. What the world needs, I believe, are focused collections of information, created and curated by people with an intellectual stake in their contents. I mean digital libraries, built by librarians!

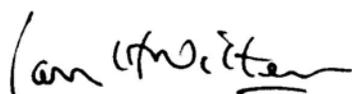
I am proud and very pleased that the Greenstone Digital Library Software is playing apart in this endeavour. Year by year its technical strength grows and its rate of adoption increases. Last year I have participated in workshops in Africa, Malaysia, Mexico, the South Pacific, the United States, and Vietnam. This software is not just for developing countries: Greenstone was received equally enthusiastically by New York's Metropolitan Libraries Council in Manhattan and by delegates from Zimbabwe and Malawi at a workshop in Namibia.

I wish I was with you in Khozikode. The workshop I held there three years ago was productive and very enjoyable. The facilities are excellent. The setting is magnificent: I can picture in my mind's eye your daily trip between guest-house and library. And the hospitality was wonderful. Most important of all, a great sense of comradeship developed during the course as we worked and learned together; a sense of common purpose and joint participation in an enterprise that transcends us all.

I exhort you to enjoy yourself at Khozikode in work and play, in private study and development of our community. Most important of all, please remember the overriding purpose of the workshop. It will only be truly successful if you actually build worthwhile digital library collections when you return home, and spread the word about the importance of digital libraries for our society.

Good luck!

Yours sincerely,



Ian H. Witten