



Annual Report – Spring 2021
South Asia Open Archives (SAOA)

Upon completion of its first five years, the [South Asia Open Archives \(SAOA\)](#) has established a solid foundation for a successful future. SAOA implemented its Five-Year Plan (FY21-25), secured funding for its next five years, and significantly expanded its collections. SAOA has also forged new partnerships worldwide and strengthened its administrative processes. Over the past year (from March 2020 to March 2021), SAOA's open access collections have grown from 15,000 items to 24,000 items (60% increase), and from 550,000 pages to 700,000 pages (25% increase). Throughout the year, there were approximately 115,000 item uses from 169 countries.

SAOA, with administrative support from the Center for Research Libraries (CRL), is pleased to share updates on behalf of the [Executive Board](#) and the Working Groups on [Content Curation](#), [Infrastructure](#), and [Funding](#). To learn more about SAOA's activities, colleagues are encouraged to attend the upcoming virtual [SAOA meeting](#) on Friday, March 19 from 9:30-11:30am (Central Time). Further information on SAOA is available on the [CRL website](#).

Executive Board

David Faust (2019-2022), SAOA Co-Chair (2019-2020), University of Minnesota
Aruna Magier (2018-2021), SAOA Co-Chair (2019-2020), New York University
Karen Farrell (2020-2023), Indiana University
Ryan Perkins (2020-2021; ex officio), Stanford University
Judy Alspach, Center for Research Libraries

The SAOA Executive Board has steered the organization through the challenges brought about by the pandemic. The recently ratified [Five-Year Plan \(FY21-25\)](#) describes SAOA's vision and strategy, establishing the short- and long-term goals related to governance and administration, membership, collection building, infrastructure, funding, and budget. Additionally, the Executive Board led an inclusive process to finalize the [Organizational Practices](#) document codifying SAOA's governance procedures. SAOA is also pleased to report nearly 100% membership renewal for FY21-25. In such a challenging budget environment, this continued support is a reflection of SAOA's impact on South Asian studies, as documented in the Publicity Scrapbook (attached) containing SAOA-related social media posts, blogs, news items and press releases, research guides, and web pages. SAOA would like to [acknowledge](#) the critical contributions of its Members and the federally-funded South Asia National Resource Centers which help sustain ongoing program costs. In order to expand SAOA's community, please refer potential members to the [How to Become a Member](#) page and follow the new [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages.

Content Curation Working Group

Aruna Magier (Chair), New York University
Deepa Banerjee, University of Washington
Abhijit Bhattacharya, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta
Gary Hausman, Columbia University
Jeffrey Martin, University of Michigan
Gautham Reddy, Emory University

The Content Curation Working Group (formerly the "Digitization Working Group") identifies, evaluates, selects, and prioritizes important primary and secondary sources for SAOA's curated collections. To help guide SAOA's collection

development priorities, the group initiated and developed an inclusive content strategy for the Five-Year Plan. They also reviewed the [Selection Guidelines](#), to help significantly expand SAOA's collection scope to include additional themes, wider geographic and date coverage, more languages, and new resource types, as per SAOA's Five-Year Plan (linked above). Recently added SAOA resources include the [Indian Census Reports](#) (1941), Bombay Presidency Reports (1857-1941), [Jugantar](#) (1966-1980), Madras Legislative Assembly Debates (1921-1960), and [Aligarh Institute Gazette](#) (1886-1924). SAOA also added federated access to nearly 140 [Naval Kishore Press](#) titles hosted by Heidelberg University, as well as 500 titles hosted on CRL's platform (mostly in the [Language & Literature](#) collection). Besides building on the existing strengths of SAOA collections, the Working Group is also now moving forward with additional selections in new thematic areas including art history and history of science. We continue to pursue additional partnerships with other projects and content providers to enrich SAOA, such as the Digital Library of India (DLI), American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies (AISLS), and others. As SAOA continues identifying and digitizing new research materials, please feel free to make suggestions through the [online suggestion form](#).

Infrastructure Working Group

David Faust (Chair), University of Minnesota

Jef Pierce, University of Pennsylvania

Mary Rader, University of Texas

Laura Ring, University of Chicago

G. Sundar, Roja Muthiah Research Library

The Infrastructure Working Group provides recommendations to the Executive Board on all matters associated with the supporting technological framework of SAOA. SAOA started making its records discoverable through WorldCat, in order to improve access to its collections. For example, CRL has uploaded the OCLC records for anthologies of Gujarati poetry, such as [Kavitā praveśa](#) and [Kavyamādhurya](#). The Infrastructure Working Group was instrumental in helping SAOA establish its preservation archive on Amazon Web Services (AWS). SAOA has started archiving its master TIFF files. The Working Group also created a visual resources metadata schema for cataloging art objects. The Infrastructure Working Group will continue working with JSTOR to make improvements to the hosting platform and discovery interface.

Funding Working Group

Grants Sub-Group

Karen Farrell (Co-Chair), Indiana University

Ellen Ambrosone, Princeton University

Bronwen Bledsoe, Cornell University

James Nye, University of Chicago

Gautham Reddy, Emory University

Membership Sub-Group

Ryan Perkins (Co-Chair), Stanford University

David Magier, Princeton University

Brandon Miliate, Yale University

Mara Thacker, University of Illinois

The Funding Working Group provides recommendations to the Executive Board on all matters associated with the financial wellbeing and sustainability of SAOA. To facilitate the work of the Funding Working Group, the Membership and Grants Sub-Groups were established. The Funding Working Group helped create an inclusive [membership model](#) as part of the Five-Year Plan. Given the varying resources among institutions and our commitment to inclusion, SAOA has created membership categories in order to invite participation from as wide an array of institutions and stakeholders as possible. The Working Group was critical in obtaining membership renewals and funding from Title VI National Resource Centers. The Funding Working Group is working on grant applications and recruiting new members in order to expand SAOA's community.