

Google launches Dead Sea Scrolls online library

December 18 2012, by Lauren E. Bohn



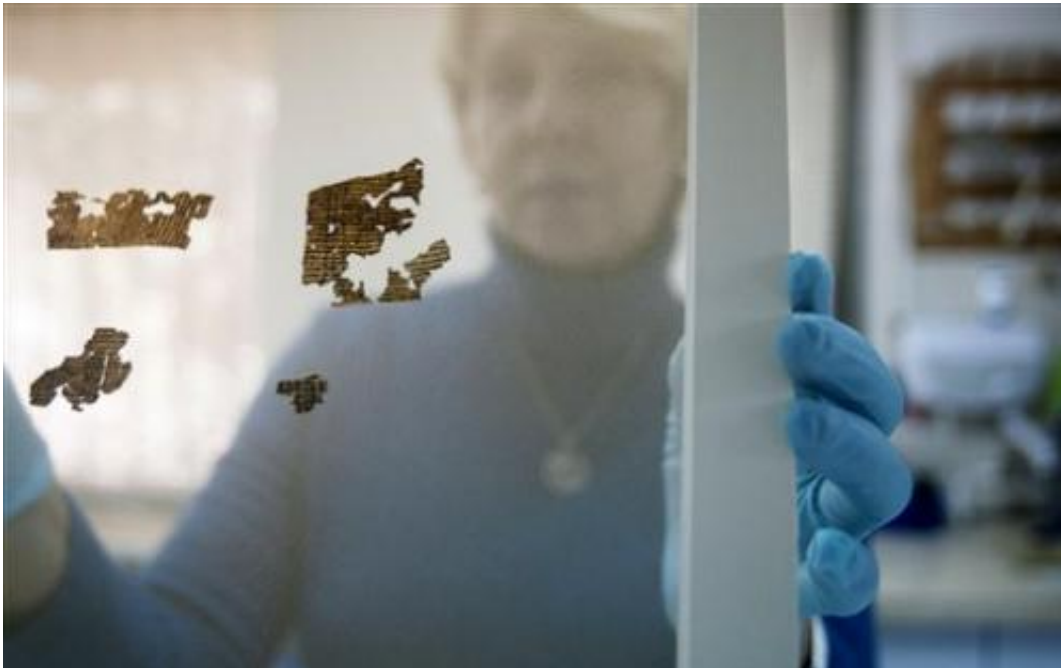
A copy of a part of the Dead Sea Scrolls is presented during a joint Israel Antiquities Authority, IAA, and Google press conference in Jerusalem, Tuesday, Dec. 18, 2012. Israeli authorities say they have put 5,000 fragments of the ancient Dead Sea scrolls online in a partnership with Google.(AP Photo/Dan Balilty)

More than six decades since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls—and thousands of years after they were written—Israel on Tuesday put 5,000 images of the ancient biblical artifacts online in a partnership with

Google.

The digital library contains the Book of Deuteronomy, which includes the second listing of the Ten Commandments, and a portion of the first chapter of the Book of Genesis, dated to the first century B.C.

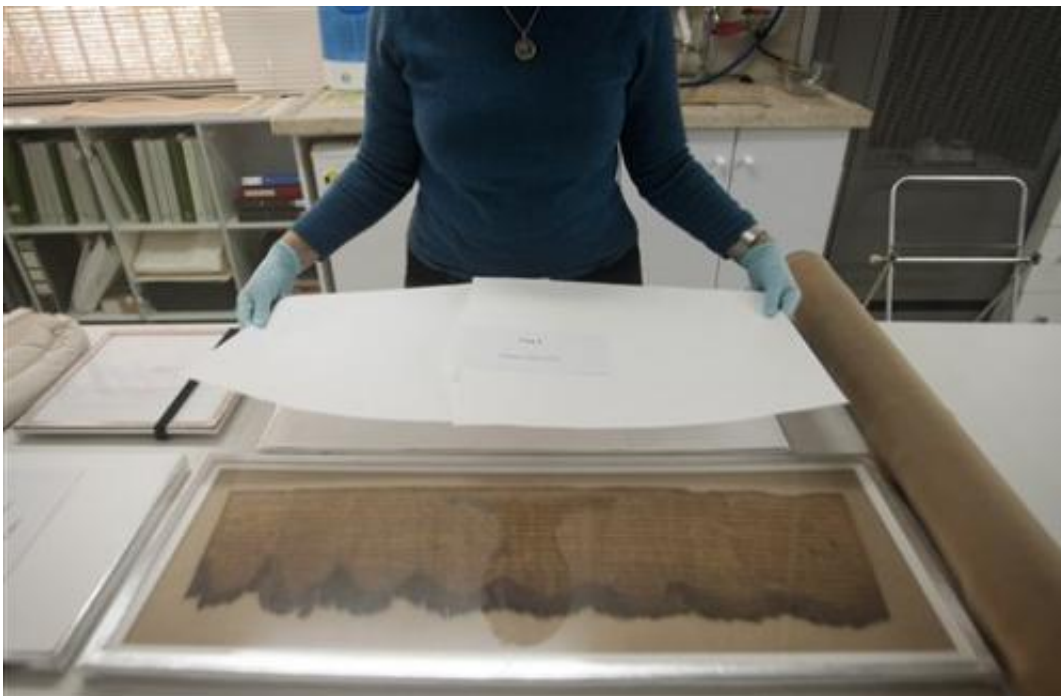
Israeli officials said this is part of an attempt by the custodians of the celebrated manuscripts—often criticized for allowing them to be monopolized by small circles of scholars—to make them broadly available.



A worker of the Dead Sea Scrolls conservation laboratory at the IAA, Israel Antiquities Authority, holds a frame with small fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls in a laboratory in Jerusalem, Tuesday, Dec. 18, 2012. Israeli authorities say they have put 5,000 fragments of the ancient Dead Sea scrolls online in a partnership with Google.(AP Photo/Dan Balilty)

"Only five conservators worldwide are authorized to handle the [Dead Sea Scrolls](#)," said Shuka Dorfman, director of the Israel Antiquities Authority. "Now, everyone can touch the scroll on screen around the globe."

Last year, [Google](#) partnered with the Israel Museum to put five scrolls online.



An Israel Antiquities Authority, IAA, worker presents fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls, at the IAA offices at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, Tuesday, Dec. 18, 2012. Israeli authorities say they have put 5,000 fragments of the ancient Dead Sea scrolls online in a partnership with Google. (AP Photo/Dan Balilty)

The scrolls, considered one of the most significant archaeological finds of the 20th century, are thought to have been written or collected by an ascetic Jewish sect that fled Jerusalem to the desert 2,000 years ago and

settled at Qumran, near the shore of the Dead Sea. The hundreds of manuscripts found in caves near the site have shed light on the development of the [Hebrew Bible](#) and the origins of Christianity.

Google says the new digital library took two years to assemble, using technology first developed by NASA. The multimedia website allows users to zoom in on various fragments, with translations and [Google maps](#) alongside.



A worker of the Dead Sea Scrolls conservation laboratory at the IAA, Israel Antiquities Authority, looks through a microscope in Jerusalem, Tuesday, Dec. 18, 2012. Israeli authorities say they have put 5,000 fragments of the ancient Dead Sea scrolls online in a partnership with Google. (AP Photo/Dan Balilty)

Google hopes to further expand its project. Two months ago Google launched a "Cultural Institute," a digital visual archive of historical

events in cooperation with 17 museums and institutes around the world.

"We're working to bring important cultural and historical materials online and help preserve them for [future generations](#)," said Yossi Matias, head of Google's Research and Development Center in Israel. "Our partnership with the [Israel Antiquities Authority](#) is another step toward enabling users to enjoy cultural material around the world."



A small fragment of the Dead Sea Scrolls, is seen at the IAA offices at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, Tuesday, Dec. 18, 2012. Israeli authorities say they have put 5,000 fragments of the ancient Dead Sea scrolls online in a partnership with Google. (AP Photo/Dan Balilty)

More information: Online: www.deadseascrolls.org.il

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