

Celtic Digital Initiative

Introduction

The aim of the Celtic Digital Initiative (CDI) is to make scarce resources available in an electronic format to students and scholars, both within UCC and beyond. This initiative has been jointly funded by the **Department of Early and Medieval Irish** and by the **Quality Promotion Unit** (from its Quality Improvement Fund) and is an ongoing project; it is hoped to add more material to the site as time and finances allow.

There are four major sections: **Images** (digitised pictures of interest to Celticists), **Text Archive** (PDF files of rare material), **Articles** (PDF files of selected publications by staff members) and **Celtic Noticeboard** (an area devoted to announcements of forthcoming conferences, events, vacancies, publications etc.).

One of the major desiderata within the field of Celtic Studies is the provision of an electronic resource of materials similar to that provided by **JSTOR** in other subject areas. This need is particularly acute in Celtic Studies as so much important material is to be found in hard-to-access sources, many of great age and not in great condition. As an example, let us examine this question solely from the point of view of medieval Irish: we are particularly fortunate in having both **CELT**, the Corpus of Electronic Texts and ISOS, Irish Script on Screen active in our field of study. **CELT** makes available a large searchable database of Irish literature while ISOS provides high quality digital images of Irish manuscripts. However, the standard editions of many of the texts contained in both **CELT** and **ISOS**, along with detailed studies of them, are not available in electronic format and indeed are often only preserved in hard-to-access sources, many of which are out of print. Providing this material in electronic format completes the set of digital tools necessary for a thorough examination of our medieval literary culture in the Irish language; the case is similar for sources in the other Celtic languages.

What is ultimately needed is a complete digital archive (like **JSTOR**) which can accommodate the main Celtic Studies journals along with the many important books, monographs and periodicals which are out of print or difficult to access. Such a digital resource should be self-financing by relying on subscriptions from libraries and individual scholars, and should be able to make money to keep the archive up to date as well as generating income for all the participating Celtic Studies journals. The Celtic Digital Initiative is a small first step in this direction, showing how such a resource might function within Celtic Studies.

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<http://www.ucc.ie/academic/smg/CDI/index.html>