

**FY 2012-2015 Project Abstracts
for the
American Overseas Research Centers Program**



U.S. Department of Education
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International and Foreign Language Education Service

Table of Contents

American Academy in Rome	3
American Center for Mongolian Studies.....	4
American Institute for Indonesian Studies.....	5
American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies.....	6
American Institute of Bangladesh Studies	7
American Institute of Indian Studies.....	8
American Institute of Pakistan Studies	9
American Research Institute of the South Caucasus	10
Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute	11
West African Research Association.....	12

American Academy in Rome

The American Academy in Rome (AAR) respectfully requests a grant of \$260,000 (\$65,000 for each of the next four years) to complete the funding of two residencies and one fellowship in Modern Italian Studies at the American Academy in Rome for the purpose of postgraduate research, international exchange, and area studies in both formal and informal ways.

First we request funds for two short-term Residencies in Modern Italian Studies. These awards would be a long overdue response to the ever-increasing need for scholars in the field. The two Residents would be introduced to unique Italian collections, archives, and monuments, and to European colleagues and peers they may not have a chance to encounter otherwise. The Residents would enrich individual scholarship and broaden the discourse among AAR scholars (and artists) and others. During their stays, Residents would mentor Rome Prize winners and other members of the community, and offer a minimum of one public presentation: a lecture; a reading; or a “walk and talk” in Rome.

Secondly, we request support from the Department of Education (ED) to co-sponsor one fellowship, also in Modern Italian Studies, which is also underfunded. Department of Education funds would enable us to supplement AAR funds in order to support one junior scholar for a year in the AAR community. Awards consist of a room with bath, workspace, meals 5-1/2 days a week, and a stipend for a period of 11 months. This support would allow us to again appoint a full roster of Rome Prize Fellows.

Each Fellow is expected to be a self-starting, curious, highly intelligent individual who can make the most of the time and resources in Rome, one of the oldest, most cosmopolitan cities in the world, a place of rich scholarly and cultural legacy that has the power to stimulate much creative and collaborative thinking. Besides furthering their own course of study, the ED Fellow would expand the reach of other scholars and artists in the AAR community and in Rome, build bridges between our cultures, and acquire new tools for teaching, learning, and discovery.

Support for this endeavor will help us advance toward a single goal, which is to enable American humanities scholars to fulfill their promise, regardless of background and resources, and to enhance scholarship in the United States. Helping junior scholars achieve their potential -- so that they can go on to teach, produce great works, make Americans understandable to those abroad, and affect generations to come -- is at the very core of the mission of the academy. Like many Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC) institutions, in recent years we have not been able to provide a full program because of disadvantageous exchange rates and grave budget limitations. We earnestly ask for your support.

American Center for Mongolian Studies

The American Center for Mongolian Studies (ACMS) is a private, non-profit educational organization that supports academic projects and exchanges in Mongolia and the Inner Asian region, which includes Mongolia and the neighboring areas of China, Russia and Central Asia. The ACMS Ulaanbaatar office is located in an office building near the city's major universities and research institutes. The ACMS U.S. office is hosted by the Center for East Asian Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The ACMS is a member of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC), the CAORC member in East and Central Asia.

ACMS membership and programs have grown steadily due to increases in academic cooperation between Mongolia and the United States. The ACMS consortium now has membership of 48 institutional members, including 35 U.S. universities, colleges, museums, research centers and related organizations, and over 350 individual members. In 2011, more than 1, 500 people requested service support from the ACMS or attended ACMS-sponsored events in Mongolia and the United States. The ACMS funded 21 fellows conducting field research in Mongolia in 2011, and sent four Mongolian scholars to the United States for research collaborations and outreach activities. The ACMS Web site (www.mongoliacenter.org) is the primary online resource in the field of Mongolian Studies and contains several thousand pages of content. The ACMS is working to develop an online community of researchers using social media tools, and is using the Blackboard Collaborate platform to run webinar information sessions on fellowship opportunities and research projects in Mongolia and to hold online Speaker Series events by scholars.

The ACMS operates a full range of program offerings to increase Americans' knowledge on Inner Asia and the Mongolian language, and to support mutually beneficial academic research and exchange. To support visiting scholars and academic groups in Mongolia, the ACMS offers weekly speaker series in Ulaanbaatar and regularly sponsors or coordinates academic conferences in the country. The ACMS Research Library collection in Ulaanbaatar is focused on Western scholarship related to Mongolia and contains over 4,000 items. It receives heavy use by local and international academics. In the United States, the ACMS works with member institutions to develop Inner Asia-focused academic conferences, guest lectures, and public outreach programs.

The ACMS offers an intensive, intermediate level Mongolian language summer program and short Mongolian language and culture classes for visiting academic groups in Ulaanbaatar. The ACMS has partnered with the University of Alaska-Fairbanks and other schools to offer support independent learners, the ACMS developed and posted 160 Mongolian language lesson modules for the beginner and intermediate levels on the Web site www.mongoliacourses.org, and ships language materials from Mongolia to learners around the world.

The ACMS has identified several key goals to be accomplished during the term of this AORC grant, including: (1) continued development of online resources and communities; (2) the expansion and integration of Mongolian language courses and resources; (3) development of the ACMS Research Library collection; (4) expansion of efforts to disseminate knowledge about Mongolia and research opportunities with a special focus on Minority-serving Institutions and community colleges; (5) sponsorship of critical research programs; and (6) the further development of ACMS facilities in Ulaanbaatar. AORC funds will be used directly and indirectly to support these efforts by covering portions of the salaries of key ACMS employees in the Ulaanbaatar office, paying for necessary services and supplies, and ensuring effective oversight and of programs and business practices.

American Institute for Indonesian Studies

The American Institute for Indonesian Studies (AIFIS), which opened a research center in Jakarta in January 2012, fills an urgent need in a country that is politically, economically, religiously, and strategically important to the United States. Indonesia is the world's fourth largest country by population and the fifth largest by area. It is the world's largest Muslim country and the third largest democracy, controlling vast mineral reserves and containing a substantial proportion of the world's humid tropical forest. In addition, Indonesia sits on top of some of the world's most vital sea lanes. The country came into greater prominence with the Obama Administration's recent overtures to Jakarta and the signing in November 2010 of the U.S.-Indonesia Comprehensive Partnership, multi-faceted agreement that lays out many points of bilateral collaboration for the present and future. AIFIS's research center in Jakarta assists in the realization of American goals of maintaining geopolitical stability and economic growth in a strategically important region.

AIFIS was established in 2011 with support from several American and Indonesian foundations and is directed by a board made up of representatives of a consortium of prominent American research universities. AIFIS opened an office and research center in Jakarta in January 2012, with a supervisory representative and deputy director, and since then has been conducted a series of presentations and seminars and assisting American scholars in conducting research in Indonesia. The present proposal is designed to solidify the basis of our Jakarta center and to expand our program activities and offerings. Support for AIFIS's research center will provide a strategic investment in a country that is critically important to the United States.

American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies

The overall purpose of the American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies (AISLS) is to develop and support U.S. research and expertise on Sri Lanka. We seek operating and program support from the U.S. Department of Education for our Overseas Research Center in Colombo, Sri Lanka's main city and cultural, economic and educational center.

This project has five main components. First, it provides operating support for the center, which enables our staff to help U.S. researchers with matters such as security, visas, housing, research permits, access to specialized libraries and archives, and making contacts with Sri Lankan scholars, government officials, and members of civil society. These services are especially important because many graduate students and scholars using the center do not have previous experience working in the country. Second, the project provides support for our language instruction program in Sinhala and Tamil. We also seek to expand access to these languages by creating a new section on our Web site that will focus on instructional materials, and by commissioning essays to our Web site on using research materials in these languages. Third, the project provides for the continuation of our successful workshop programs, which bolsters the expertise of U.S. educators and builds ties between them and their Sri Lankan counterparts. Workshops will continue to cover a wide variety of topics in the humanities and social sciences, but we also plan to shape the program to support other AISLS goals, such as addressing topical and disciplinary weaknesses in U.S. expertise and promoting comparative research and work that is accessible to non-specialists. Fourth, the project provides support for the center library, which has many holdings not available elsewhere in Sri Lanka and some that are not available in the United States. Finally, the project will strengthen AISLS programs that make research materials and other information on Sri Lanka available to U.S. educators. AISLS will expand its efforts to publish bibliographical and other reference information on its Web site, and will continue to respond to requests from U.S. students and scholars for publications and publications and specialized bibliographical information.

The project has been designed to complement AISLS activities that are carried out with other federal and private funds. For instance, the support requested from the Department of Education for the Colombo Center staff and facilities is essential to the success of our research fellowship and dissertation planning grant programs, which are supported by other federal grant funds. AISLS also maximizes the impact of its programs by working closely with its member institutions and other organizations that share its goals. The Digital Library for International Research, for example, hosts our library catalog and our digital library on the Furniture and Decorative Arts of Sri Lanka. We also work with South Asia librarians in the United States to build U.S. holdings on Sri Lanka.

AISLS programs serve some 100 individual members, as well as students and faculty affiliated with the 34 colleges and universities that have institutional or consortium membership. Annual individual membership rates are set at a very affordable level (\$40; \$15 for students), thus ensuring wide access.

Since its incorporation in 1996 and the establishment of its Colombo Center in 2000, AISLS has made important and critical contributions to strengthening U.S. scholarship on Sri Lanka. Support from the U.S. Department of Education is essential for AISLS efforts to continue to deepen and broaden U.S. expertise and to improve the language skills of U.S. specialists.

American Institute of Bangladesh Studies

This proposal seeks support to enhance the contribution of the American Institute of Bangladesh Studies (AIBS) in Bangladesh through support for programs and infrastructure that contribute to strengthening relations between American and Bangladeshi scholars on issues of mutual interest. AIBS programs seek to improve the scholarly understanding of Bangladeshi culture and society in the United States and to promote educational exchange between institutions and scholars in the United States and Bangladesh. AIBS also promotes a better understanding of the United States in Bangladesh through its graduate and senior scholar research exchanges. Through its undergraduate group exchanges and visits of scholars of Bangladesh to undergraduate programs in the United States we also seek to expand opportunities for learning about Bangladesh for U.S. students particularly those students in small colleges and minority-serving institutions that have limited opportunities for international experiential learning.

The recently reopened AIBS office in Dhaka seeks to build on these goals by strengthening its ability to facilitate research and extend expertise on Bangladesh by American researchers, build exchanges between the United States and Bangladesh for researchers and language learners in both countries, sustain an infrastructure with qualified and experienced staff, and ensure continued improvement of AIBS services through ongoing evaluation and assessment. We seek support for an ongoing seminar series, a collaborative conference with other American Overseas Research Centers (AORCs) in the south Asia region, a Bangladesh focused conference on Governance and Leadership in Higher Education, and independent collaborations with institutions in Bangladesh, including building a long-term relationship with the Institute of Bangladesh Studies (IBS) at Rajshahi University.

Our record as a center indicates that interest in Bangladesh Studies is increasing in the United States, as is recognition of AIBS as an institute of research excellence in Bangladesh. To build on this recognition we seek to strengthen the support fellows receive from the Dhaka Center staff through improvements of our infrastructure and resource base. These services include securing research clearance and visas for fellows, encouraging Critical Language Scholarship Program (CLS) participants to apply for AIBS fellowships, augmenting collaboration with Independent University Bangladesh through language learning and scholarly activities and building collaborative activities with other institutions including, in addition to the Institute of Bangladesh Studies in Rajshahi, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee's (BRAC's) Institute of Development Studies and its Institute of Global Health, and Dhaka University departments and programs. We plan to enhance the workshops we offer Bangladeshi graduate students to strengthen their competitive advantage in their applications to study in the United States. In addition, we seek support to improve meeting the needs and interests of community college and minority-serving institutions and encouraging their participation in our efforts through attendance at our annual meeting in the United States. As well, we seek support to encourage short-term undergraduate visits to Bangladesh where our Dhaka staff could provide logistical support and facilitate exchange with our collaborating researchers and institutions. Finally, we seek support to improve our Web site with language materials and the sharing of research from junior and senior scholars and our ongoing seminar series, workshops, and conferences.

American Institute of Indian Studies

The American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) was formed to further the knowledge of India in the United States by supporting American scholarship on India. The major activities of the institute are located in India. The principal methods by which the AIIS achieves its goals are providing financial and logistical support to U.S.-based scholars carrying out research and study in India. It provides language instruction in India to about 180 American graduate and undergraduate students each year and fellowships for research in India to about 35 doctoral and post-doctoral scholars from all fields of academic inquiry focusing on aspects of India, as well as to performing and creative artists. The AIIS maintains two internationally recognized research archives: the Center for Art and Archaeology and the Archives and Research Center for Ethnomusicology. It also organizes faculty development workshops and outreach projects which are primarily directed to previously underrepresented groups; obtains documentation necessary for approximately 250 American academics annually to obtain research visas for India; and provides substantial in-country support (e.g., travel arrangements, access to archives, introductions to pertinent scholars) to scores of American scholars each year and to U.S. study abroad and U.S. Department of Education-funded Group Projects Abroad programs in India.

The AIIS, incorporated in 1961, is a consortium of 71 American universities and colleges in which scholars actively engage in teaching and research about India. The scholars from these institutions who serve the institute as trustees, officers and committee members are recognized as the most respected scholars in the fields of South Asian Studies. The U.S. administrative office of the institute is located at the University of Chicago. In India, the AIIS employs approximately 60 employees, in Delhi (the headquarters and locus of the institute's two research centers), at the Regional Centers in Kolkata and Pune and at Language Program Centers.

The programs of AIIS promote and advance mutual understanding between the citizens of the United States and of India. They contribute to the creation of an increasingly large group of experts on all aspects of India and who will use their knowledge in their teaching, their scholarship, in government service or in their work for non-governmental organizations. All AIIS fellows in India are affiliated with an Indian institution of higher education, and contribute to the scholarly interaction that takes place at that institution. In addition, performing/creative arts fellowships promote the arts of India in the United States through performance as well as teaching. A broad cross-section of the American public benefits from experiencing the arts of India.

The institute endeavors to reach out to the widest possible audience in the United States, in terms of scholarly discipline, geographical location, gender, and national origin. It advertises its programs widely and is constantly exploring new ways of publicizing. It actively solicits applications from students and scholars who are not located at major research universities and not located in large states and has been increasing its efforts at creative and collaborative outreach activities.

The institute seeks U.S. Department of Education funding to maintain services and to enhance in-country support that the institute is able to deliver to its fellows and other scholars working in India -- service nowhere else available yet ones that will significantly aid the research of these scholars. It seeks funding to enhance its successful language programs in India, its outreach efforts, and to fund conferences that will promote exchange among scholars, including a seminar for all junior fellows in India (i.e., Ph.D. candidates) that is intended to facilitate their research and build a sense of community among the new generation of scholars.

American Institute of Pakistan Studies

The American Institute of Pakistan Studies (AIPS) is a member of the Council of American Overseas Research Center (CAORC). Its mission is to encourage and support research on issues relevant to Pakistan and the promotion of scholarly exchange between the United States and Pakistan. The institute's activities during the next four years (2012-2016) will include continued development of its Islamabad and Lahore Centers and expansion of the Karachi Center to support U.S. postgraduate research fellows, academic exchange and area studies in Pakistan. AIPS will also organize lectures and conferences in Pakistan and the United States, and assist Pakistani scholars who will be traveling to the United States as part of the Pakistan Lecture Series. In addition, AIPS will: (i) provide outreach to historically minority institutions in the United States by supporting Pakistan-specific courses to be taught in these institutions; (ii) create programs for faculty from community colleges and minority-serving institutions to attend Pakistan-related workshops in the United States and in Pakistan; (iii) continue to work with the South Asia Summer Language Institute (SASLI) to develop standards for Urdu and Pashto language teaching and evaluation (both languages are a critical priority for national security); (iv) actively seek partners in Pakistan to develop an Urdu program in the country for U.S. scholars; (v) collaborate with the regional Library of Congress office to develop holdings in U.S. universities; and (vi) support outreach lectures on Pakistan for K-12 audiences, community colleges, minority-serving institutions and the general public through the Title VI-supported South Asia Centers and university museums. The above will be in addition to online resources that AIPS offers for undergraduate educators, K-12 public school teachers and librarians to assist in teaching children and young adults about Pakistan's history and culture.

AIPS' presence in Pakistan enhances collaboration between increasing numbers of U.S. visiting scholars with Pakistani institutions. In the forthcoming grant cycle, AIPS will build on its relations with officials at the Embassy in Islamabad, as well as with various Pakistani universities, government institutions such as the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan, civil society organizations and cultural institutions. We will fund lectures, conferences and workshops to expand U.S. academic interest in Pakistan, provide objective information about Pakistan to the U.S. public and enrich academic programs. In short, we endeavor to promote knowledge on Pakistan, encourage international study, train graduate students, and stimulate the study of Urdu, Pashto, and other Pakistani languages.

American Research Institute of the South Caucasus

The American Research Institute of the South Caucasus (ARISC) is the only American Overseas Research Center (AORC) that is being established in the states of the former Soviet Union. Its purview comprises the three countries of the South Caucasus (SC) -- Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia -- and many of its members have long been engaged in scholarship in and about these countries. Since 1991, many scholars unfamiliar with the complexities of research in the ex-Soviet Union have nevertheless sought to investigate new data sets in his previously difficult-to-access region, reflected in the more than doubling of the number of masters and PhD projects about the region from the first to the second half of the last decade. ARISC was founded to facilitate the research work of American scholars exploring this new scholarly landscape of expand knowledge of and interest in the region.

ARISC headquartered at Purdue University, became a Member in Developing Status of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC) in February 2011. Membership comprises 18 consortium institutions, together with 19 individual members and 17 student members. To support its educational and research missions in the SC, and to assist scholars new to the region, ARISC has employed part-time local representatives in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, and has sponsored and co-sponsored lecture series and special events in all three countries and the United States. ARISC has also awarded nine graduate student research fellowships since 2010 and two collaborative heritage preservation grants. Use of its Web resources has almost doubled each year.

With the support of the AORC grant, ARISC plans to achieve the following goals over the four-year performance period: (1) amplify the physical presence of ARISC by establishing permanent centers in all three countries to serve as focal points in support of visiting American scholars, research dissemination, and scholarly exchange; (2) expand our ability to promote postgraduate research in the areas by increasing by 25 percent the number of Americans receiving grants from ARISC, including an innovative grant to provide research assistance to American graduate students and junior scholars who will mentor local students in cutting-edge research approaches; (3) expand and support opportunities for inter-disciplinary engagement and exchange by doubling the number of ARISC-sponsored events, such as panels at professional meetings, lectures and colloquia in both the United States and South Caucasus, and programs for American and local scholars in the host countries; (4) broaden the knowledge of the region by outreach to community colleges and minority-serving institutions through attendance at regional meetings and new curriculum materials; and (5) promote the study of relevant critical languages in the region by publicizing existing programs and by facilitating individual language study through the centers.

The establishment of the physical branches will require amplifying organizational resources, fulfilling requisite legal requirements, and other ministerial tasks. During this process, programming will actively continue and grant opportunities will be expanded. For example, programs in the United States will feature an international interdisciplinary conference called "Caucasus Connections," focusing on the institutions, practices and histories that articulate the various places and peoples of the SC to one another and to their neighbors. Outreach will include presentations at the annual conference of the Midwest Institute for International / Intercultural education. Measurable outcomes of this and other workshops and conferences will consist of new resources for the study of the SC, new ties among scholars in diverse fields, including those at community colleges, and a wider awareness of the potential for research in a region that is gaining increased attention among U.S. scholars across the humanities, social science, and natural science disciplines.

Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute

The Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute (CAARI) is the only foreign research center of its kind in Cyprus. Devoted to the promotion of archaeology, art, history, culture and related research, CAARI serves as a forum and focal point where Cypriot and foreign scholars meet to exchange ideas and experiences. Founded in 1978, CAARI is an American not-for-profit organization incorporated in the State of Massachusetts with 501(c)(3) tax status and registered in Cyprus as a non-profit overseas company and is a member of a consortium with the American Schools for Oriental Research (ASOR). CAARI's excellent and truly unique library is a principal source for researchers worldwide. Thousands of scholars from Cyprus, the United States, and overseas make use of the library each year and hundreds of U.S. and foreign scholars annually use CAARI as a residence and base of operations for research projects. CAARI offers a range of fellowships and scholarships to help American academics and students come to Cyprus and for research and training, and serves the wider academic community by providing many of the logistical and research needs of scholars coming to Cyprus. CAARI also provides a network by which scholars can connect to the wider Mediterranean world and also acting as liaison between the local community and foreign researchers, facilitating access to museum collections, collaborative research libraries, governmental and ecclesiastical bodies, archaeological sites, and other locally-available resources.

CAARI is an authorized field station for conducting primary research and is an authorized institution where scholars can study collections. CAARI itself holds an extensive collection of over 14,000 artifactual and ecofactual reference and study materials, and there is adequate laboratory space where scientific analyses can be conducted. The institute also has nearly 300 historical and contemporary maps of Cyprus, and an even larger collection of maps of the Eastern Mediterranean. These maps have all been digitized and will make up part of our new geographic information systems (GIS) laboratory that is under development.

The purpose of this grant is to assist in the operational expenses of maintaining CAARI's undergraduate and postgraduate academic fellowship programs, our residential facilities, laboratories, library and computer network and program costs. These funds will go toward four main areas:

- 1) Operational expenses (including staff salaries)
- 2) Laboratory improvement and equipment purchase (including investment in the artifact and bone labs and to develop a new GIS microlab)
- 3) Library acquisitions to meet the coverage of expanding scientific analyses
- 4) Financial assistance with program budget (including the lecture series, the annual workshop and special conference in 2013 honoring the legacy of archaeologist JRB Stewart).

This request for funding will provide a portion of the annual costs of maintaining CAARI's facilities and to administer the ongoing fellowship programs for American students and senior scholars.

West African Research Association

The West African Research Association (WARA), founded in 1989, is a consortium of U.S. colleges and universities with significant research interests in West Africa. WARA's mission is to promote collaborative research and exchange between U.S. and West African scholars, students, and institutions and to support the training and development of a pool of Americans with expertise on this region. The fact that populations of African descent have played such a vital role in the economic and cultural development of the United States is an important reason to cultivate our knowledge and understanding of this under-studied region. At the same time, given the rapidly changing geopolitical environment in West Africa and its growing strategic importance to the United States, it is critically important that we develop a cadre of individuals who have a solid understanding of the region and who are fluent in its languages and cultures.

WARA is a member of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers and maintains the only research center of its kind in sub-Saharan West Africa, embracing 18 countries. The center serves American scholars working in the region, study abroad students from a number of U.S. institutions, and a community of local and regional scholars. Located in Dakar, Senegal, a hub of intellectual activity that draws scholars from throughout the region, the West African Research Center (WARC) provides an institutional presence and lends continuity and stability to programs sponsored by U.S. postsecondary institutions. WARC enjoys a collaborative relationship with the principal universities in Senegal and offers an array of supportive services to visiting scholars and affiliated institutions from the United States, including a research library, computers and wireless internet access, conference facilities, and logistical and scholarly support. Through its program of regular seminars, film screenings, exhibits, and forums, WARC provides a rich and vibrant venue for scholarly exchange between American scholars and their West African counterparts.

Each year WARA awards a number of postgraduate research fellowships to U.S. scholars to conduct research in West Africa, with special priority given to students enrolled in HBCUs. Through its Residency Program, WARA makes it possible for member institutions to host West African scholars on their campuses and in their communities. WARA facilitates and organizes study tours and professional development seminars for American faculty on pertinent topics such as Islam in West Africa; West Africa and the Atlantic world; and West African film and literature. These programs increase the capacity of U.S. faculty teaching about Africa. WARA works with community colleges to bring Africa specialists to their campuses and to enhance their Africa offerings. WARA's African Language Materials Archive (ALMA) is at the forefront in the development and dissemination of African language materials for instructional use.

WARA receives funding for its programs from membership dues and contributions, funds generated from its programs, and a grant from the Educational and Cultural Affairs Bureau of the U.S. State Department.

We are requesting funds to support operation of WARA's overseas headquarters, for a Minority Graduate Student Internship, for essential staff travel, board meeting costs, and costs associated with financial management. These administrator functions allow us to provide the rich programming that has become associated with WARA.

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