L2/26-242

TO: UTC
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This document provides a summary of the UC Berkeley Script Encoding Initiative's recent activities.

Proposals/documents

The following SEI-funded proposals were recently submitted to Unicode:

- Proposal to Encode **Codical Maya Hieroglyphs** in Unicode, Carlos Pallán, Andrew Glass, and Céline Tamignaux [L2/26-145-R3]
- Proposal to encode **Vatteluttu** in Unicode, Anshuman Pandey [to be posted]

Ongoing Script Work

In addition to those listed above, the following script proposals are in active development, and are expected to be submitted to SEW for review in the next six months:

- Kulitan (Revised)
- Linear Elamite (Revised)
- Masaba (Revised)
- Persian Siyaq (Revised)
- Proto-Sinaitic (Preliminary)
- Zou (Zolai) (Revised)

Other ongoing projects include: Book Pahlavi, Box-Headed, Byblos, Kerinci, Kurukh Banna, Proto-Elamite, Ranjana, and a review of the Rejang code block. We have also been assisting on a Gurung Khema font and other support, in conjunction with JamraPatel and Translation Commons.

SEI is exploring measures to help coordination with other Unicode working groups such as Properties and Algorithms (PAG) once a proposal has passed review and provisional assignment.

The full list of SEI-funded projects, including those currently inactive or awaiting more information, is available on the SEI website (sei.berkeley.edu/scripts-to-encode).

Research Activities

Ongoing Projects

This cycle of SEI's annual fellowship is coming to an end. This year's fellows worked on Buginese-derived scripts (Febri Muhammad Nasrullah), Nsibidi (Jordan Williams), and Kulitan (Julie Sayo). Reflections from each will be coming out on the SEI blog this fall; we anticipate applications for the next cycle opening in December 2026.

We have several scholars joining our team this fall:

- **Katie Russell** (PhD, UC Berkeley) joins SEI in a two-year postdoctoral position, focusing on neographies and the stakes surrounding their digitization
- **Logan Simpson** (PhD, Queen Mary) is conducting research on the Crawford Shanghainese script and the language politics surrounding Tulu-Tigalari
- **Karthik Malli** (MA, University of Washington) continues research on the impacts of hot-metal type on Indic scripts with us
- UC Berkeley undergraduate students **Claire Kim, David Milberg, and Mae Richardson** are helping organize scanned materials from Stanford's Unicode Collections, building on work started this summer by undergraduate intern **Bryce Hoenigman** (UChicago)
- UC Berkeley undergraduate students **Nina Elmoyan, Donovan Farmer, and Mae Richardson** are conducting a review of past encoding decisions with regards to neographies

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Missing Scripts project, a collaboration with ANRT Nancy and IDG Mainz. We hosted an exhibit in honor of the milestone at UTW 2026, highlighting student projects across the years.

We were also pleased to publish the fourth version of the World's Writing Systems posters. This release includes updated script and Unicode version data and appears in two versions: chronological and family clusters. Further publications are planned for the anniversary, including a commemorative book detailing the particularities of researching and designing for minority scripts.



Right: Chronological poster displayed at the Missing Scripts exhibition at ANRT, Nancy, France.

Publications

- Anushah Hossain published an article in the *Journal of Asian Studies* titled "ISCII Imperialism: The Legacy of a Devanagari-Centric Character Code." The article is part of the October 2026 special issue on "Unicode and the Humanities," edited by Raja Adal and Christopher Lowy. The issue also includes a roundtable discussion on "What Unicode Means to the Humanities"

Recent Gatherings & Presentations

- **UTW 2026: Unicode in the World** (Nancy, Oct 20-23, 2026):
    - Kyra Ann Dawkins and Helena Kansa presented "Accessibility Encoded: A Survey of Scripts for Disability Inclusion in the Unicode Standard"
    - Andrew Glass, Gabrielle Vail, and Alexandre Bassi presented "Developing an Encoding for Maya Hieroglyphs"
    - Anushah Hossain, Debbie Anderson, Helena Kansa, Kyra Ann Dawkins, and Katie Russell held "Office Hours with the Script Encoding Initiative"
- French Senate Committee on Culture, Education, Communication and Sport (September 2026): Anushah Hossain spoke with a delegation on a panel entitled "IA impact on education, culture and society"

Public Communications

SEI has continued sharing its work via a monthly newsletter and its blog. Recent blog posts include:

- Symbolism and Ephemera: Exploring Usage of the Kulitan Script of the Philippines by Julie Sayo
- Dispatches from the Worlds of Digital Text by Anushah Hossain

This September, we hosted our second annual Open House at UC Berkeley to kick off the academic year. More than 50 students, faculty, staff, and friends from the wider Bay Area writing systems community came together to learn about our work and ways to get involved.



SEI Open House attendees poring over versions of the World's Writing Systems posters. Every copy found a home by the end of the day!

Administrative Updates & Funding

SEI turns 25 in 2027. To mark the occasion, we look forward to hosting the Unicode Technical Committee meeting at UC Berkeley in April 2027, and will hold a one-day workshop of seminars and a reception on Monday, April 12, ahead of the week of UTC meetings. All UTC participants are warmly invited.

SEI, alongside the other Missing Scripts partners, partnered with the Unicode Consortium to co-host UTW 2026: Unicode in the World this October at the Atelier National de Recherche Typographique (ANRT) in Nancy, France. The event built on a year of planning, with SEI contributing to conceptualization, program development, promotion, and organizational infrastructure.

SEI is currently pursuing membership in INCITS Character Sets and Internationalization.

SEI is formally housed in the Department of Linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley, but is entirely sustained by external grants and donations.

This year we raised $3500 from UC Berkeley's annual fundraiser, the Big Give, and other private donations. This funding enabled SEI to support a number of scholarships to UTW 2026 and UTC #189 in Nancy, France.

Ongoing funding for basic operations and script research currently comes from the Mellon Foundation's Public Knowledge program, and will provide support from Sept 2024 - Aug 2028. Additional funding for public communications projects from Sept 2024 - Dec 2026 comes from the Internet Society Foundation. Funding for our neography research stream comes from the U.S. National Science Foundation, under the Science and Technology Studies program, from Sept 2026 - Aug 2028. Proposal work by Anshuman Pandey and Carlos Pallán is also being supported through the Unicode Adopt-a-Character (AAC) program.

With our current grants concluding in 2028, SEI is actively seeking support to sustain its work beyond that date. SEI accepts donations from private donors via our website. If you would like to explore the possibility of a program-level donation, please get in touch.