Digitally Smart: Japan's Move Toward a Digitally-Enabled Society
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Over the last decade, Japan has put increasing emphasizes on the technologies, business models and government policies needed to transform the country into a "smart society." Major urban initiatives, smart energy grids, smart phone-enabled systems, digitally-advanced homes and many other such efforts have kept Japan at the forefront internationally in the practical implementation of digital technologies for domestic and industrial use. The country's ambitious Japan 5.0 policy is one of the largest digital policy strategies of its type, calling for major government and private investments in emerging digital systems. This presentation examines the background to Japan's digital transformation and considers the effort to create "digital growth," wherein national investments in digital connectivity and consumer empowerment become the foundation for a national economic development and international export strategy designed specifically for the post-industrial age.

Digitalization and the Democratization of Historical Discourse: A Case Study of Museums Presenting Images of Japan’s Wartime Past
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Japan’s wartime past remains a contentious issue. Museums are key players in the public representation of this historical period, not just through the direct impact of the viewpoints they explicitly or implicitly advocate, but also through the way their curatorial decisions about what to preserve and how to display it affect the discourse about past events. Museums present a variety of competing narratives advanced by the interests that establish them, including, inter alia, national governments and non-governmental organizations. Using Japan’s wartime past as a case study, this research examines the museum world as an ecosystem in which each type of institution plays a different role: explicitly advancing a specific viewpoint, attracting and preserving various classes of artifacts, serving different research specialties, appealing to different categories of visitors, etc. It argues that this variety is needed for a healthy, balanced evolution of our understanding of any complex period, and that such variation requires the removal of artificial barriers to the emergence and development of new forms of institutions, particularly virtual or on-line museums.
This paper examines the potential of digital resources for research, learning and teaching in the field of Japan Studies outside Japan, particularly in Canada. The paper focuses on the case of the “One Hundred Poets Open Collection” (hereafter “HNIS”), a digital resource derived from the personal collection of Professor Joshua S. Mostow from the University of British Columbia. “HNIS” is published as a digital collection in the library platform of UBC and available online without restrictions. The collection includes images and bibliographic data of mostly early modern woodblock print books, manuscripts, graphics and cards on the topic of “Ogura Hyakunin isshu” — a critical anthology consisting of one hundred waka poems by one hundred different poets in the Heian and the early Kamakura periods— and its adaptations.

The intent is to argue that usage statistics of “HNIS” to date demonstrate the ability of digital technologies to expand and support the needs of Japan Studies communities far beyond immediate geographical proximity. The paper points out that the images in “HNIS” have the characteristic of multidisciplinary resources and that they constitute a significant contribution to research, learning and teaching.

As such, they have the potential to enrich perceptions about Japan, its culture and history.