



About the Digital Bible Library

The Digital Bible Library® (DBL) is an online digital asset and licensing management platform developed and maintained by the United Bible Societies. DBL gathers, validates, and safeguards a large collection of quality, standardized, digital Scripture texts and publication assets, in hundreds of languages -- all contributed by a growing number of partnering translation agencies. DBL enables the secure licensing and distribution of these resources to approved internal or external ministry partners. In this way DBL seeks to empower others to reach people from every tribe, in every nation, with the power of God's Word in their heart language.

Vision and Mission of the Digital Bible Library®

The vision for The Digital Bible Library™ is to contain digital Scripture, in every language spoken on earth by the year 2033.

Its mission is to gather, validate, and safeguard Scripture translation content in a standardized digital format, and to empower partners to reach people from every tribe, in every nation, with the power of God's Word in their heart language by providing authorized and licensed access to the library content.

Learn More

The **Digital Bible Library®** (DBL) is a primary tool within a larger digital scripture development ecosystem: a deeply integrated, shared technical infrastructure designed to help accelerate the scripture translation process, provide new insight into the translation development process, and facilitate global access to the Bible.

Now housing a secure collection of over 1,100 texts, across more than 900 unique languages, the DBL streamlines licensing and access to high-quality, digitized translations by approved ministries, mission agencies, and technology innovators – to help bring God's Word to every part of the world.

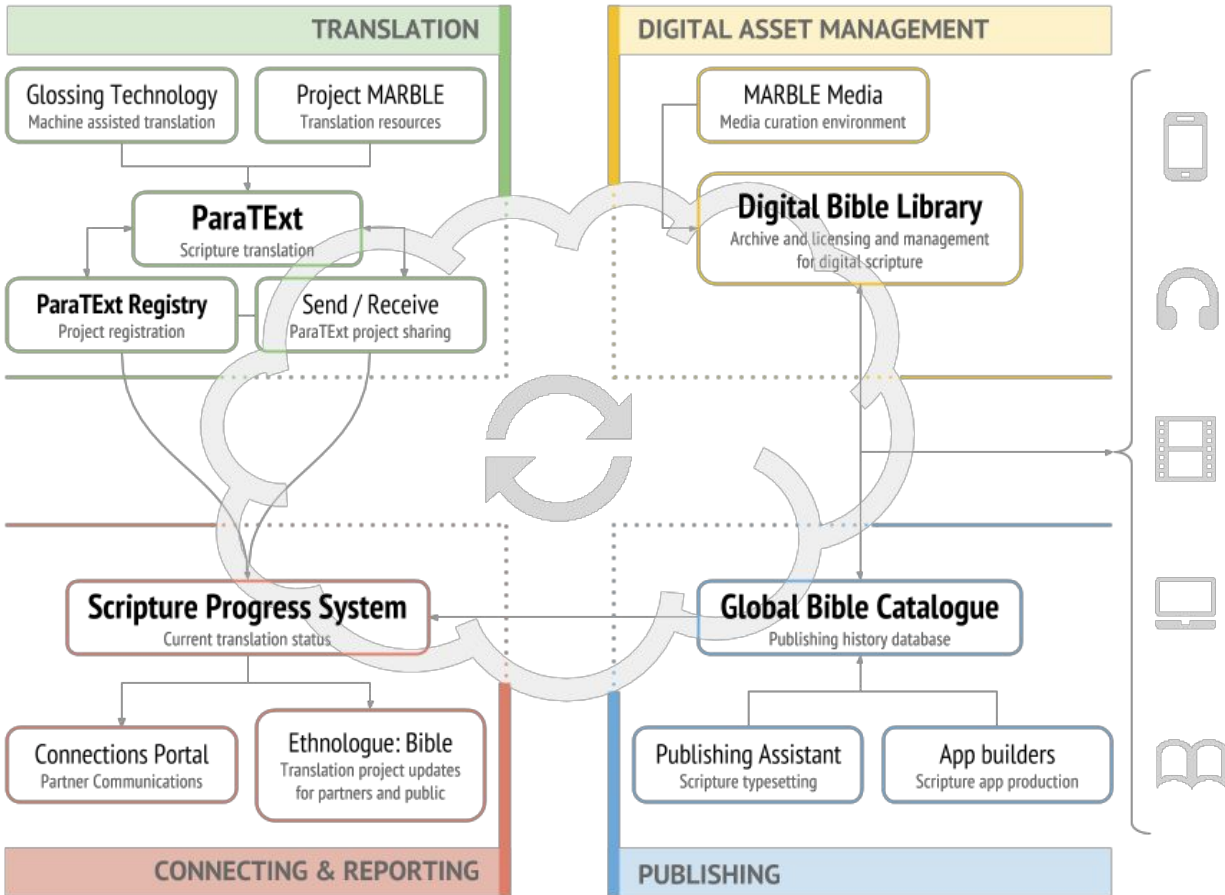
A Digital Ecosystem

Development of the digital ecosystem is facilitated and generously supported by the [Every Tribe Every Nation](#) (ETEN) alliance – an informal collaborative alliance between the world’s largest translation agencies and a team of resourcing partners, dedicated to the vision of eliminating Bible poverty. Today, these partners remain committed to collaboration and innovation around these two urgent priorities:

1. Increasing the speed, cost-effectiveness, and quality of ongoing translation work, with a focus on those who have no access to God’s Word;
2. Creating infrastructure and systems which facilitate Scripture access and use, including not only translation work, but also distribution, engagement, and the commitment of resources toward the goals.

Other components within the ecosystem include:

- **ParaText** - World’s leading software application for Bible translation development. Developed jointly by UBS and SIL International, it enables consistent and accurate translation, based original texts, and modelled on versions in major languages.
- **ParaText Registry** - A comprehensive list of ongoing translation projects, team members, and project progress information.
- **Project MARBLE** - A system for automating linking of media resources such as images, audio, and video to scripture texts within ParaText, helping translators to better understand the meaning of scripture passages, and to translate difficult passages accurately and quickly.
- **Publishing Assistant** - ParaText helps translators to translate the Bible. Publishing Assistant helps publishers to publish it. This software reads ParaText project data into typesetting software to create PDF files ready for printing.
- **Global Bible Catalogue** - Contains all of the essential background information (or ‘metadata’) about known Bible publications. This database provides critical metadata information for content stored within the DBL.
- **Scripture Progress System** - A well-organised data warehouse containing a large volume of information about Bible translation worldwide.
- **Ethnologue: Bible** - What Bible translations are underway at the moment? How far have they progressed? This system will provide donors and other stakeholders with access to the latest Bible translation and publication data in user-friendly maps and graphs.



Development, Location, and Security

DBL technical development, maintenance, and support is handled by the Institute for Computer Assisted Publishing (ICAP), a global initiative of the United Bible Societies which provides technology support and training for the scripture translation and publishing community. The ICAP team has extensive experience in text archiving and data conversion, and a long history of working closely with national Bible Societies and partner agencies. The knowledge and expertise accrued in this area serves as a foundation for the ongoing development of the Digital Bible Library.

The DBL follows industry standard protocols and best practices for securing its stored texts and digital files, and for managing access to the library. DBL runs on high availability servers in a proven commercial network infrastructure. Software upgrades, data backups to multiple global locations, and system maintenance are all performed routinely.

Digital Formats

What is stored in DBL?

DBL is both a library for securely storing long term project archives, as well as a licensing management and distribution environment. Scripture texts are stored in two distinct packages - an 'archive' component, and a licensable 'text release bundle' component.

- The **archive** component remains private, and is available for disaster recovery of a project's data for the benefit of the translation team.
- The text **release** bundle contains the scripture text in XML format together with supporting files providing publication metadata, language, versification, and style references. The release bundle is the package of data which may be licensed to external partners.

Scripture XML

Accessing Bible text is commonly done using a reference format consisting of book, chapter, and verse. When preparing a Bible for print, readability is a major concern, which leads to an increased level of complexity. This is because most Bibles contain another hierarchical structure that defines paragraphs, poetical lines, quotes, and other formatting elements. These two hierarchies—book/chapter/verse and formatting for readability—overlap each other.

This overlapping structure is a challenge to describe using XML, since XML is strictly a hierarchical syntax. The suitability of the format is, in many ways, determined by the intended use of the text. For print use, or even some types of digital display of Scripture by chapter, a structure based on readability of the overall content is ideal. However, the selection and display of individual verses may be better defined with a book/chapter/verse hierarchy.

Scripture texts in DBL are contained in an XML format known as [USX](#). USX is an XML structure which is aligned very tightly to the internal format used in ParaText by the translation team. This close association with the translation environment used to author the text provides additional assurance that the validated content has not been altered by a complex conversion process.

Digitizing Existing Translations

Many existing published translations of Scripture are still scheduled to become part of the Digital Bible Library. Some of these translations already exist in a digital format and need only to be converted to the proper format for upload. Other translations may exist only in a printed form which will require data entry and careful validation. In every case, all required companion metadata providing a full description of the translation text must be added to the Global Bible Catalogue before a submission to DBL can be done.

Quality Assurance

Any digital file stored in the Digital Bible Library® must meet a strict standard of quality. The founding Bible agencies in the ETEN alliance bring 500 years of combined experience in working with translations around the world, and their expertise is well documented. For this reason, Library Card Holders can be sure that the translations and other digital files found on the shelves are faithful to the biblical text, and have passed a rigid technical validation process.

Rights Management

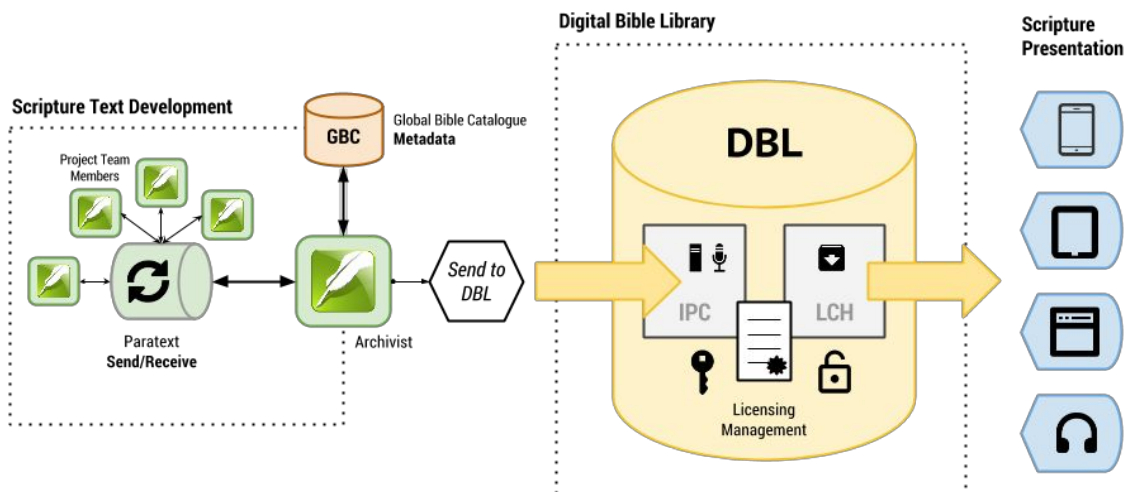
The Digital Bible Library® streamlines the process of rights acquisition through standardized agreements with copyright holders.

DBL provides an interface for contributing organizations (IPCs) to add and maintain licensing documents, which can then be used for defining the terms for agreements granted to publishing partners (LCHs). Approved LCH organizations are able to browse the DBL catalog and request access to specific content. DBL tracks and manages the agreement workflow, whether initiated by an IPC or LCH, and maintains an ongoing log of events and agreements between organizations.

Each copyright holder has the ability to grant or revoke access to content through the Digital Bible Library® interface.

Adding to the DBL

[ParaText](#) provides the uploader client used for submitting scripture text content to DBL. The scripture text itself is maintained within ParaText by the translation or text maintenance team. The ParaText project includes different sections of configuration settings which supply a portion of the metadata required for submission to DBL. The [Global Bible Catalogue](#) (GBC) provides the remainder of the required metadata. ParaText validates that the scripture text and the gathered metadata conform to the standards and syntax defined for a DBL text release bundle.



Complete workflow diagram

Founding Partners

[Every Tribe Every Nation](#) (ETEN) represents a unique alliance of the largest Bible agencies in the world. Although in other settings these global, historic organizations would separately produce their own digital repositories, the ETEN alliance members have worked together to contribute a large volume of digital scripture texts to the DBL – currently over 1,100 texts, across more than 900 unique languages. Collectively, these agencies bring 500 years of combined experience in working with translations around the world, and are involved in 90 percent of all translation work being done globally. Collaboration in the field has supported cooperation in creating this first-of-its-kind alliance.

United Bible Societies: A global fellowship, combining 146 national Bible Societies that operate in over 200 countries and territories. Joined together, they are the biggest translator, publisher and distributor of the Bible in the world.

American Bible Society: After nearly 200 years of ongoing ministry, American Bible Society continues to invite people to experience the life-changing message of the Bible. American Bible Society contributes significant resources and technical knowledge, including the Nida Institute for Biblical Scholarship, Bibles.com and BibleSearch (bibles.org).

Biblica: Since its founding in 1806, Biblica has translated, published, and provided more than 650 million Bibles and biblical resources. Today it serves in 55 countries through Bible translation, Bible publishing, and Bible engagement, making the transforming message of God's Word accessible for people in any life circumstance.

Wycliffe: For its 70-year history, the Wycliffe Family of Organizations has played a key role in completing more than 700 Scripture translations, with hundreds more currently being done. The organizations complete the critical work of translating Scripture, training field personnel, and promoting interest in translation work still in process.