Thank you Sam. I had the great pleasure of tagging along with Sam in October as he went barnstorming through India. We spoke at the Sabarmati Ashram on Gandhiji’s birthday, there were speeches to the Indian Institution of Engineers, at the Mayo Boy's College, at Rajasthan Central University, and everywhere he was mobbed with admirers. When we got out of the car at Gandhi’s ashram, there were at least 100 people who surrounded him taking selfies.

His contributions to India for over 50 years, from bringing telephones to every village to his more recent work advising Prime Ministers, creating food banks, and so many other things, have been immense. Thank you for joining us tonight.

I have a few closing thoughts, but before I get to those I would be remiss if I did not thank some of the people on whose shoulders we stand tonight. The Digital Library of India would never have been possible without the visionary efforts of Carnegie Mellon University and the Million Books Project pioneered by Professor Raj Reddy and Dean Gloria St. Clair.

In India, the Digital Library of India project has been headed by a distinguished computer scientist, Professor Narayanaswamy Balakrishnan. The Digital Library of India is now a project of the government of India with 25 scan centers throughout the country, and it is a huge undertaking.
The library has 550,000 books scanned, and we have over 400,000 of those spinning and available today here at the Internet Archive. We’re delighted to be working closely with the project.

It truly is a remarkable collection, particularly when it comes to Indian languages. There are over 45,000 books in Hindi, 33,000 in Sanskrit, 30,000 in Bengali, and much more. Overall, there are 50 different languages represented.

When books are ingested here at the Internet Archive, you’ll see that in addition to the basic PDF file, they are run through Optical Character Recognition.

In addition to OCR, you’ll see that the books are transformed into formats that work with your e-book reader, your Kindle, and your tablet. You can search across the collections using advanced criteria, and you can even search inside the books.

One of the things we’re trying to do on the collection is help improve the metadata. One of the engineers here at the Internet Archive has been experimenting with fuzzy matching on titles, creators, and other metadata fields to try and link each book to identifiers such as ISBN numbers and the Open Library card catalog.

You’ll notice at the bottom of each item in the Digital Library of India there is a spot for “reviews.” Professor Dominik Wujastyk, a distinguished Sanskrit scholar at the University of Alberta, has been using that space to add much better metadata to dozens of books he knows about.
You could do the same thing! If you speak Gujarati, for example, go through some of the 13,000 Gujarati texts and use the reviews space to let us know if there is a better title or author, or maybe if we just got it all wrong! We need your help.

Our second collection tonight is Hind Swaraj, a project that I've had lots of fun putting together. This started when I went to see Sam a while back. While we were chatting, he pulled out his laptop and asked me “You have a stick?”

I handed him a USB drive and we continued talking. At the end, he handed me 9 gigabytes of PDF files. I asked him what they were and he said “100 volumes of the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi in the new electronic edition.” I was astounded.

The 100 volumes of the Collected Works was created by the Sabarmati Ashram, in particular by Ms. Dina Patel, who has toiled for years with a team of volunteers to create this definitive electronic edition of the works of the Mahatma. It is truly a monumental accomplishment! She is now putting together the resources to create the Hindi edition of all 100 volumes, and I am looking forward to seeing that come together. It has been a real pleasure to work with her.

When I posted the Collected Works, I started looking around the net for other resources in a similar vein and found the complete works of Jawaharlal Nehru on a government server, but not in a terribly useful format and I assembled those into PDF files. There were 3 volumes missing, and I’ve found and scanned two of them, and just ordered the last one. So, we’re almost complete with 77 of the 78 volumes.
Likewise, the first 20 volumes of the complete works of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar were also on a government web server, and I’m pleased to announce that we have now supplemented that collection with the last 6 volumes that were not previously available, so that set is now complete.

The collection is much more than books though. There are 129 audio files of Gandhiji speaking on All India Radio. For each of those audio files, I extracted the English translation or report from the Collected Works and put that with the item. So, after listening to the speech, you can read the translation, then click into the Collected Works to see what Gandhiji said the next day and the day before that, letting you walk through all his public speeches in the last year of his amazing life.

In addition to Gandhiji’s audio files, there are quite a few audio files of Nehru, Rabindranath Tagore, Rajiv Gandhi, Indira Gandhi, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Professor Radhakrishnan, Saradar Patel, and more.

I’m really pleased that the collection also has all 53 episodes of the 1988 Doordarshan production Bharat Ek Khoj, the history of India as told by Nehru in that fantastic book he wrote while sitting in a jail cell, the Discovery of India.

All 53 episodes have subtitles in English, and we’ve been working with an innovative Bengaluru startup named E-Bhasha Language Services. For 6 of the episodes—including both of the Gandhi episodes and both of the Ramayana episodes—we now have subtitles not only in English, but also in Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, and Telugu. Our hope is to get all 53 episodes subtitled this way so the history of India can be available to schoolchildren all across India and around the world.
We have two more resources relating to India.

First, I found 90,000 photographs on the Ministry of Information servers that were publicly viewable, but not in a very convenient way. I pulled all of them in, and took 12,000 of the photos that are of high quality and historical significance and put them on Flickr, sorting them out by category. So, if you want photos of trains, or temples, or rural India, or cricket, or pictures of Nehru and Indira Gandhi when she was a little girl, there they are.

Finally, there is a collection which is the one I have spent the most time on, and that is the technical public safety standards of India, over 19,000 official Indian Standards. You can find them on the Internet Archive and also on my server at law.resource.org.

Our world is a technical world today. Technical public safety standards cover areas such as the National Building Code of India, standards for the safe application of pesticides, standards for processing spices and food, standards for the proper operation of textile machines, the safety of bridges and roads, and much more.

Many of these standards are required by law or enacted into law. They are the law. There are dozens of products that you cannot sell in India unless they are certified to meet a particular Indian Standard, products such as cement, household electronic goods, food products, and automobile accessories.
Knowing the laws that keep the factories and products safe is essential to the conduct of business in India and overseas. You cannot make in India unless you make by these rules. These codes are law.

But, this is about much more than the economy. Indian Standards specify how to keep Indian cities and villages safe, how hazardous materials should be transported, providing proper exits in schools and public buildings in case of fire, how electricity should be safely wired. Every city official, school headmaster, building owner, and concerned citizen should have access to this important government information.

This is also not just about the economy and public safety, it is about education. Indian Standards represent the best codified knowledge of the technical world of India. The standards are created by eminent engineers, civil servants, and professors who volunteer their time. These standards are a crucial educational tool to be used by the 6 million engineering students in Indian universities.

For the Indian Standards, we have done more than simply scan and post the documents. Close to 1,000 key standards have been transformed into modern HTML. We have redrawn the diagrams into the open SVG format, we have reset the tables. This means you can view the standards on your mobile phone and it is easy to cut and paste high-quality diagrams and text into your paper or software program, they have become much more usable.
All across the world, not just in India, technical public safety laws are sold for very high prices and many of them bear stringent copyright notices prohibiting duplication. The National Building Code of India, for example, costs 13,760 rupees. That’s $213. For a book! In India! And, if you want to buy one outside of India, the foreign price is 1.4 lakh rupees. $2000. For a mandatory building code!

One would think it is obvious that these documents, which have the force of law and govern the safety of our society should be available, but all over the world these public safety laws have been sold under onerous terms and caviar prices. This is a global problem, a problem that reaches beyond partisan politics and political divisions.

I set out 10 years ago to change this situation, and it has been a long journey. In India, we presented our case for more open distribution of these government documents in a formal petition to the Ministry. I was joined in this petition with affidavits from Sam, from Vint Cerf—the father of the Internet—and by distinguished engineering professors throughout India.

When the petition was turned down, we presented ourselves to the Honorable High Court of Delhi in New Delhi in a public interest litigation suit which is ongoing. I am joined as petitioner by two of my colleagues in India, Mr. Srinivas Kodali, a transportation engineer and Dr. Sushant Sinha, the creator of Indian Kanoon, the free, public system that provides access to all court opinions and all laws.
We are represented before the High Court by Mr. Nishith Desai and his firm, and by the Honorable Salman Khurshid, the former Minister of Law and former Minister of External Affairs. I am very pleased that Mr. Desai is here with us tonight.

Availability of the law is not just a question for India, it is a global challenge. We have a similar suit in the Court of Appeals in the United States, and in Europe we are fighting in the courts of Germany for the right of citizens to read and post EU-mandated safety standards. For our United States case we are represented in the District of Columbia by EFF and Fenwick & West and I am pleased that Mitch Stoltz of EFF is also in the audience tonight.

What is remarkable in this global legal campaign is that all of the lawyers are working on a pro bono basis, working for free, including Mr. Desai and Mr. Khurshid. There are 9 law firms throughout the world assisting us in petitioning our governments, contributing tens of thousands of hours in free legal help.

This is because they believe that in countries governed by the rule of law, the laws must be available, because ignorance of the law is no excuse. The laws must be available for all to read because in a democracy, the laws are owned by the people, the government works for us. We own the law. We must know our rights and our obligations if we are to be an informed citizenry. Democracy depends on this.
When Gandhiji was in South Africa, he was much more than just a lawyer. He was also a publisher. He sought to change the world through the courts and petitions, but also in the social media of his day. He was a blogger, a news syndicator. He was cutting edge high-tech in his use of publishing technology.

When he opened the Phoenix Ashram, the very first thing they did was dismantle the printing press in Durban, load it into four wagons, each one of which was driven by a team of 16 oxen, and they hauled that press into the wilderness.

When they got to the new site of Phoenix, there were no buildings yet. The very first building they made was to house the printing press, they camped outside until that was done. At Phoenix, everybody learned to typeset, everybody spent time with the printing press.

This was what Gandhiji called bread labor, doing something with your hands every day. Genesis 3:19 says that “by the sweat of your brow you will eat your food” and that became a central tenet of his philosophy. Gandhiji said:

"Intelligent bread labour is any day the highest form of social service. For what can be better than that a man should by his personal labour add to the useful wealth of the country? ‘Being’ is ‘doing.'"
That is a remarkable statement, one that we should all heed. We must all do bread labor, and we must all also become what Gandhi called public workers, people working to make our society better, what Gandhiji calls “the lesson of service instead of self-interest.” Bread labor and public work were two foundations of Gandhi’s philosophy and those teachings motivated and inspired people to unite around a common goal.

Our world today is a perplexing place. I worked for 15 years in Washington, D.C. and I have never seen our government in such disarray. The United States is not the only country to face such chaos, though we certainly appear to have brought chaos to a previously unimagined level.

All across the world, there are wars, the violence of state against state, but also violence of the state against the people, violence of people against each other, against women and children, against people who are simply different. There are shocking and horrific acts of terrorism.

There is famine and disease which we could stop if we only had the will.

There is the shocking act of violence against our planet, violence that we may have committed in ignorance in the past but that today we commit with full knowledge of the implications of our neglect.

As individuals, it is tempting to disengage, to lead our daily lives and ignore the things that seem beyond our powers, to withdraw from participation in public life, to stop holding our leaders accountable. But, that would be wrong.
John F. Kennedy once said that if we make the peaceful means of revolution impossible, then the violent means of revolution are inevitable. I put it to you that despite the chaos of our world, there is also hope. The Internet makes possible universal communications and it makes possible universal access to all knowledge. These are the peaceful means of revolution, but only if we embrace them.

Education is how we can transform our society. We must educate our children. We must educate our rulers. We must educate ourselves.

John Adams wrote that the American revolution was only possible because our founders were men and women of learning, people who knew history. He said that “ignorance and inconsideration are the two great causes of the ruin of mankind.” He said that a democracy cannot work if the citizenry is not an informed citizenry. He said we should “tenderly and kindly cherish … the means of knowledge. Let us dare to read, think, speak, and write. Let every order and degree among the people rouse their attention and animate their resolution.”

In India, that brave and long struggle for swaraj that led to the birth of a new nation—a struggle that led to that tryst with destiny—a struggle that inspired all the world to action—that struggle was also based on an informed citizenry. Gandhiji was invoking Justice Ranade when he said we must educate ourselves so as to warn our rulers.
The men and women who led India into the modern world were scholars and historians as well as leaders. Look at the amazing books Nehru wrote in a jail cell. Look at the immense learning of Dr. Ambedkar, who led the drafting of the constitution. Look at the worldwide reputation of Professor Radhakrishnan, a distinguished leader who was still a prolific scholar during his entire time in office.

In India and America, the largest democracies in our world, we have a special obligation to be informed citizens. We must all be active citizens, we must all do bread labor, we must all be public workers.

Universal access to knowledge is the great unachieved promise of our times. By informing ourselves, by educating our children, by struggling to change the world instead of allowing the times to beat us into apathy, we can all walk together down that road of progress, and, as Martin Luther King so often said, “the crooked ways will be made straight and the rough roads will be made smooth” until, arm in arm, we arrive at that shining city on the hill, that place with a library containing universal access to all knowledge, a free library, a library we can pass on as a gift to future generations.

Please help us build that library. It is bread labor. It is public work.

Jai Hind! God bless America!

Thank you!