



[Introduction](#)

[Language Atlas Source](#)

[Maps](#)

[Contacts](#)

[Related Projects](#)

[ECAI Austronesia](#)

[Batanes Cultural Atlas](#)

Introduction

David Blundell

ECAI Pacific Language Mapping Project Editor: pacific@berkeley.edu

Languages included in this Atlas cover about one third of the world's 6,000 languages. The regions of the Pacific, Southeast Asia (apart from Burma), and Madagascar are documented. By the end of this century most of these languages will be extinct, thus limiting our ability to comprehend the diversity of human experience.

The importance of ECAI mapping these languages and cultures, whether on a single island or across the vastness of Oceania, is to geographically view layers of data through time. This process allows for geo-referenced data to be accessible with the ability to electronically connect, display, share, and analyze materials.

ECAI Pacific Language Mapping is a result of the ECAI Austronesia Team that was initiated by Prof. Lewis Lancaster, founder and director of ECAI, at the Conference on Austronesian Studies in Taiwan--Retrospect and Prospect, held at UC Berkeley in 1997. The ECAI Austronesia Team started from this conference on linguistics, history, anthropology, and archaeology as a digital mapping project. Digital language mapping continued in Taiwan by [Paul Li](#) resulting in his publications 2000 and 2001. Projects continued to gradually include Southeast Asia with projects of GIS in Hainan, China, by [Christian Anderson](#) (2003) and a demonstration of geographic search for Cebuano language sources in the central Philippines by [Michael Buckland](#) (2002).

The ECAI Austronesia Team obtained copyright permission from the Australian Academy of the Humanities to create and distribute digital versions of their materials contained in the Language Atlas of the Pacific Area (Wurm, S. A., and S. Hattori, 1981 and 1983, Canberra: Australian Academy of the Humanities in collaboration with the Japan Academy).

The ECAI Digital Pacific Language Map spans the extent of Pacific languages

including Austronesian languages, Papuan languages, Australian aboriginal languages, and the Austro-Asiatic languages of Southeast Asia. Others such as trade, pidgin, and continental languages are represented as related to Pacific language regions.



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