

University of California
Systemwide Strategic Directions for Libraries and Scholarly Information
Perspectives on State Financing Issues

Systemwide Library and Scholarly Information Advisory Committee*

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The ongoing challenge for the University of California Libraries is to sustain excellence in the face of budget constraints, continuing increases in the cost of information, changing information technologies, and the shifting service expectations of the libraries' clientele. That the libraries have met this challenge is the result of strong ongoing campus support, key financial support from the State, and a Universitywide strategic approach to development of library collections and services. That approach has emphasized multi-campus collaboration, application of new technology, and expanded sharing of the information resources within UC library collections. These strategies have successfully applied the leverage available to a multi-campus system of strong and distinguished institutions in order to maintain high-quality research collections and services in the face of rising costs and other challenges to traditional library models. Moreover, each successive revision of this overall planning strategy has extended the concepts of collaboration, sharing, and systemwide leverage into new domains of library service, from expedited intercampus lending to a shared online library catalog and regional library facilities, a shared digital collection, and beyond. As a result, UC faculty and students have enjoyed increasingly faster and more convenient access to a broader universe of information in a wider variety of formats, even in the face of rising costs and constrained budgets.

The State has made critical investments at key points in the development of the University's library strategy:

- The University's 1977 library plan recommended strategic use of emerging technology (the Melvyl online union catalog, support for automation of circulation and cataloging operations) and shared physical infrastructure (two Regional Library Facilities) in the expectation that these strategies would leverage systemwide capabilities in order to maintain and improve service while containing costs. Between 1977 and the late 1980s, the State provided most of the operating and capital resources called for in the library plan.
- Between 1998-99 and 2000-01, the State provided \$7 million to support the development and expansion of the California Digital Library (CDL), which has grown to provide a current collection, available to faculty and students on all campuses, comprising more than 8,000 journal titles and 250 databases, as well as other material. The CDL has provided the foundation for a variety of additional key services, including the Online Archive of California, through which students and faculty throughout the University are exposed to treasures of UC's special collections, archives, and museum collections, resources that previously were not well known or readily accessible even to those at the collections' home campuses, and Counting California, which provides access to the wealth of government-produced statistical information about our state and its people, information previously available only through local government documents collections or arcane data archives.
- In addition, between 1998-99 and 2000-01, consistent with provisions of the Partnership Agreement, the State provided \$8.7 million for library materials and expanded sharing of

library collections that began to address a permanent budget shortfall that was estimated at \$33 million in 1999-2000, as well as \$14 million in one-time funds for library materials. This funding, too, is essential for the success of the University's collaborative strategy, which is founded on the principle that every campus should have the basic library resources it needs to meet most local needs. The ability to leverage the resources of the campus libraries to cost-effectively provide more access to information resources requires that campuses have resources to leverage.

The State's support has helped the University create a nine-campus library system with capabilities for coordination, collaboration and sharing of resources that are unequalled by the research libraries of any similar university system. Those capabilities were essential in helping the UC libraries cope with the forces that have acted in concert to erode the quality of campus library collections over the last decade.

The available evidence suggests that the State's investment in strategic development of the UC Libraries has resulted in substantial benefits. Many of these are described in "Advances in Resource Sharing and Systemwide Library Service in the University of California: A Five-Year Progress Report" (January 29, 2003). Recent efforts at a financial assessment of these benefits suggest that:

- If campus libraries were independently to negotiate for, license, catalog, and collect user statistics for the 8,000 journal titles and 250 databases in the systemwide digital collection described in Section 2.3, UC libraries would have to spend \$34 million more per year than they do currently.
- Through the development of the shared print journal collection described in Section 4.1 below, the libraries may avoid subscription costs for print journals of up to \$3.1 million per year, plus additional savings in on-campus shelf space to house those journals.
- The savings in high-value on-campus library space attributable to the Regional Library Facilities described in Section 2.2 (after accounting for the cost of the facilities themselves) have an estimated annualized value of \$11 million per year.
- If the libraries had been compelled to purchase and add to their own collections the items they were able to borrow from each other via interlibrary loan in 2002-03, the total purchase cost would have been \$31 million.

Additional benefits accrue from the technologies that enable the libraries more effectively to share, integrate, and present the University's systemwide print and digital library collections, including the Melvyl catalog, interlibrary loan enhancements, and other services.

These accomplishments benefit not only the University, through more cost-effective provision of library service, but also all Californians. Some of these benefits are indirect: because information resources are at the foundation of effective research, teaching and learning, the provision of world-class library service supports the University's substantial contributions to California's citizens and the state's economy. In addition, new opportunities have emerged to make UC's rich information resources directly accessible to all Californians. Through systemwide library services available to the public, California citizens can, for example:

- Search the libraries' collections and request items through their local library via interlibrary lending or use our collections on site
- Gain access to and descriptions of over 6,000 collections of unique primary source materials through the Online Archive of California
- Search for and display information, facts, and data about the Golden State through Counting California
- Explore the latest research findings of UC scholars and scientists through the eScholarship program and its eScholarship Repository
- View online many of the premier publications of the University of California Press

These and many other services available to the general public have recently been brought together in, californiadigitallibrary.org, which is specially designed to serve as the public's portal to the digital collections produced or managed by the University of California.

The UC Libraries' most recent strategic plan, *Systemwide Strategic Directions for Libraries and Scholarly Information*, describes a UC library system in which the campus libraries are increasingly collaborating with and dependent on the other libraries and shared systemwide services to deliver comprehensive collections and high-quality services to their campus' faculty and students. The five strategic directions set out in the plan represent the next steps to optimize the shared management of the libraries' resources, by working together to collaboratively design, develop, and share in the operation of an even wider range of services. These strategies leverage the ascendance of scholarly information in digital form, while continuing to improve access to print resources and further enabling each campus library to provide needed information in all formats along with advanced services for its campus communities. These strategies include:

- Expanded development and management of shared collections (*Systemwide Strategic Directions*, Sections 4.1 and 4.4)
- Elaboration of shared services (Section 4.3)
- Greater utilization of shared facilities (Section 4.2)
- Ensuring persistent access to digital information that results from and supports research and teaching at UC (Section 4.4)
- Changing the economics of scholarly communication (Section 4.5)

Among the additional benefits promised by these strategies are:

- Possible savings in space and in staff required to acquire, process and manage print collections that are acquired, housed and managed collectively.
- Better integration of a greater variety of information sources through collaborative development of shared services, and an enhanced ability for each UC library to create and integrate collections and services to meet campus needs and reflect each library's strengths.
- Cost-effective development of a shared infrastructure for preservation and management of digital information, enabling the libraries to act as guardians over the University of California's digital scholarly assets without having to individually invest in the requisite deep technical infrastructure.

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