Economic growth is on everyone’s radar these days—but what’s the best way for a city or region to achieve it? Many believe that encouraging local entrepreneurs is far more important than attracting national or international corporations to set up shop, a philosophy sometimes called “economic gardening.” And libraries can help, because the tough economic climate means that a great idea just isn’t enough. New businesses have to do their research—using everything from census reports on local demographics, to regulatory publications that explain state and federal guidelines for their industry.

Laura Leavitt, head of the Gast Business Library, has a long history of supporting entrepreneurs and small business owners in Michigan. Most recently, she’s been serving as advisor and consultant on a project to develop a network of business resource centers in ten public libraries in the northwestern lower peninsula. Led by the Northern Lakes Economic Alliance, the goal of the project is to connect small business owners and entrepreneurs with the business resources in their local libraries. At the same time, there’s an effort to connect libraries more closely with local chambers of commerce, downtown development authorities, and similar groups.

In her role as advisor, Laura provides advanced training on business resources and consultation on especially difficult questions. “It’s so rewarding to see the tangible results of this work: connecting people to the right information at the right time, and getting them one step closer to their business goals,” she says. “There’s a huge untapped potential for libraries to promote the economic health of their communities by helping local companies make better-informed business decisions.”

Andy Hayes, president of the NLEA, is in complete agreement. “The resources Laura helped to select are a perfect match for our clientele. For example, we had new businesses which needed to create employee handbooks, so their new hires would understand policies and expectations. They utilized the BRC’s Gale Legal Forms database to access handbook templates that were easily adapted to their specific business. After business counseling meetings, most clients are so enthusiastic about the resources available to them, that they begin their research immediately.”
Today we have a dramatically different situation. It’s a rare library that doesn’t have its catalog online; email and scanning allow us to send requests and deliver material with immense speed. Academic libraries have become so excellent at sharing collections that requests for journal articles submitted before noon are often filled electronically the same day—meaning that the requestor has a link to the scanned article in his or her inbox by 5 pm.

In fact, more than one faculty member has observed that they would prefer we not own print journals; electronic delivery is so quick and reliable, they’d rather request items they don’t own. Such an approach.

Given the endless space demands for new services and operations, it would be easy to conclude that we should simply go to the stacks, throw away millions of items, and repurpose the space. This is tempting, but there are serious concerns about such an approach.

First, borrowing items we don’t own only works if some library still owns a copy. If a library doesn’t own a copy, users are constantly challenged by publishers. If such an approach.

What’s A Library to Do?

Once upon a time, academic research libraries were ranked mainly according to size. The more books and journals the library had on its shelves, the better the library was thought to be. While there are certainly flaws in this logic, it did make sense back when it was difficult to find out what materials were owned by other libraries. It could take weeks—or even months—to find a library able to supply a volume on interlibrary loan. Having as many things as possible “in-house” was clearly an advantage; in a way, bigger was better.

However, moving away from “bigger is better.” Librarians across the nation and around the world are wrestling with these concerns. Challenges are upheld by the courts, borrowing something no longer owned will not be provided, and the point remains that having materials available locally is less important than it used to be. Online digital collections such as the Hathi Trust are another contributing factor: they duplicate significant portions of the print collection sitting in our stacks, further reducing the need to hold these items.

UBorrow Wins Innovation Award

UBorrow, the user-initiated interlibrary loan service developed by the libraries of the CIC, has won the Rethinking Resource Sharing 2012 Innovation Award.

The CIC is the Committee on Institutional Cooperation, an academic consortium of the Big Ten member universities plus the University of Chicago. UBorrow was developed jointly by the CIC libraries, with the MSU Libraries taking a leading role as one of the first three to test the full implementation.

UBorrow allows library users to search the holdings of all CIC libraries at one time—a virtual catalog containing more than 90 million items. When, within the same interface, users can quickly and easily request the desired items. Because the requests are coordinated among the member libraries, UBorrow offers users a reliably fast turnaround. UBorrow also allows a longer loan period than most other interlibrary loan agreements.

Denise Forho, head of interlibrary loan at MSU says the innovation award was well earned by the UBorrow development team. “UBorrow stitches together 13 individual university library catalogs—each one holding millions of records—with two software systems: the Relais D2D system to handle the searches, and the OCLC ILLiad system to manage the fulfillment of loan requests. If you’ve ever put together a 1000-piece jigsaw puzzle—you have an idea how complex it was!”

Haladyna’s donorship of South American poetry is a generous gift from a valued member of the South American community. Haladyna’s gift will enrich the study of South American poetry in the English-speaking world.
NEW DONATIONS FOR COMIC ART COLLECTION
Autumn Faulkner, Cataloging Librarian

For many of us, the thought of “comic books” conjures images of Superman, Wonder Woman, and other iconic superheroes in tights and capes. But the world of comic art is far more expansive and complex—something the Comic Art Collection at MSU strives to demonstrate.

With more than 200,000 titles representing dozens of countries, genres, and time periods, the collection already has much to offer recreational readers and dedicated researchers alike. Now, MSU is pleased to announce two recent donations which further improve the collection’s scope.

Terry Malone of Troy, Michigan, has generously committed some 15,000 comics titles. The first installment includes movie adaptations, funny animal characters, and less common titles, such as 50 issues of a 1950s Catholic comic for school-age readers called Treasure Chest. “There’s a growing interest in comics from that period,” says Randy Scott of Special Collections, “so titles like this are an excellent addition to our collection. The most popular superhero comics were published either during World War II, or from the 1960s onward, while 1950s works focused more on science fiction, romance, horror, and war-themed action. 1950s comics weren’t collected as enthusiastically as the popular superhero titles, and thus aren’t widely available to readers these days—so Malone’s donation is a great start for MSU in this direction.”

Another very welcome gift came from Timothy Lehmann of Portage, Michigan: more than 1000 Japanese-language comics collected during a year in Japan, along with a number of other gifts. These titles augment MSU’s already sizable collection of Asian comics, which Scott predicts will see ever-increasing interest from patrons. “Anyone who has visited a bookstore lately knows how prevalent Asian comics have become, and thousands of young Americans read manga these days,” explains Scott. Some of them will end up studying comics or learning Asian languages—and when they do, MSU will be ready.

Digital & Multimedia Center
$10,000 will fund one year of a Digital Library intern, to work on access and delivery infrastructure—an opportunity to directly support a student, as well as the library.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUPPORT
WISH LIST

“Recently I was gathering material on the Schell Memorial Bridge, a steel cantilever truss bridge in Northfield, Massachusetts. Engineering librarian Tom Volkening made a special effort to locate back issues of the Engineering Record, which published a series of articles about the Schell Bridge in 1904. Even the local group working on restoration of the bridge had never seen this material! I am so grateful for Tom’s good work.”

Elaine Davis, volunteer historian, Callahm County (MI) Historic Bridge Park

Above: Engineering Librarian Tom Volkening.

Opposite: Photo of Sparty (top, left) courtesy of MSU Communications and Brand Strategy. Photo of student studying (bottom, left) by Harley Seeley. All other photos by Louis Villafranca.

Special Collections
$2,500 will allow us to purchase Underground and Independent Comics, Comix, and Graphic Novels. This first-of-its-kind online archive documents the first 50 years of underground, independent comic art, with 75,000 pages of original material and 25,000 pages of interviews, commentary and criticism. (Alexander Street Press)
TURFGRASS INFORMATION FILE
FULL TEXT MILESTONE

The Turfgrass Information Center at the MSU Libraries is pleased to announce a significant milestone: as of June 2012, 50% of all records in its Turfgrass Information File (TGIF) link to full-text.

The TGIF database describes more than 200,000 books, articles, and research reports in the field of turfgrass literature. It is freely available to the MSU community and residents of Michigan through the Michigan eLibrary (MeL), and to others by subscription. TGIF subscribers include academic institutions throughout the rest of the U.S. and the world, researchers in the private sector and practitioners in the turf industry, including golf course superintendents, sports field managers, and others who work with maintained landscapes. Many of these users do not live near a research library, so gaining access to the material cited in the TGIF database can be difficult—unless the record links to full-text.

The Turfgrass Information Center actively strives to increase full-text access, which we can provide when a copyright owner allows TGIF to digitize a publication, or when others load their own material on the web. It’s an enormous task, with thousands of pages scanned and loaded, and over 100,000 TGIF records linked this way. The 50% milestone seemed very far away when we began active digitization efforts eleven years ago!

MICHIGAN COOKBOOKS, PRINTED AT THE MSU LIBRARIES

Thanks to our Espresso Book Machine, the MSU Libraries can now offer reprints of historic American cookbooks digitized for our websites Feeding America and Feeding Michigan. We’re starting off with a selection of Michigan community cookbooks—each compiled from recipes contributed by individual cooks to benefit schools, charities, civic improvement leagues, or ladies’ aid societies of local churches.

The first eight titles in the Michigan Cookery Collection will be:
- Charlevoix Cook Book (1908)
- Copper Country Cookery (1902)
- Junior Dorcas Cook Book (Jackson, 1921)
- Manistee’s Every Day Cook Book (1904)
- New Crumbs of Comfort (Kalamazoo, 1906)
- Pilgrim Cook Book (Lansing, 1895)
- St. Cecilia Cook Book (Grand Rapids, 1910)
- Superior Cook Book (Ishpeming, 1905)

In addition to recipes, historic cookbooks often provide advice on household management, dealing with emergencies like fire or poisoning, or raising home gardens—making them a valuable resource on social history, gender studies, and more. The page above from New Crumbs of Comfort offers useful tips for home makers.

To purchase, visit shop.msu.edu and look for the MSU Libraries under Specialty Shops. New cookbooks will be added to Shop MSU as soon as they become available.

COLLECTIONS
$3600 will allow us to purchase online access to the first 50 years (1958-2007) of the Beijing Review, China’s first and only national weekly news magazine in English—one of the most visible means for the Chinese government to communicate with the rest of the world. A valuable resource for students and researchers of modern Chinese history.

Institutional Libraries
$12,000 will allow us to provide online access to New World Cinema: Independent Features and Shorts, a collection of 200 acclaimed feature films and 50 shorts, which collectively have won more than 250 awards. Sixty countries and forty languages are represented—a rich resource for the study of cultures, languages, and international filmmaking.

Dear Friends,

It is a pleasure once again for University Archives & Historical Collections, in collaboration with the MSU Libraries, to be part of Insight, the newsletter for faculty and supporters of Michigan State University.

The University Archives seeks to document both the everyday activities on campus and events around the world that impact the MSU community. These range from finding a home remedy for a student who caught a snowball in the eye, to the award-winning journalistic efforts of African American students in the turbulent 1970s, to military testing of atomic bombs on Bikini Atoll after World War II. In the next few pages you’ll find more about these new and notable acquisitions.

Our collections are made possible by grants and gifts from individuals and organizations. Please consider making a donation today. In addition to paper records and photographs we are digitizing, we are adding collections all the time. Our free digital exhibits include recently digitized Civil War materials, an extensive collection of Port Huron Times files, and a collection of oral histories from migrant workers. Please check our website regularly for new additions.

While paper records and photographs make up the backbone of our collections, the world is going digital, and we’re working hard to bring more collections online so researchers can use them 24/7. We recently asked for support to transcribe and digitize our Civil War materials, to commemorate the 150th anniversary of that conflict. You responded enthusiastically! Digitization is in progress and we hope to debut the site later this fall.

We encourage you to stay connected to the University Archives online at our Archives@MSU blog located at msuarchives.wordpress.com and our new Twitter feed of fun MSU facts and history at twitter.com/#!/msuarchives. Even if you can’t visit the University Archives in person, we look forward to sharing Michigan State’s proud heritage with you through our Flickr feed at flickr.com/photos/msuarchives and our digital exhibit On the Banks of the Red Cedar at onthebanks.msu.edu.

Yours in MSU history,

Cynthia A. Ghering
Director, University Archives & Historical Collections

Above: Students enjoy the W. J. Beal Botanical Garden in the 1940s. Photo courtesy of University Archives & Historical Collections.

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University Archives
Location: 101 Conrad Hall
Phone: 517.355-2330
Email: archives@msu.edu
Reading room hours:
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday: 9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.
Wednesday: 10:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.
Website: archives.msu.edu
MSU Archives on Facebook: www.facebook.com/MSUArchives
MSU Archives on Twitter: www.twitter.com/MSUArchives
MSU Archives blog: www.msuarchives.wordpress.com
On the Banks of the Red Cedar: www.onthebanks.msu.edu

MSU ARCHIVES
HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS

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The largest American minority student newspaper of the 1970s was none other than the Grapevine Journal, produced by MSU students from 1971 to 1975. The University Archives are pleased to hold an extensive collection of both published issues and papers relating to the Grapevine Journal’s production and funding.

The Grapevine Journal was rooted in Project Grapevine, founded in 1969 by James Ballard and based on the idea that African-American students needed to help each other. This led to the Grapevine, an 8-page newsletter listing job opportunities, housing, and tutoring services for all students. Soon, the Grapevine was expanded to include the concerns of all minority students and a wider political view, becoming the Grapevine Journal in September 1971.

The Grapevine Journal covered MSU news, but also national issues—elections, prison reform, the Black Panthers, and more. The May 1972 issue featured a widely-read article on obstacles faced by African American athletes at MSU and other Big Ten universities. The Associated Collegiate Press recognized the Grapevine Journal with a First Class Award, and when the newspaper held a fundraising event in 1973, guests included the Reverend Jesse Jackson.

Funding was the Grapevine Journal’s most severe obstacle. Its competitor, the State News, had funding from student activity fees, but was the only student publication to receive such support. The Grapevine Journal petitioned the Board of Trustees to expand university support for student papers, but the board declined, instead referring the question to ASMSU and the Council of Graduate Students, which allocated the funds from student activity fees. The Board advanced the Grapevine Journal $15,000, but it was not enough. The disappointed editorial board shut down the paper on January 21, 1975.

Along with the Grapevine Journal newspapers, the collection includes minority student papers from other universities, office files, drafts of articles, letters to and from the editors, advertising files, original artwork, photos of people and events on campus, negatives, slides, cassette tapes, and reel to reel tape. “The Grapevine Journal archives are a unique and exciting resource,” says Natalie Morelli, a UM graduate student who has used the collection. “Not only for the context of the papers themselves—articles, opinions, notices, and poetry written for and by the black MSU student population of the 1970s—but also for the extensive materials on the day-to-day work behind creating these newspapers. [This is] a great collection for both the black history researcher and for anyone interested in journalism and history!”

The University Archives & Historical Collections has received a generous donation: the Perry M. Thomas Operation Crossroads Collection, given by Kevin P. Thomas, grandson of Perry Thomas.

Operation Crossroads was a joint Army/Navy project in Bikini Atoll to test the effects of atomic blasts on the fleet. The first test, “A,” was conducted on July 1, 1946 to measure the effects of an atomic bomb detonated above ships moored in the lagoon. During the second test, “B,” on July 25, 1946, an atomic bomb was detonated under water.

Major Perry M. Thomas served as the Chief of the Photographic Engineering Section, Task Unit 1.52 assigned to photograph the tests from land and air. He supervised the installation and maintenance of motion picture equipment and electronic controls for unmanned cameras. During the actual tests, he also served as a photographer.

Major Thomas created a detailed chronicle of his experiences during the tests, documenting the mission, equipment, and tests in text and photographs. Ben Dettmar, an MSU doctoral student in American Studies, observes that “there’s a real feel of history when you turn the pages of the book.” Scrapbook images include staff members, airplanes, photographic equipment, atomic blasts, daily life on Kwajalein Base, and natives from Bikini Atoll. There are also several images of blasts in New Mexico as well as articles about the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings from the New Yorker magazine.

“The book’s main service to historians is as an incredibly rich primary document,” continues Dettmar. “It brings together commentary on some of the first nuclear tests conducted by the U.S. government with photographs that show the islands before, during, and after the dropping of nuclear tests A & B on Bikini Atoll. The juxtaposition of simple everyday life, both for the islanders and the soldiers, next to the incredible intensity of the Air Force personnel at work, and the amazing images that show the power of nuclear weapons, is something that historians, and all scholars of twentieth century U.S. and world cultural history, will find rich, rewarding, and worthy of further study.”
“When coming back from Chemistry class I got to snowballing and Doc. Holister hit me in the eye with a snowball. Don’t know how serious it is going to be but I can’t study much at present any how.” So reads the December 30, 1858 entry in the diary of Edward G. Granger, held at the University Archives.

Student health has always been a hot topic at Michigan State. In the college’s early years (1855-1894) there was little medical care available on campus. Common ailments included malaria, ague, “shakes”, and physical injuries. There were also annual cases of mumps, scarlet fever, typhoid fever, measles, and diphtheria. The closest medical care facility was in Lansing, so early students were confined to their rooms and relied on self-treatment, help from other students, or concoctions created by chemistry professors. Road conditions of Lansing were rough, so early students were confined to their rooms and relied on self-treatment, help from other students, or concoctions created by chemistry professors. Read conditions of the day made the trip to Lansing equivalent to today’s drive to Detroit.

As medical care was established on campus, the concerns about student health shifted. The 1965 Health Service annual report noted that the on-campus accidental injury rate had increased and attributed this to the appearance of the “skate board.” The report went on to say “no really serious injuries occurred while students were riding them, but there were some instances that could have been extremely consequential.”

Recent use of medical collection records has been as diverse as helping departments and colleges celebrate their milestone anniversaries, to inquiring about the stonework surrounding the entrance of the health center.

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The collections at the University Archives allow researchers to trace the stories behind the evolution of student health care on campus, and they provide a glimpse into student life and home remedies. Glynda Moorer, Director of Student Health Services at Olin Health Center, said, “I truly value the use of the archives to help us better understand the rich history of MSU and particularly the information about the history of the student health services.”

The Wallace Conservation Laboratory was established by Margaret Wallace Moon in honor of her late mother, Florence G. Wallace. Mrs. Moon also generously provided the Margaret Wallace Moon Endowment, which supports our efforts to preserve the books, journals, maps, and archival materials in our collections for future generations of scholars.

WALLACE CONSERVATION LAB MOVES TO MAIN LIBRARY

The Florence G. Wallace Conservation Laboratory has moved to the MSU Main Library, from its first home in Giltner Hall, where the lab was established in 2005. “At the time,” explains conservation librarian Eric Alstrom, “Giltner Hall was the only space available to the library that could accommodate a workstation with an adequate fume hood,” for working with adhesives and other chemicals.

The Giltner Hall space will now be used for an expanded volume of deacidification work and as quarantine space, on the rare occasions when an incoming gift collection has insect or mold issues. In the meantime, the central conservation operations have settled into their new location on the ground floor of the East wing.

“Moving a lab is a little harder than moving an office,” Alstrom notes, “with equipment like a 900-pound board shears to deal with. It happened amazingly fast, though, thanks to conservation techs Sue Depoorter and Brenda Brown, and the library facilities staff.”

Enhanced features of the new lab include a new water filtering system, paired with a huge paper washing sink: at 36 x 60 inches, it’s nearly twice the size of the sink in the Giltner lab, big enough to handle maps. Facilities coordinator Jay Johnson, whose carpentry skills frequently benefit the library, helped to keep costs low by constructing work benches and a clean-up area from readily-available kitchen cabinets and counter pieces.

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This well-used copy of The Scholar’s Arithmetic passed through the hands of many young students after it was published in 1822. Conservation treatment preserved the evidence of its long service, while damage to the spine was repaired and torn pages were mended.

Africana Library

$3000 will purchase a set of 174 back issues of the rare South African Footballer, published by the National Football League of South Africa. Soccer is hugely popular in South Africa, making this newsletter an important resource on South African culture and comparative world sports. Only four libraries in the world currently own this periodical—all in South Africa.

Special Collections

$5000 will allow us to provide conservation treatment for important volumes in our collection of 19th century American schoolbooks—preserving the books that shaped several generations of American leaders.
**SHARE YOUR MEMORIES OF THE MSU LIBRARIES!**

The MSU library [was] the first research library I ever used. This huge rectangular chunk of brick and glass contained so many shelves of books that I had to rely on signs that listed call number ranges next to pieces of brightly colored tapes. Looking down, I’d find the corresponding trail of orange, chartreuse, or some other shade leading off into the stacks. In this way, I was gently guided into the labyrinth toward authors like Mikhail Bulgakov and Italo Calvino and topics like Heils Angels and Voodooism. Somewhere I got lost and still haven’t found a way out.

Justin Wadland, class of 1999, wrote about his memories of the MSU Libraries in “Michigan Left,” an essay in The Great Lakes Reader, published by Delphinium Books in 2009. His experiences at the MSU Libraries had a lasting impact: he is now a librarian at the University of Washington at Tacoma.

Do you have a memory of a pivotal moment in the MSU Libraries? We’d love to share it in a future issue of Insight or in the library news blog! Send your thoughts to Ruth Ann Jones, editor in chief, at rjonesr@msu.edu.

Below: Librarian Annie Pitts Cooper at the reference desk in the 1970s. Back panel: Students at the MSU Computer and Audiovisual Center, 1970s.

**LIBRARIANS AT THE PODIUM**

MSU librarians don’t spend all their time at the library! You can also find them at the speaker’s podium, at professional conferences near and far. Here’s a sampling of presentations recently given by our staff.

**MICHIGAN**


**NATIONAL**

Hui Hua Chua: “Regional in Transition: Michigan Timeline and Perspectives” with Bruce Serjeant (Northern Michigan University) at the Fall Depository Library Meeting, October 2011, in Washington DC.

Don Depooter and Dao Rong Gong: “Metadata Transformation: the Case of Integrating the HathiTrust Shared Digital Repository into the Millennium System” at the Innovative Users Group Conference, April 2011, San Francisco, CA.


Ranti Junus: “Accessing Library Electronic Resources for Accessibility” at Electronic Resources & Libraries, April 2012, Austin TX.

Susan Kendall: “Rethinking the Health Sciences Library as Place: Providing Service without a Health Sciences Library” at the Medical Library Association, May 2011, Minneapolis, MN.

Sharon Ladenson: “Critical Pedagogy and Reflective Teaching: Enhancing Information Literacy in the Gender Studies Classroom” at the American Library Association, June 2012, Anaheim, CA.

Deborah Margolis: “Creative Strategies for Improving Services to Patrons with Disabilities” at the Association of Jewish Libraries, June 2012, Pasadena, CA.


**INTERNATIONAL**


Peter Limb: “African Associational Life and Journalism in Central Johannesburg of the 1990s” at the University of the Witwatersrand, June 2012, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Sara Miller, Ben Bonderick, and Nancy DeJoy (Dept. of Writing, Rhetoric and American Cultures): “Disciplinary Literacy: A Context for Learning Critical Information Literacy” at the Libraries’ Information Literacy Annual Conference, April 2012, Glasgow, Scotland.

Rachel Monkin: “Writing for Real: Creative Contexts for Information Literacy Teaching and Learning” with Brian Holcomb and Penny Gardner (Dept. of Writing, Rhetoric and American Cultures) at the Librarians’ Information Literacy Annual Conference, April 2012, Glasgow, Scotland.

Tom Volkering: “To Keep or Not to Keep: What to do with Print Engineering Index Volumes” and “Show and Tell: Using Screencasting to Enhance Your Library Services” at the American Society for Engineering Education, June 2011, Vancouver, British Columbia.

Emily Sanford and Lisa Robinson: “Preparing for RDA (Resource Description and Access)” at the Innovative Users Group for the Eastern Great Lakes, September 2011, Wilmington, OH.

Kelly Sattler: “Cyber Tour: QR Code 101” at Internet Librarian 2011, Minotseri, CA.

Kathleen Weessies: “Hidden Treasures: Mining Library Resources for Local History Maps” at the American Library Association, June 2011, New Orleans, LA.

Agnes Widder: “Beyond Google Books and Wikipedia Online Resources for the English 18th Century” at the Midwest Archives Conference, November 2011, Terre Haute, IN.

**Health Sciences Library**

$40,000 will allow us to purchase Nursing Education video training programs. A collection of more than 800,000 primary historical documents, including letters, speeches, telegrams, manuscripts, and government correspondence, as well as supporting and interpretative material especially commissioned from scholars of 20th century history for this collection.

**Collections**

$53,000 will provide online access to the Churchill Archive, a collection of more than 800,000 primary historical documents, including letters, speeches, telegrams, manuscripts, and government correspondence, as well as supporting and interpretative material especially commissioned from scholars of 20th century history for this collection.
THE 24/7/365 LIBRARY

Fifteen years ago, we published the very first MSU Libraries web site. It was a modest but cheerful green-and-white design with links to library hours, branch locations, the catalog, and a scattering of databases, some of which were accessible only in the library building from workstations that read the data from CD-ROMs.

Fast-forward to 2012: the library website still has a green-and-white design theme, but almost everything else has changed.

The website is the library branch that never closes, with an incredible 1.8 million e-books and 87,000 online journals—not to mention image collections, databases of social and economic statistics, geospatial datasets, streaming music, streaming video of theater and dance, and more. Last year the library website was visited 2.6 million times, with users downloading 4.7 million articles—not to mention all the other resources listed above.

It takes a dedicated team to keep the library website running smoothly, delivering data to our users and taking in thousands of virtual reference questions, interlibrary loan requests, class and lab reservations, student employment applications, and requests for copyright assistance, as well as hosting an event calendar, blogs and wikis, and 750 research guides.

Kelly Sattler leads the Web Services team, seven staff members with specialties in web development, programming, graphic design and usability testing. “With 5000+ pages and over one hundred content authors,” she says, “it’s a challenge even to keep track of the extent of our site. We have a great variety of content residing on multiple platforms and servers.”

“What a large site, we have to watch for redundancy, and most important, provide this mountain of information in a way that faculty and students find user-friendly. We’re starting a new round of usability testing this fall, and we’ll be tracking usage statistics to inform our content and navigation choices.”

What other changes can website users look forward to? “Out on the horizon,” Kelly says, “I expect more integration of mobile devices and reality, such as searching the catalog on your mobile device, and using the call number to summon a GPS application to lead you to the correct location in the stacks. We may also consider installation of a ‘discovery layer’ which would search our website, catalog, and all licensed, purchased and digital resources in a single query. And I would like to do more embedded help modules and provide more feedback opportunities, so users can help us make the site even better and easier.”

Follow library news online!

Want to keep up with the MSU Libraries between issues of Insight? Our website now has a blog just for you: News and Features. You’ll learn about new projects and what’s going on behind the scenes, and even enjoy a little humor.

The Announcements blog continues to carry time-sensitive news, like events, exhibits, classes, and updates on library hours during holidays and exam weeks. Both blogs are accessible from the library website—see What’s New, in the lower right corner of the page.

They’re also available on an RSS feed, which delivers each new blog post directly to your email inbox. To set up a feed, look for the orange RSS symbol next to the blog name.


RED CEDAR ENTRANCE WELCOMES VISITORS AFTER CONSTRUCTION

If you’ve visited the Main Library any time in the last 15 months, you know we’ve had a bit of construction going on!

The south entrance to the building, facing the Red Cedar River, was the site of an important infrastructure upgrade: replacement of the chiller, a key component of our heating and cooling system. Since excavation had to be done, MSU’s Physical Plant got extra mileage from the project by installing a new electrical substation at the same time, to keep our 400 student computers powered up.

Landscaping at the Red Cedar entrance had been a gift of the class of 1984, and members of that class responded generously—again—to provide funds to beautify the area after construction was completed. The south entrance now features a sunny patio with outdoor seating and newly planted greenery.
Brass scroll case inlaid with silver design and Samaritan inscription, 51 x 19 cm. Made in Damascus in 1523. Part of the Chamberlain Warren Samaritan Collection in the MSU Libraries’ Special Collections.