

The UW–Madison Libraries: A Digital Decade Libraries Transformed 1998-2008

Delivering Necessary Services During a Time of Fiscal Shortfall

The past decade has proven to be a time of extraordinary opportunity and significant challenge for the UW System (UWS) and the University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries. During a time in which the UW System sustained significant budget cuts and user expectations were evolving, the Libraries expanded efforts to support the teaching, learning, research, and outreach missions of the university. The Libraries' creative efforts became apparent during the course of the recent reaccreditation self-study interviews. These interviews showed no dissatisfaction with library resources and services despite these budget constraints.

Over the course of the past decade the Internet and its ancillary technologies have become tightly woven into higher education, and new resource discovery tools and services were developed by the Libraries to keep pace with these developments. Course management software allows for online components that merge course content with reserve materials, journals and books, databases, and archives. In addition, virtually all aspects of academic work now have Web-related facets that include research and teaching, publishing, communication, and preservation.

In response to the changing nature of our user's needs and expectations, the Libraries have re-examined and changed many of the ways it serves the research and information needs of the faculty, students, and staff that include expanding our collaborations and partnerships. What follows are examples of some of the actions, collaborations, efficiencies, and innovations the Libraries have undertaken to serve the research and information needs of faculty, staff, and students.

Cooperative Purchasing

Cooperative purchasing within the CIC has been a high priority during the last 10 years. Electronic journals (e-journals) are some of the most highly-used and highly-priced resources on campus. A recent working group studied e-journal use and noted that virtually all high-use titles are available only in electronic format and the demand for e-journals is growing rapidly, due to the growth of interdisciplinary research.

Other key actions:

- Established fund sharing for high-use e-journals through a central budget that also includes monitoring usage and pricing trends
- Purchased online resources at aggressively-negotiated prices
- Expanded the number of system-wide licensed electronic databases through the Shared Electronic Collection (SEC) and have worked to expand funds for the SEC.
- Secured a multiyear robust discount (21.5%) on books purchased by the Libraries.

Resource Sharing

Annual inflationary increases for scholarly journals have significantly outpaced the University's ability to pay. In response, the Libraries are relying more on buying access to scholarly material rather than owing the resources outright. The Libraries also joined a consortium of libraries for the purposes of document delivery.

Other key actions:

- Developed a same-day, free-of-charge document delivery service on campus
- Developed rapid inter-library loan services in collaboration with UW System Book Retrieval, the CIC, and the South Central Library System.

Digitizing Scholarly Content

The Google Partnership and the University of Wisconsin Digital Collection (UWDCC) are two large-scale projects that provide world-wide, full text access to the academic resources of the Libraries. These projects support the Wisconsin Idea to expand the university's influence beyond its borders.

- The primary goal of the Google Book Project is to work with other university libraries to make UW-Madison Libraries' resources and special collections discoverable to the world.
- The UWDCC works collaboratively with UW System faculty, staff, and state cultural institutions, to create and provide access to digital resources. UWDCC has digitized more than 1 million objects that make unique resources more accessible, make content of value to faculty and staff for teaching and research, and build digital collections or materials that are unique or less widely disseminated or held by multiple libraries.

Integrating Academic Content and Technology in the Classroom

As faculty continue to integrate technology and electronic course material, librarians play a critical role in creating and organizing related academic materials and instructing students on how to use them. The Libraries were among the first in the nation to use online multi-media tutorials.

Other key actions:

- Designed supplementary course material called Library Course Pages. The online pages give students easy access to reserve materials, databases, and research strategies pertinent to specific courses or field of study.
- Expanded library instruction; more than 2,500 instructional sessions reach more than 30,000 users annually focusing on information literacy, and discipline-specific instruction using print and electronic materials.
- Created Ask-A Librarian to provide easy access to librarians through online chat, instant messaging, phone, or email.
- Established library liaisons to develop partnerships with faculty and resource centers to facilitate communication.

Scholarly Communication and Publishing

The Libraries—in particular the director Ken Frazier—has been on the leading edge in elevating the discourse on scholarly communication and publishing. In 1999 he led an initiative to develop the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC). SPARC, an international alliance of academic and research libraries, works to correct imbalances in the scholarly publishing system. Frazier also led the UW-Madison Libraries initiatives to stimulate the emergence of new scholarly communication models that expand the dissemination of scholarly research and reduce financial pressures on libraries and authors.

Under his leadership the Libraries formed the Libraries Scholarly Communication and Publishing Committee (SCP). The committee addresses such issues as the mandated NIH Public Access policy, copyright, repositories, and publishing and dissemination of research.

Other key actions by SCP:

- Provides workshops and consulting to faculty detailing the new NIH Public Access law and information on compliance (25 presentations have been made to more than 600 faculty)
- Provides copyright information through workshops and assistance with copyright transfer agreements
- Supports author fees for open access publishing
- Assists with the preservation of research in the local repository (MINDS@UW)
- Facilitates the publishing and dissemination of research online and in print

Renovating Libraries to 21st Century Learning Spaces

In concert with the developments in technology the Libraries have developed specialized learning spaces with increased technologies such as wireless access points, task lighting, and multi-media tools. The Libraries along with DoIT and other units have created new learning spaces in almost all campus libraries including: College, Steenbock, Memorial, Business, Wendt, Mills, and others.

Other key actions:

- Conducted campus wide surveys to ascertain user needs and users expectations for campus libraries regarding resources, services, and space.
- Conducted focus groups with students to learn how and where students study.
- Created the Open Book Café – a space for students to gather, eat, and study.
- Changed library hours to reflect student study habits and needs. College Library is now open 24 hours a day.
- Upgraded the computer labs in partnership with DoIT. The labs are visited more than 600,000 times annually and provide service to over 20,000 unique users.
- Provides laptops and other multi-media equipment for circulation to students.

Summary

The Libraries remain committed to providing exemplary services to the university's teaching, learning, and research community as well as beyond the borders of the campus to state, nation, and the world.

The *Strategic Plan of the UW-Madison Libraries* (2008-2010) states, "We are vital to the teaching, learning, research, and outreach missions of our great university." <http://library.wisc.edu/about/#strategic>. In order to continue to provide innovative and cost-efficient approaches to the challenges of the next decade the Libraries have developed the following strategic directions:

- Assess, identify, and respond to user needs in teaching, learning, research, and outreach.
- Improve access to physical and virtual resources.
- Integrate libraries into environments where users work and interact.
- Enhance management and change-management skills in library staff.
- Actively participate in information policy partnerships.