I've got Google. Why do I need you? The value of the university library in the digital age

In the decade and a half I’ve served as university librarian at Rutgers, I’ve observed that one question – part philosophical, part practical – has become a regular feature of our discourse, arising in national conference discussions and in private conversations with alumni, administrators, and faculty members. Posed politely by most, the very question itself is jarring in its implications.

In the current circumstances of severe fiscal constraints and vigilance for cost-savings wherever they can be found, the question takes on increased urgency. The question, in its varied forms, is: In an era when so much information is available online, much of it for free, what is the continued need for the university library?

I'm getting Google. Why do I need you? The value of the university library in the digital age

Putting theory into practice

The Libraries are fortunate to have forged a close working relationship with the School of Communication and Information (SC&I), which includes one of the nation’s top-ranked programs for library science. In 1998, the Libraries joined with SC&I to establish an Internship/Residency program to attract diverse students to the profession by providing scholarship funding and hands-on experience in a research library.

This year, the Libraries are pleased to name Gideon Thompson to hold the Internship/Residency for 2010-2013.

Gideon graduated in May 2009 from the University of Wisconsin Law School, and passed the Wisconsin state bar exam in June of that year. He graduated from Duke University with a BA in History in 2002. At Duke, he made the Dean’s List, served as a member of the Varsity Baseball team, worked as a tutor in a local elementary school, and received the John Hope Franklin International Research Fellowship. Between college and law school, Gideon worked as an archival assistant in Rutgers University Libraries’ Special Collections and University Archives, and participated in a Labor Studies International Exchange Program conducted in Brazil by Indiana University.

RUL by the numbers

- Over 2 million students and faculty visited Rutgers libraries last year in person.
- There are over 3 million items in the Libraries’ collections.
- Librarians taught 993 information literacy courses in the 2008/2009 school year.
Drawing on my experiences at The Libraries also drive me to believe that librarians are ideally suited to lead this charge. I believe that librarians understand well the necessity of growing national concern. Our library efforts to design spaces that reflect the different ways current students work together and includes ample outlets for laptops, cell phones, and other electronic devices. The group study room provides an attractive space for a group of four to work together and includes ample outlets for laptops, cell phones, and other electronic devices.

Class of 1990 gives new group study room

To celebrate their 20th reunion in May, the class made a gift to Alexander Library to support the creation of a new group study room on the 3rd floor. Class president Stuart Heiser welcomed twenty members of the class to the dedication of the new room.

Putting theory into practice

The Libraries Internship/Residency program is designed to provide one student in the Masters of Library and Information Science program at Rutgers with an intensive three-year exposure to the various aspects of professional work within an academic library, such as reference, instruction and information services, collection development, access services, administration, digital library systems, preservation, and special collections. Admission to the program is competitive and requires a commitment of three years: two to complete the MLIS degree and working twenty-five hours per week in the Libraries (full-time during the summer), and upon graduation, one year in post-graduate residency. The internship carries a full stipend as well as tuition remission. Asked why he applied for the Internship/Residency position, Gideon stated, "I discovered, while attending law school, that the hours I enjoyed the most were those I spent conducting research, prepripping briefs, and digging into the sources in the library. I already had a great experience working for two years in Special Collections and University Archives. And I recall that some of my best times at Duke University were those I spent at the campus library."
addition to his activities as a composer and teacher, he made appearances as a
composer until his retirement in 1991 and as department chair from 1974 to 1981. In
1968 Robert Moevs joined the music faculty of Rutgers University in 1968 where he served as professor
and director. Moevs’ compositions have received major performances by George
Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra, Erich Leinsdorf and the Boston Symphony,
and Leonard Bernstein and Symphony of the Air. In 1978 he received the Stockhausen International
Prize in Composition for his Concerto Grosso for Piano, Percussion, and
Orchestra. By bequeathing his personal scores and materials to the Blanche
and Irving Laurie Music Library in 2007, Professor Moevs ensured that his musical legacy will continue to
live on in perpetuity at Mason Gross. The Robert W. Moevs Collection
includes sixty-nine boxes of scores, some written in Moevs’ own hand.
The collection also includes many rare recordings of his music, a few long-play records and copies of compositions by his students.

The Libraries, with the support of the Moevs family, have begun the process of preserving these recordings and ensuring that they remain accessible to future generations of artists and scholars.

Through its relationship with Mason Gross School of the Arts, the
Blanche and Irving Laurie Music Library is visited every day by world-
class composers, musicians, and researchers. Fortunately, for the
Rutgers University Libraries the work of one such composer has now found a
permanent home in the Music Library.

Robert Moevs, a noted American composer in the post-war period, joined
the music faculty of Rutgers University in 1968 where he served as professor
until his retirement in 1991 and as department chair from 1974 to 1981. In
addition to his activities as a composer and teacher, he made appearances as a
pianist, often in performances of his own works.

Moevs was part of a new generation of American composers whose style
developed in the international milieu of post World War II Europe. After
serving in the war as a pilot in the United States Air Force, Moevs spent the
following years in Paris as a student. He was later a recipient of the Rome Prize
of the American Academy of Rome. While his contemporaries experimented
with atonality in their compositions, Moevs, who was influenced by the works
of Boulez and Varèse, developed his own compositional style of “systematic
chromaticism” based on intervallic control rather than specific pitch sequence.

A wealth of education research that for years had been available only on
videotapes at Rutgers will soon be accessible online to researchers worldwide.

The Video Mosaic Collaborative, a partnership between Rutgers and the
University of Wisconsin at Madison, will display the work of Rutgers
researchers led by Rutgers Professor Eric Davis who, for more than two decades,
videotaped math classes in K-12 schools across New Jersey. The research
will be accessible through a sophisticated website that will incorporate 400
hours of research on mathematics (from a larger collection of 4,500 hours of
video). In addition, the project adds identifying labels or metadata about
each video. With the metadata, any online visitor can find videos that meet
their research needs. Topic searches can be broken down by the type of math
content, grade level, teaching method, researcher, school district, year of study, and other
forms of classification.

The project will also allow users to add their own notes, create and
store clips from each video, and
analyze the video in comparison with others in the collection.
Once the site is fully developed and launched, it will enable other
scholars to add their own videos
and contribute to the body of
research.

The videos, owned by Rutgers’
Robert B. Davis Institute of
Learning, part of the Graduate
School of Education (GSE), captures a generation of classroom learning
experiences and could break new ground in math education because they track
students from elementary through high school. The footage contains classroom
as well as after-class learning that cover fundamental math concepts.

“The collection contains unique and valuable video data, as well as digital
copies of students’ work, that show how students build mathematical ideas
and develop ways of reasoning over time, in a variety of diverse school settings,
across all grade levels, and in several math content domains,” says Carolyn
Maher, a professor in the GSE, and one of the principal researchers who
assisted the data.

More than twenty-eight doctoral dissertations have already been written,
and seven more are in process, based on the videotape collection. The website
project, which is expected to be up and running by the end of summer, 2010, is
supported by a $2 million grant from the National Science Foundation.

The Video Mosaic Collaborative website is built upon R1core, the Rutgers
Community Repository, a broad web-based system that preserves and makes
available the research of Rutgers faculty members.

The Video Mosaic Collaborative website can be viewed at http://video-
mosaic.rutgers.edu.
New personnel in the Libraries as of January 2010

Tibor Purger

Tibor is the new director of Integrated Information Systems (IIS) at the Rutgers University Libraries. He began work at the Libraries in April 2010.

The IIS department strives to provide access to all of the Libraries’ information holdings to any authorized user from anywhere, at any time. Tibor’s role is to work with IIS staff to ensure that all systems and projects incorporate both industry best practices and proven engineering principles. His long-term goal is to upgrade the Libraries’ technological infrastructure to further reduce downtime, improve access speed, and better integrate components of our large system spread over multiple cities.

Tibor brings a wealth of experience to his new role. He has worked as a journalist in television, radio, and print magazines, as an event organizer, and as a statistical programmer. As an IT manager, he created the original website for the Brookings Institution in 1994 and oversaw its growth for fifteen years. The website has developed into a multi-million dollar operation and now attracts 50,000 visitors each week.

Tibor admires how well the IIS staff members are integrated in the essential work of the Libraries and how fluent they are in the “business” of the Libraries, allowing them to actively and thoughtfully participate in discussions about future projects. He is also impressed with how receptive Libraries’ personnel are, across the board, to new ideas. This allows for adaptation in the face of challenges — some anticipated and some unexpected.

Stacey Carton

Stacey is the new manager of the Sharon A. Fordham Multimedia Lab in the Douglass Library. She began work in her position in the spring 2010 semester.

Stacey oversees the daily activities of the lab, which include planning multimedia workshops, creating pathfinders to guide users through lab resources, and video-editing for the Libraries. The lab is available for use by students and faculty and offers programs for video production, graphic arts, music production, and web development.

Stacey worked previously as library assistant and a videographer. She also spent a number of years as a video editor at a boutique video production firm. Stacey recently completed the Masters in Library and Information Science program at Rutgers, in which she took courses on multi-media music production, and web development. Stacey oversees the daily activities of the lab, which include planning multimedia workshops, creating pathfinders to guide users through lab resources, and video-editing for the Libraries. The lab is available for use by students and faculty and offers programs for video production, graphic arts, music production, and web development.

Stacey is very excited to be working at Rutgers, her recent alma mater. She is most impressed with the vision of the Fordham Lab and the commitment of her colleagues to serve the needs of Rutgers faculty, students, and staff.

Michelle Oswell

Michelle is the new Music/Performing Arts Librarian in the Rutgers University Libraries on the New Brunswick campus. She began working in the Libraries in January 2010.

Michelle serves as the Libraries primary liaison with the Music, Theater, and Dance departments at the Mason Gross School of the Arts. In that role she consults with department chairs and faculty members on the purchase of new materials in their respective areas for the Libraries collections. She also promotes Libraries resources and services in her meetings and communications with faculty members in the three departments. Michelle also handles collection development for these departments in video, audio, print, and electronic forms; assists in reference services in the Blanche and Irvinger Laurie Music Library, based in the Douglass Library; and is an active participant in Libraries committees.

Michelle received a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Delaware, a Masters degree and Ph D. degree in Musicology from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, and a Master of Science/Library Information Science degree from Drexel University. Before coming to Rutgers she worked as the music and literature librarian at Haverford College in Haverford, PA.

In her first year at Rutgers Michelle has been impressed by the breadth of interests she encounters at Rutgers. She enjoys the interactions she has with the students and faculty and finds that she is often challenged to learn and grow professionally by their varied research inquiries.

October 6 through January 31, 2011
“Out of Retirement: The Later Wood Engravings of John De Pol” Exhibition in the galleries of Special Collections and University Archives, First Floor and Lower Level, Alexander Library, New Brunswick

Selected highlights of librarian publications and awards

• Gary Golden, director, and John Gibson, instructional technology specialist at the Paul Robeson Library, won the New Jersey Library Association’s College and University Section/ACRL-NJ 2010 Technology Award for the “Access in the Stacks Project,” which consists of the development and implementation of software that runs on an all-in-one touch screen PC. This software provides automated assistance to library patrons and includes the use of sound and video.

• Thomas Izbicki, humanities librarian in Rutgers’ New Brunswick Libraries, was awarded a Board of Trustees Research Fellowship Award from the university in April. Tom serves as the Rutgers University Libraries liaison to the Classics, Philosophy, and Religion departments. Tom is currently the Acting Associate University Librarian for Collection Management and Development.

• Thomas Izbicki’s new book A Companion to the Great Western Schism (1378-1417), edited with Joelle Bollo-Koster, was published by Brill Publishers in 2009. The book examines the division of the Church or Schism that took place between 1387 and 1417, which forced upon Christianity a rethinking of the traditional medieval mental frame. It raised questions of personality, authority, human fallibility, ecclesiastical jurisdiction and taxation, and in the end responsibility in holding power and authority.

• Haipeng Li, associate director of the John Cotton Dana Library, received the President’s Recognition Award from the Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA), an affiliate of the American Library Association. The CALA President’s Recognition Award recognizes an individual, group or organization who possesses a philosophy of dedication, quality of service, and professional integrity for significant contributions to the library community that have shown leadership in one of the many areas of great importance to the mission and goals of CALA.

• Behavioral Sciences Librarian Laura Rowering Mullen’s new book, Open Access and Its Practical Impact on the Work of Academic Librarians, was published by Chandos Publishing in 2010. The book provides key insights into open access (the availability of free content online) as it relates to practical changes in reference, collection development, subscription indexes and databases, preservation, faculty liaisons, library and information science literature, institutional repository issues, publishers, and potential new user services.

Upcoming events in the Libraries

Gary Golden, director, and John Gibson, instructional technology specialist at the Paul Robeson Library, won the New Jersey Library Association’s College and University Section/ACRL-NJ 2010 Technology Award for the “Access in the Stacks Project,” which consists of the development and implementation of software that runs on an all-in-one touch screen PC. This software provides automated assistance to library patrons and includes the use of sound and video.

Monday, March 7, 2011 “Why and how diversity matters in libraries and on campuses” Public talk by Dr. Karen Downing, visiting scholar at the Diversity Research Center John Cotton Dana Library Rutgers-Newark

October 6 through January 31, 2011 “Out of Retirement: The Later Wood Engravings of John De Pol” Exhibition in the galleries of Special Collections and University Archives, First Floor and Lower Level, Alexander Library, New Brunswick

Sunday, February 13, 2011 Public Lecture by Joan Snyder Estelle Lebowitz Visiting Artist in Residence in the Rutgers University Libraries At the Zimmerli Art Museum, New Brunswick

First Floor and Lower Level, Alexander Library, New Brunswick

September 1 through August 31, 2011 Public Workshops "Out of Retirement: The Later Wood Engravings of John De Pol” Accessibility workshop in the galleries of Special Collections and University Archives, First Floor and Lower Level, Alexander Library, New Brunswick