A library for the 21st century

When Raul Flores’s father was a boy growing up in Mexico City, he loved going to the library, immersing himself in the knowledge contained in the books there, delighting in the feel of the pages, savoring their smell.

His dad instilled in Flores that same reverence for a library’s offerings. But as a 21st-century college student, Flores, 21, goes to the library for much more than books.

A third-year sociology major from Mission Hills, Flores might hit the library’s Media Center to check out DVDs or videotapes for class, including movies such as El Rojo Amanecer, about the Tlatelolco Massacre in Mexico City in 1968. When Raul Flores’s father was a boy growing up in Mexico City, he loved going to the library, immersing himself in the knowledge contained in the books there, delighting in the feel of the pages, savoring their smell.

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Flores is part of a sweeping shift in how students use university libraries and, in turn, how libraries are redefining their role on college campuses.

"A 'cyber study' room is scanning books to link to the contents of a library, just as he had," says UCSC University Librarian Virginia Steel. "Now, with resources like Google and other online services, you can just link to the contents of a library from anywhere."

In January, for example, UCSC became the first UC campus to loan a shipment of books from its library to the Google Books Library Project, which is scanning books to make the full text publicly searchable online. But that doesn’t mean that libraries, as physical presences, are disappearing.

UCSC’s McHenry Library is not only moving its catalogs and collections to the Internet, but the building is being redesigned, expanded, and reorganized to accommodate new styles of learning, rapidly evolving ways of accessing and presenting information, a trend toward social gathering, and a shift in how libraries interact with their clientele.

At McHenry, a new annex has added 81,600 square feet of light-filled space in a modern, concrete-and-glass structure. Other renovations and enhancements include:

- An instructional design center to help faculty make innovative use of technology in instruction and research
- A cyber study room and the Global Village café— an Internet café providing social gathering space and online access
- Distance-learning facilities, providing support for students and faculty at remote locations, such as Silicon Valley
- Wireless networking throughout the building and outside
- Additional electronic workstations and a number of group study rooms to foster collaborative learning

As a generation born into the information age, they have found out what libraries must adapt to meet the demands of this new, digital age—and the expectations of a new, hyperconnected user.

"When I became a librarian, you pretty much had to go to a library to find out what they had," says UCSC Library Director Virginia Steel. "Now, with resources like Google and other online services, you can just link to the contents of a library from anywhere."

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Learning through collaboration

"Students collaborate much more in their learning than they did in the past," says Joan Lippincott, associate executive director of the Coalition for Networked Information in Washington, D.C.

In her observation, students today may be learning with others in a group, and may also have friends who are just these hanging out.

"In my generation, you had a social life in the dorm or wherever and an academic life in the classroom or library," says Lippincott, who labels herself a baby boomer.

"Today’s students have a much more fluid arrangement of academic and social life."

Libraries are also trying to pay attention to learning styles that depart from the traditional model of solitary reading, says Erika Linke, president of the Association of College and Research Libraries and...
The Dead live on at UCSC
Scarlet begonias or a touch of the blues, you’ll find it at UC Santa Cruz.

At the Fillmore: Bob Weir and Mickey Hart of the Grateful Dead explain why the Dead’s archive is coming to UCSC.

This past April, the Grateful Dead announced that it would donate its vast and colorful archives to a campus that opened the same year the collection was started. Documenting the history of the band from 1965 to the present, the Grateful Dead Archive will reside in the Special Collections area of UCSC’s McHenry Library. The renovated McHenry Library will also include a room named “Dead Central,” just inside the front door, where some items from the archive will be permanently displayed and other exhibits will rotate in and out. Other universities, including Stanford and UC Berkeley, vied for the archive. But the band thought UCSC was a perfect fit. “We looked around, and UC Santa Cruz seems the best possible home,” said Grateful Dead band member Bob Weir. “If you ever wrote the Grateful Dead a letter, you’ll probably find it there!”

Library staff expects the processing of the archive to take at least two years, though parts of the collections will be debuted in stages as processing progresses. The archive includes business records, correspondence, photographs, tickets, backstage passes, flyers, posters, shirts, press clips, and awards. Framed photos by renowned photographers and untold videos of interviews and TV appearances will be available for viewing. The archive will also feature large stage backdrops, stained-glass pieces, props from live performances, and an extensive collection of Deadhead fan mail and gifts.

“Library 2.0”
Fifty to 100 years ago, libraries were designed around particu- lar structures and schemes for organizing information, says UCSC’s Steel. “But with the advent of the web, people expect a more responsive and flexible type of structure,” she says. “They’ve gotten used to ubiquitous Internet access.”

To respond to the demand, UCSC Library staff decided last spring to embark on a “Library 2.0” initiative adapted from a program developed by a North Carolina librarian. “There were a lot of new technologies such as instant messaging, wikis, blogging, and RSS feeds, and this was a way to get everyone on the library staff up to speed at the same time and think of ways to use these new technologies that were emerging,” says Sue Chesley-Perry, digital initiatives librarian for both McHenry Science and Engineering. Now, librarians go where the students are, says Perry. For example, many librarians have Facebook pages to make themselves available for questions. And several librarians who teach research workshops for specific classes are using a blog instead of a web page.

Despite the many new technologies, books still have an important place in research, learning, and teaching. “In my classes, I tell students how to find the different databases and how to use them,” says Bri Lunine, a UCSC lecturer in writing. “But I still make my students get into the stacks because you often find the best stuff next to the book you were looking for.”

Student Flores agrees that, despite the shift to an online research model, a physical library is still an important part of the culture. “It sounds corny, but I’d like to see my kids come to an institution like this,” says Flores, gesturing to the vaulted ceilings and book-filled shelves at McHenry Library. Libraries’ rapid shift from print to electronic media has raised a host of complex questions around intellectual property, ownership, licensing, and preservation. While those issues will have to be solved, that’s part of the excitement of being a librarian at this particular juncture, says UCSC Steel. “We’re poised between the old and the new, and every day brings with it new, interesting problems to think about,” she says. “The whole information environment is changing so rapidly. It’s really exciting to be part of this.”

Below left: Student Raul Flores makes use of the library’s bank of computers. Above: With large expanses of glass forming a major element of the building’s construction, light is almost as much a presence as walls in McHenry’s new addition.

The $700,000 challenge
UC Santa Cruz has been awarded a $700,000 challenge grant from the Kresge Foundation toward the construction and modernization of McHenry Library. In order to receive the funds, however, the library must raise $3.5 million by October 1, 2009.

That’s because the grant is designed to assist UCSC in raising the balance required to complete its capital campaign goal and the fund- ing of the library expansion project. “This is an amazing opportunity to help us raise the funds we need to totally transform McHenry Library and make it a 21st-century destination for a new generation of library users,” said University Librarian Ginny Steel.

Private donations must be found to support the many as- pects of UCSC’s library project not covered by state funding. This includes such amenities as the planned Global Village Café, the reading lawn and gardens, new furniture, information technology, media equipment, and public art for the building.

The Kresge Foundation is a private organization that supports communities by building the ca- pacity of nonprofit organizations in the fields of health, the environment, arts and culture, education, human services, and community development.

For more information, visit library.ucsc.edu or contact the UCSC Library Development Office at (831) 459-5870.

For information, including how to support the archive, visit library.ucsc.edu/speccoll/GD_archive.html, e-mail grateful@ucsc.edu, or call the UCSC Library Development Office at (831) 459-5870.

For the complete story on the Grateful Dead Archive, visit www.ucsc.edu/news_events/text.asp?pid=2142.

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Photographer Phil Carter, 20, is a junior at UCSC, majoring in community studies.