New Library Web Page Puts Resources Within Easy Reach

It’s hard to make a complex Web site easy to use without sacrificing depth and quality. But a team of library staff members recently spent eight months redesigning the Stewart Memorial Library Web site in order to do just that. The library’s new web site, launched shortly before the start of fall classes, replaced an out-of-date site that included information readily available elsewhere (like the weather) with a more focused site that provides front-page access to key library services and departments.

“We wanted students and faculty to be able to go directly to databases that were relevant to what they were looking for,” says Jill Jack, head of reference, who led the Web redesign team, “so we created a catalog of databases available from the main page.” Along with a general listing of academic databases, the page offers access to an A–Z database listing and databases organized by academic subject area.

“The objective was to provide relevant, good-quality Web sites for each of the departments on campus,” Jack says. The library’s new homepage also features a library catalog search bar and direct links to other library departments, including Audiovisual, the College Archives, the Fisher Music Library and the Art Collection. A new “Featured Material” section, to be updated at least monthly, highlights important databases or materials that have been added to the collection.

Social networking tools have also made their appearance on the library’s Web site. Laura Riskedahl, head of audiovisual, is using Twitter to announce new arrivals in her area, and a new “Ask a Librarian” link on the main page uses MEEBO instant messaging software to allow library users to ask staff members a reference question online. Students can use this remotely, says Jack, and librarians monitoring the site can talk back and forth with students. “It’s another way to serve students,” says Jack.

The library is also creating its own Facebook page, described by Jack as “our fun page,” which will make it possible for students to access the library directly through their Facebook pages. “It’s a nice way for students to get into the library, but it also allows library staff and students to put up information about things they like – books, music or events.”

Early reviews of the new library Web page have been positive, says Jack. “Students really like the fact that they can search by their subject area, and we are hoping that the way we have it designed, some databases that were underused are getting more visibility.”

Check out the new library Web page at: www.library.coe.edu

Integrated Search Yields Targeted—and Tiered—Results

One of the most helpful features of the new library Web page is the integrated searching capability now available through EBSCO Host, the library’s primary supplier of databases. When users type in a query, it searches all the available databases and creates a list of prioritized results.

“Our students are so used to doing a Google search,” explains Jack. “Integrated searching mimics Google, but with mediated results. It’s a way to search our databases and catalogs on a topic of interest and list the results, ranked in terms of importance.” Using a tool created by the library’s head of technical services, Hongbo Xie, students and faculty can also conduct a discrete search within a specific subject category rather than searching all of the databases.
**Shirer Collection Bringing Scholars To Coe From Around The World**

Thanks to Coe’s highly prized William L. Shirer Archives—and the availability of an archives staff member to help process the collection and handle requests for information—the world has been coming to Coe College in an unprecedented fashion. Coe Head of Reference Jill Jack estimates that the library receives at least two or three inquiries a month from scholars seeking information about the Shirer collection. “The word is out there in the research community,” Jack reports, “and I’ve had inquiries from some very prominent researchers.” Many of them subsequently visit the campus to conduct their research.

Perhaps Coe’s most famous graduate, Shirer (1904-1993) ’25 was a foremost World War II journalist who wrote more than 20 books chronicling 20th-century events. His collected notes, diaries, manuscripts and correspondence—housed in more than 300 boxes totaling more than 150 linear feet of materials—were donated to the college by the Shirer family in two large batches before and after his death.

Beginning in 2007, Jack and Archives Assistant Sara Pitcher ‘07 tackled the momentous task of processing and cataloguing the collection in order to create a detailed “finding aid”—an inventory and description of the contents—for use by Coe students and faculty as well as off-campus researchers. “It’s a very, very time-consuming process, but we’ve come a long way in terms of cataloguing sections of the collection,” says Jack, who estimates that the finding aid is 50 percent complete.

Equally important, she says, is the fact that the college was able to hire Pitcher to staff the college’s George T. Henry Archives 30 hours per week, thanks to generous support from Coe alumni Alan ’78 and Ann ’81 Anderson. “There’s no way we could serve just the college and its needs, much less outside researchers, if we didn’t have Sara,” Jack says. “To allow researchers from different parts of the U.S, Canada, and Europe to access this collection and to put Coe in this position is just fabulous.”

This past summer, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Steve Wick, a reporter for *Newsday*, spent several days at Coe conducting research for an upcoming book about William Shirer, working with the library staff and even enjoying a few bike rides with Library Director Rich Doyle.

“As a journalist, I am always looking to unravel a story back to its beginnings—to study what historians call primary source records that show how history unfolded at the time,” Wick says of his experience. “The William L. Shirer collection at Coe is extraordinary, as it shows nearly every move this great foreign correspondent made, every letter he wrote, every diary entry he made, for a large part of his adult life. There would be no way to research this book without this collection, and I’m grateful to the college for allowing me to access it.”

Other researchers who visited this past summer included a medical scholar from Dusseldorf, Germany, who was researching the Nazi euthanasia program—which came to light in part through Shirer’s book, *Berlin Diary*—and a graduate student from Berlin who gathered material for his master’s thesis. The library has also provided materials from the Shirer collection for the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. and for documentary filmmakers in New York and Cologne, Germany. This semester, an Indian-born scholar will visit Coe to conduct research on Shirer’s years in India and his correspondence with prominent Indian leaders.

The library is also in the process of creating a digital exhibit featuring the Shirer collection that will be installed on the Archives Web site. The exhibit, which will include a working draft of the finding aid along with selected documents and photographs, will travel around the world through World Cat, the international library catalog—likely generating more interest in the collection.

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**Reader’s Reflection**

When the library replaced its old book return box this fall, the new book drop container came with the universal library logo printed on its side—creating a striking juxtaposition with the sculpture by J. Seward Johnson Jr. that has provided an inviting presence on the library steps since 1999. The sculpture of a student eating a sandwich while reading Frank Conroy’s book, *Stop Time*—named “Food for Thought” by Coe students—was donated to the college by Carl “Mac” and Doris “Dodie” McClain.
LONG-TIME TECH SERVICES MANAGER STILL LOVING IT

Before a patron can borrow or access a book, CD, DVD, periodical or electronic item from Stewart Memorial Library, it must first pass—behind the scenes—through Jeff Schulte’s lively domain on the second floor of the library. Although his official title is cataloging and serials manager, “I just tell people I do technical work,” he says with a smile, downplaying the complexity of the modern library cataloging process. “For everything we get in the library, we put the bibliographic record into our database so patrons can look it up and find what they need.”

A Cedar Rapids native, Schulte graduated from Coe in 1989 with a degree in psychology, little suspecting how that knowledge might help him evolve into an effective library manager a few years later. “I had a work-study job in the library while I was at Coe—in circulation and then in technical services—but it was never my plan to work in a library,” he says.

After graduating he worked at the Cedar Rapids Public Library for three years and found he enjoyed it. “When a job opened up in this department at the Coe library, I pounced on it,” he says. “I loved my experience at Coe.” He began working at Stewart Memorial Library in 1992, gradually learning the technical services area through on-the-job training and classes offered by the organization that oversees bibliographical research and training.

Today Schulte is a cataloging expert who oversees a staff of seven work-study students in the never-ending endeavor to integrate new materials into the library’s collection. “We could stop buying books and continue to work for months,” he says. “It takes many stages and it’s much more complicated than people realize.” Currently, he is learning to manage the library’s growing collection of electronic resources—including the 44,000 items in the newly acquired Ebrary collection. The objective, he emphasizes, is always to make it as easy as possible for people to locate what they need.

Like all library professional staff, Schulte also spends time each week at the reference desk. His interaction with faculty, staff and students—especially those who work in his department—is the most satisfying part of his job, he says. “Students are of utmost importance to this process. We set the plate and they input all the records, barcode the materials, and put labels on them. I have tried to make Technical Services their home away from home. It’s very rewarding on a daily basis, and I love keeping in contact with them after they graduate.”

Schulte says he tries to integrate life lessons with technical skills. “I can see the signals when they come in as freshmen if they’re going to need extra help,” he says. “My goal is not to tell them what they’re doing wrong, but to help them figure out their lives. That’s the most important thing I can teach them.”

His passion for mentoring extends to his family as well. Jeff and his wife, Nia Nelson Schulte ’93, a rehabilitation counselor, are parents of 12-year-old Nathan, nine-year-old Julia, and seven-year-old Erica. An avid runner, he coaches all three kids’ soccer teams. “There’s not a spare moment in my life,” he says, “and I love it.”

CLASSIC HENRY PHOTOS CIRCULATING ON CAMPUS

Sixty years after George Henry began taking photographs of Coe people, places and events, his unparalleled collection of black-and-white images includes hundreds of beloved and memorable campus scenes. To increase campus awareness and enjoyment of the Henry collection, the library asked him to create archive-quality prints—signed, matted and framed—of 24 of his photos. Items in this collection of prints, known as the George T. Henry Circulating Collection, may be checked out for a year at a time for display in offices or other campus locations.

Krishen Narcelles ’12 and Jordan Taylor ’11 view three classic George Henry photos from the archives that were recently put on display in Nassif Admission House.
BUILDING AN ‘EBRARY’ FOR THE COE CAMPUS

Stewart Library’s electronic book collection took a giant leap this fall with the acquisition of Ebrary Academic Complete—a collection of 44,000 academically oriented books now available in electronic format on any campus computer (or from off-campus computers for those with Coe network accounts). Accessing Ebrary materials does not require any special software, says Library Director Rich Doyle. “You just click on it and you can start reading.”

The Ebrary subscription increases Coe’s electronic book collection to nearly 65,000 titles. Over time, Doyle says, the goal is to create a parallel library of books available electronically so that students can do their work wherever and whenever they desire—which frequently means when the library is closed.

‘LITTLE BO’ CONTINUING TO SUPPORT LOCAL ARTISTS

Sales of the poster of Marvin Cone’s 1941 painting, “Little Bohemia,” have so far raised $11,200 to benefit Cedar Rapids-area arts organizations affected by the 2008 flood. Coe and the Marvin Cone Art Club teamed up to create the high-quality posters depicting a familiar landmark in Cedar Rapids’ Czech Village area, which was devastated by the flood. To order a poster, send your name and information, along with a check for $50 plus $4.50 shipping and handling, to Cheri Pettibone, Stewart Memorial Library, 1220 First Ave. NE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52402.