

UC System Launches California Digital Library

by George Soete, *Transforming Libraries* Editor

The University of California is creating what may eventually be a miracle: a truly comprehensive, integrated approach to electronic scholarly publication that will directly serve its more than 200,000 faculty, staff, and students, and potentially a much broader segment of the state's citizenry. The California Digital Library is the first step in the University's multifaceted Library of Tomorrow initiative that is sparking great excitement throughout the institution and gaining strong support from a broad constituency. Funding for the California Digital Library was approved for 1997/98 and a new University Librarian/Executive Director is currently being recruited.

The Library of Tomorrow initiative had a slow birth, beginning during the late 1980s/early '90s with the realization that the University's pioneering 1977 Plan was no longer working in the emerging environment. The story is a familiar one to most academic research libraries: library materials prices and technological advances were outstripping the UC libraries' ability to adequately meet the needs of students and researchers. Nearly ten years later, this sense of crisis has reached significant proportions in the University community.

The recent words of Charles F. Kennel, Executive Vice Chancellor of the UCLA campus and Chair of the Library Planning Initiative's Advisory Task Force, sound a call to decisive action:

- *There is indeed a serious library crisis ... which threatens the ability of UC's libraries to support adequately the University's education, research, and public service missions.*
- *The crisis in scholarly and scientific communication is not confined to UC; its impacts are international.*
- *Current practices, including the building of nine comprehensive research collections, cannot be sustained. The libraries have been leaders in re-engineering processes for operational efficiencies, but further re-engineering to achieve additional cost savings, while practical in limited instances, does not address the fundamental crisis.*
- *Solutions to this crisis need involvement from all stakeholders; the libraries cannot solve it alone.*
- *Certain immediate strategic actions need to be taken as steps to building a foundation for a sustainable UC library system.*

Key Components of the Library of Tomorrow Initiative

These critical assumptions underlie the development of a multifaceted program. If the full program comes about, and all indications are that it will, the UC Library of Tomorrow will have a number of key components.

- The California Digital Library (CDL) will have primary responsibility to license, acquire, develop, and manage electronic content and to facilitate access to such content. The Digital Library--and this is the truly innovative part--will be the tenth library in the UC system with its own executive director, budget, staff, and broad-based governing board. CDL's first focus will be on the needs of UC students, faculty, and staff, but eventually it will facilitate access to others in

the state and beyond. It will license and acquire electronic content in support of campus research and academic programs and manage such content to assure its efficient and effective delivery to all members. It will also develop a centralized delivery mechanism for electronic materials; encourage the migration of selected campus-based content into the CDL; support digitization of paper-based materials; establish policy and procedures for archiving electronic content; encourage and support electronic publishing by UC faculty; assist the campuses in providing user support and training; and foster standards for effective interoperability.

- As its first strategic initiative, the CDL will create a Science, Technology, and Industry (STI) Collection, beginning in fiscal year 1997/1998. The STI Collection will be developed by the CDL in partnership with library staff and faculty from all of the UC campuses, who will participate actively in determining content for the collection, design of the access mechanism, and provision of support to users. At first, the collection will provide broad coverage of a critical mass of publisher-produced electronic information in the health, life, physical, and engineering sciences. In later phases, it will incorporate less mainstream resources, such as University-produced technical reports, patents, preprints, and datasets. One potential focus will be on areas that the University has designated as high priority for industry initiatives: biotechnology, microelectronics, and information technology.

A key function of the STI Collection will be a learning laboratory of organizational, technical, financial, policy, human resources, and training issues for further initiatives.

- CDL will take a new approach to resource sharing that will include: 1) swift migration to electronic journals, thereby reducing the demand for interlibrary loan for a growing portion of journals since they will be available online; 2) implementation of a system of direct borrowing between UC campus locations; and 3) outsourcing for an expeditious, reliable delivery service. With direct borrowing in place, a member of the University community will be able to request and receive material with minimal manual intervention.
- Intersegmental cooperation between the UC libraries and those of the California State University system is another strategy for making maximum use of state resources. Library directors from both systems are looking at several collaborative projects for accomplishing the following:
 - Providing joint union catalog services by developing reciprocal access through Z39.50 interfaces to the UC MELVYL Union Catalog and the CSU Unified Information Access System;
 - Establishing joint consortium contracts and interagency purchasing agreements for information resources and services, thus leveraging the buying power of both universities for measurable cost savings;
 - Strengthening programs, such as overnight point-to-point document delivery, for the cost-effective transfer of physical information resources;
 - Cooperatively exploiting technologies that enhance access to information resources and facilitate resource sharing;
 - Developing cooperative programs for user and staff training and support;
 - Supporting joint initiatives of the UC and CSU systems, such as outreach to K-12 education and to the business community; and

- Supporting regional and individual campus cooperative initiatives.
- Extending intersegmental cooperation beyond academic libraries will further distribute the economic base for the California Digital Library. In particular, the development of the Library of California, a proposal currently before the State Legislature, would provide the administrative framework that will facilitate UC making California Digital Library services available throughout the state.
- In order to develop the critical mass of content that is so necessary to the success of such projects as the CDL, planners have been negotiating with a number of commercial and academic partners and vendors.

Intense Environmental Factors, University Support Drive New Directions

The Library of Tomorrow initiative is the product of intense environmental factors. Chief among these is the financial crisis that has finally propelled the University into a radical strategic direction. Another factor, however, is the engagement and commitment of the University's leadership, especially embodied in the support for the concept of the Cyberlibrary as articulated by UC President Richard C. Atkinson. Acknowledgment of the crisis and support from leadership led to the formation of a planning team, whose members were given substantial long-term assignments and time away from their regular jobs. This team is led by Richard E. Lucier, University Librarian at the San Francisco campus.

In addition to the development of the California Digital Library, the planning team continues to look at other innovations, including the formulation of new business models to sustain access to scholarly information. Currently, this library planning and action initiative is scheduled to proceed through February 1998.

Though the vision of the UC Library of Tomorrow is truly innovative in its plan for organizing, staffing, and exploiting the vast resources of the UC system and beyond, perhaps the greatest achievement has been in overcoming the difficulties of getting nine major libraries (including seven ARL member libraries) to agree on such a radical new approach.

- *N.B. Portions of the wording of this report were taken directly, with permission, from planning documents currently available only within the UC system. For more information on the UC Library of Tomorrow Initiative, contact [Richard E. Lucier](#)*

Issues & Innovations in E-Scholarly Publication

The UC report above is one of 14 descriptions included in *Issues and Innovations in Electronic Scholarly Publication*, a 39 page report published in June by ARL as #3 in a new series titled [Transforming Libraries](#) (*Transforming Libraries* #3 was also issued as SPEC #223). *TL#3* was written by *Transforming Libraries* Editor George Soete with editorial advice from Mary Case, Director of the ARL Office of Scholarly Communication. The reports in *TL#3* are based on a series of interviews with professionals in 20 libraries, consortia, and publishing enterprises. "Reports from the Field" examine the innovative ways in which electronic materials are being acquired and distributed, and individual library and publishing projects are showcased. The "Issues and Trends" section highlights some of overarching topics associated with electronic publication ventures, including: staffing, licensing and copyright, changing roles, archiving, and collection management. Single issues of the full report are available for \$34; contact the [ARL Publications Department](#); for order information.

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[Table of Contents for Issue 193](#) | [Other Current Issues Articles](#) | [ARL Newsletter Home](#)



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