New Directions - Basic Service Improvements: Suggestions from Staff (Blogged)

Computing:
- expanding computer services? Perhaps taking on many of the tasks of the computer labs
- need to plan for are more use of wireless, mobility, and video conferencing, which means
- public areas will need network and power sources to operate the applications in collaborative spaces for learning and instruction
- wireless printing
- common desktop initiative which gives wider access to programs on public computers. Where students, staff and faculty will be able to save work more easily on flash drives, and can access the Microsoft Office Suite, Photoshop, etc.
- more of the computer capabilities that the computer labs have, such as word processing and spreadsheets

Web/Catalog:
- linking from catalog records to books that have been scanned
- create active links between the library liaisons and departments
- librarians and faculty need to work together to create subject websites
- need to have the ability to use data on many web pages
- integrate Google’s book search into online library catalogs
- e-journals are provided by the library, so do we want to find a way to let users know that this is something they are getting via the library?
- a catalog with accurate records and a user interface that moves the user quickly to full text
- putting a Meebo widget into the public catalog, … permits patrons to instantly chat with a librarian when the search fails-- i.e., no hits. But imagine, we could have an IM link attached to every search, because in our catalog it may be that most searches result in too many hits, or just plain irrelevant hits
- our on-line library catalog might be more useful to students, faculty members and the general public if it included the following:
  - Reviews of each book, with 1 to 5 stars ratings, with a link in each book's record to a ratings form. See Amazon.com for examples.
  - Links to full text of books that have full text in any on-line database. E.g., Baen Free Library, Bartleby.com, Focus Collection, Oxford World's Classics, Questia, etc.
  - Links to web sites that can translate foreign language text into English provided they can interact with other web sites to translate the texts of books on those web sites.
  - Subject approach as one available option. For example, if I want a book on how to repair my house, I want to be able to find it under "House repair" and under "Home repair," with further break-downs by type of repair and part of the house.
  - Author and/or title approach also, in case the catalog user already knows that John Doe wrote a great book on how to repair screen doors.
  - Key word search of titles and contents notes as another way the user can find the most useful books. The more ways people can find information, the better.
• The best enhancement, however, would be to have complete and accurate cataloging records for every item in our Library.

• Another feature on my personal wish list is "people who checked out this book also checked out these books" - it works great on Amazon.com, why not for us?
  
  – Design website to be customizable more user-friendly- seek out expertise in web design and invest more money in systems
  – Better access to new acquisitions and in-process materials
  – Single source for info… stop static duplicative pages

Collections:
  – affording users to create their own personal collections
  – tactical search teams for “unrecoverable” materials: detecting lost, misplaced, claimed returned items for all units. More effective search techniques and more frequent shelf reading to better provide resources to patrons and to prevent repurchase of misplaced items
  – RFID
  – maximize on collaboration with our UC-wide consortia. Similar to the benefits achieved in creating the CDL Melvyl catalog, we can expect to benefit collectively from the ongoing consortial efforts regarding shared print archives and prospective collection purchasing. There may be other potential areas of collaboration with respect to our digital library presence and access issues.
  – find a way to get our collections indexed by google - what tools are out there to expose what we have?
  – rather than see Google as a threat - Can't stop Google, so use to our advantage, e.g., scan things Google can't do. Focus less on books and journals. Do other stuff (small and oversize, images, etc).
  – LC recently published "American Memory" images on flickr. Included a way of searching. Is that what we should be doing with some (all?) of our images?
  – e-books. Our ability to move in this direction now seems blocked by GLADIS / Pathfinder. We need to be earnest in building e-book holdings records and easy links for our users.
  – digitizing collections. We definitely need a Digital Collections Development Plan. We need a way to nominate collections; we need good project management and communication; we may need to find reliable partners to help do good quality production work, in a timely fashion, for a reasonable price. We could start, perhaps, by digitizing materials for which UC owns the copyright. We need to select a level of quality for digitization that is "in the middle ground" between "google-level digitization" and "Bancroft archival copies." We need to assess our successes and failures thus far. We need to analyze what is really required and figure out how to fund/staff it for success. Build strong cooperative agreements about what institutions will digitize what (we don't need duplication, we need access). Consider partnering with UC Press.
  – really move to acquiring digital (in lieu of print). Begin having the conversations we need to have, set benchmarks we can agree to, find ways of meeting the benchmarks, then actually cancel print. Really cancel print in those disciplines where digital is ubiquitous. Eliminate the need to received, check in and claim issues. Eliminate the need to bind and shelve. Eliminate the need to train staff to do this.
Problem of ownership of materials between campuses- “gumming up the services (loan, borrowing)

Facilities:
- uniformity of machinery across locations and within the larger units
- endowed classroom…an instruction room within the Library that has an endowment for technology, meaning that whenever the classroom needs a tech upgrade, the money is there. … no matter what the budget situation the classroom can always have the latest technology. … when the machines are replaced, they can be used for other purposes, such as staff machines, public machines, etc.
- a magazine room. UC Merced has a reading room where popular magazines are kept. The magazines are not shelved in any order, are not cataloged, and are not security stripped, so if a student wants to take it, s/he can, just like a doctor’s office. When I was there, the room was filled with students studying, but also students taking a break and doing some pleasure reading.
- student spaces within the Library need to be increased, in some cases decoupled from the physical collection, and adapted to their educational needs (i.e., increasingly group oriented work, wireless access, previously physical items in digital formats, etc.) The spaces need to reflect current desires of the student body, this means making spaces where foods and drinks are available, and encouraged as part of the collaborative process. We should be not only observing how the Library's are being used currently, but also asking the freshest incoming students what they would like from the library, and what changes are being made in forward-thinking high school “media center” libraries which are integrating all aspects of media into an experience...

Services:
- "Mobile Service Point" using Segway Scooters
- mobile Check out system. Basically, they have a Wireless computer terminal on a desk with a printer, a scanner and a De-sensitizer. The employees wheel the desk around and check out books to people while they are sitting and studying. With a portable terminal, and constant movement through the Stacks, we might even be serving multiple purposes...we would have a regular presence -- laptops in hand to help answer last minute questions
- use a "click to call" system. I clicked on the "Call me" button, and a new window popped up. I entered my phone number and chose when I wanted them to call (in this case, "right now"). A few seconds after I clicked OK on this, the phone rang. It was a live person who knew who I was and what order I was calling about. No waiting, no menu options to press.
- we need to create active links between the library liaisons and departments. Librarians and faculty need to work together to create subject websites. We need to have the ability to use data on many web pages.
- more seamless means of access to services immediately for Visiting Scholars, new Faculty and Postdocs, who are currently required to navigate some steps to access that should be automatic upon appointment/ID card dispensation.
- self checkout
- consolidation and unification of copy card account services and microcomputer facility student accounts. One card for all purposes. Walking away from privatized service, providing homegrown copy service alternatives
- better connect and promote our services and resources in B-Space, on class and faculty websites, through social networking sites. etc. to better reach out to faculty and students virtually? social networking sites as an outreach tool?
- decentralized provision of public service functions where staff and students are operating within the collections. This could lead to any number of changes such as RFID, self checkout, and directional assistance.
- cater to users outside the library:
  - Shorten the e-mail reference response time from 48 hours to 24 hours (even if it's just a "we got your question and are working on it" message).
  - Encourage communication among everyone involved in e-mail and chat reference (through meetings, an e-mail list, or however) to foster a common sense of mission and increase consistency in responses.
  - Provide refresher training for reference desk staff on common out-of-library questions that may come in by phone.
  - Position library content, "ask a librarian" links, etc. in bSpace course pages and other online venues. Unlike users at library computers, these folks don't necessarily start with our homepage.
  - Continue positioning the proxy service as the primary authentication method for most users. Plan ahead to ensure continuation of a robust proxy service, through the present setup or some other means.
  - Continue positioning VPN as an alternative authentication method. Some users need it for certain resources, but since it has to be turned on before each use, it's not the best choice for most.
  - Provide excellent technical support (online and/or by telephone) for connection and authentication problems, regardless of the method used. Currently, students needing VPN support can't turn to the library and have to go to the Moffitt Microcomputer Facility in person.
  - Take up the slack left when CDL canceled the Vovici (WebSurveyor) license, and standardize on a new system for online user surveys.
  - An active reaching out to the student body population is going to be crucial. We should aim to interact within student domains (e.g. dorms, student academic groups/clubs, etc.), asking them what they don't like and would prefer the Library space to be for them, involving them in the process of making/creating these New Directions initiatives that effect their enduser experience.

- Improve pay for print service
- Liaison contacts need pictures/ bios to make them seem reachable
- Extend access to the public (hours, services, etc) beyond faculty and staff
- Structured system wide cooperation in cataloging and reference sources (saving resources) with seamless delivery as a goal
- Self checkout of books
- Helping disabled- better services in using collections. Do we need more staff time?
- Provide more services during the even more popular summer sessions
- Faster delivery of NRLF and Bancroft storage materials
- Improving and enhancing face to face communication with users in addition to new technologies
- Faster processing of library materials
- We digitize materials faculty want for course reserve
- Expertise repository for staff helping patrons remove all telnet interfaces
- Asking stations/ reference desk in the stacks
- Late night services- reference
- More public service- parts with live people- face to face (diversity, value personal attention)
- Good signage and info about services
- Reliable e-delivery: increase and test accessibility to online materials- no more broken urls!

**Miscellaneous**

- revitalized PC Experts program, ongoing techno-training, creating a gasoline general tech understanding expected at all units. Putting PC Expert role into new job descriptions.
- routinely audit the staff, unit & SLE circulation logon accounts for appropriate authorizations within GLADIS. Also, purging out the wacky old accounts that some times linger.
- it's said that some faculty not using library, especially sciences. Do our stats (both manual reference stats and circ stats) support this idea?
- would be good to see internal Library annual reports that highlighted progress made in a year, or in culmination of years.
- fix the infrastructure. There are so many things that don't work now, …Staff would be much better positioned to think "new" if they could depend on getting computers fixed, could get a new lightbulb, could get mail delivered on campus in less than five days.
- build a culture of efficiency.
- It would be very convenient if we could make a link to all the wikis that we have been creating recently so library staff and patrons could find them more easily…encourage students and faculty to comment here. I think we could get some positive feedback and good ideas. If people do complain about the library, we can always respond and engage in open debate.
- In a world that is becoming more and more competitive for financial resources, organizations of all kinds are being asked to provide decision-makers and funding agencies with data that justifies their existence. Our Library has fallen way behind others in collecting and making available good data that supports our impact. We do not have a good picture of who our regular user's are, what they are using, what they cannot find on the shelves, etc. One of our new directions should focus on improving this data collection and analysis situation. Wouldn't it be great to have regular reports that consolidate data on:
  - use of electronic resources (surely a very impressive figure to justify our role in the digital age)
  - gate counts in individual units and sample room counts
  - the top 50 books being used per week
  - titles receiving extremely high use that need to have duplicate copies purchased
  - which departments are the most frequent users of printed books
  - where most photocopying is occurring
  - book borrowing by subject field
  - ILL impacts on our collections
  - reference statistics/ chat and IM statistics
• book usage by student status (undergrad and graduate degrees)

Although some of this type of data is available here and there, it is not easily accessible and available for an overall picture of the impact of library services on the university community.

− The Library might seriously consider the pros and cons of restructuring its services and collections to address the changing approaches to scholarship and teaching on the campus. Subject/niche approaches may not hold much future for our organization. Sharing a variety of staff expertise across academic disciplines may be the key to a bright and exciting new role for us. I envision teams of librarians, library assistants, computing experts, teaching experts, acquisitions and cataloging experts, etc. focusing their efforts on providing content and service delivery to the research and teaching teams growing in number on this campus. A dynamic team approach offers opportunities for interesting staff development, cooperation, and constant renewal. Operating study halls becomes less of a key library function and is perhaps outsourced to some other campus unit.

− Outsource library functions which cannot be effectively managed internally