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Not Just a Pretty Space

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by Colleen

When the addition to and renovation of the Law School were completed, the Law Library became the showplace of the School, with its five-level atrium, open-glass stairway, and sunken reading room looking out into Dunn Woods. But beyond the beautiful appearance of the space, the Law Library has become one of the major research law libraries in the country. Its rich collection, outstanding service, and state-of-the-art technology uniquely position the library to serve the needs of Indiana's diverse legal community.

The Collection Grows in Quality and Size

The Law Library added its 400,000th volume in February and now holds nearly 425,000 volumes. The collection includes 300,000 hard-bound volumes, and more than 670,000 microform pieces that represent approximately 125,000 volume equivalents. In addition, the library has an extensive collection of audio and video tapes, CD Rom products, laser disks, and computer software.

The collection reflects the broad and interdisciplinary research interests of the law faculty. In addition to a strong collection of Anglo-American and international legal materials, the library has substantial holdings in philosophy, economics, political science, and history. In recent years, there has been increased emphasis on foreign law acquisitions, with special emphasis on Germany, France, Poland, and the European communities. Although the rare book collection is small, it is strong in the legal material of early Americana, including an exceptional collection of early territorial and state session laws.

Because of the generous acquisitions budgets of recent years, the library has been able to purchase retrospective collections of material as well as current acquisitions. Microform collections of Nineteenth-Century Legal Treatises, Colonial and State Session Laws, Classics of International Law, U.S. Congressional Hearings and the Serial Set, U.N. and European Community Documents all provide significant depth to the collection.

The library also has a large collection of the records and briefs from various appellate courts. As a depository for briefs of the U.S. Supreme Court, the library receives the paper briefs for all cases filed. In addition, briefs are available for the Second, Seventh, Ninth, and D.C. Federal Circuits and for both the Indiana Supreme Court and Court of Appeals.

A federal depository since 1978, the library collects all publications of the Congress, all Justice Department publications, administrative reports and decisions, major agency annual reports, and other publications thought to be important for research in law or law-related subjects.

Catalog Goes On Line

Years of planning have culminated in the implementation of the University-wide on-line catalog in January. Information Online (IO), an integrated computerization of all library functions, consists of six different functional modules: a public access catalog of holdings; a cataloging function; a module for on-line book acquisition; circulation; serials control; and links to all University library collections around the state.

The first system to be implemented, cataloging, was in operation last December. In January, the public access or OPAC module was implemented. The combination of these two modules—through the use o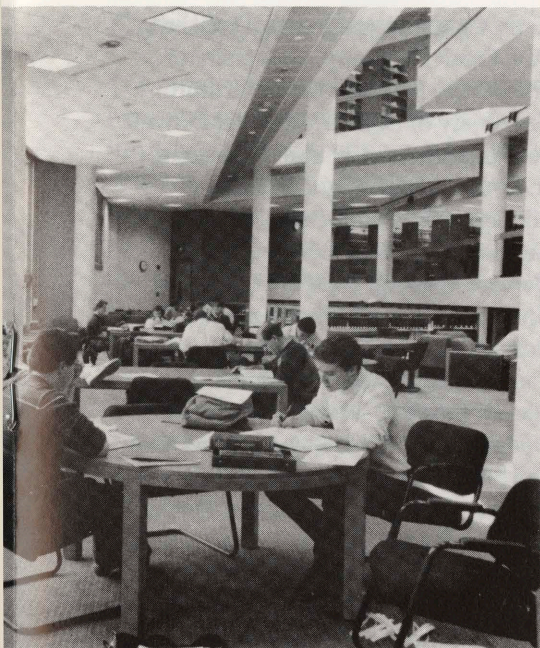f such innovations as keyword and Boolean searching, access capabilities from home and office, and the rapid accessibility of materials from nearly all libraries on all IU campuses—provides users with faster, easier, and more powerful access to the collection than the card catalog. Completion of the remaining modules will occur over a period of time, culminating in a totally integrated system by late 1991.

In preparation for the implementation of IO, the Law Library has worked for five years, converting its library records to machine-readable form. Currently, 80 percent of the holdings of the Law Library are accessible through the computerized catalog. The entire collection will be converted by the conclusion of 1991.

With the implementation of the circulation component of IO scheduled for spring 1991, the library has begun placing machine-readable barcodes in each of the books. When the circulation module is integrated into the system, the library patron will check out material on line, and

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circulated items will be noted together with the record in the on-line catalog. As a result, library users will no longer have to fill out cards and will know if a book is checked out when looking it up in the on-line catalog. Ultimately, newly ordered books and the receipt of each issue of a journal will be similarly noted, bringing complete information to the user regarding the availability of material.

Technology Creates New Services

The ever-widening body of computer applications has altered the very essence of public services and made creative new services necessary. The development of such products as CD Rom indexes, interactive video, and computerized legal instruction, as well as the library's new responsibility for word-processing access and training, have broadened the role of the Law Library within the Law School community. Keeping pace

with current developments and communicating changes and new opportunities in this growing research environment are essential aspects of effective service.

The greatest challenge facing the Law Library is keeping up with the burgeoning technology and, at the same time, maintaining and expanding those traditional services that form the core of the Law Library. To answer this rapidly increasing need for expanded services, the Law Library has broadened its role as an information resource and structured its staff accordingly. The many law-trained reference librarians provide quality research assistance to faculty, students, and the legal community around the state. Technically skilled computer systems specialists provide training and coordination of the computer applications, hardware, and software within the Law School and library. Experienced librarians and support staff provide the needed foundation services that enable the library to operate effectively.

Traditional services such as the current awareness and courier services have been expanded to meet the growing needs of an increasingly productive faculty. Outreach services to non-law users have increased, making legal material more available to the University community. Faculty and students can access a wider range of legal material from the Library, from their offices, or from their homes. Computers in the library and in faculty offices have made word processing and bibliographic searching essential elements of the education process. Telefax, scanning equipment, and electronic mail have made research more efficient, while making material more accessible to

the Law School community, to attorneys, and to patrons around the state. CD Rom products, interactive video, and computerized instruction have added creative and effective new ways for students and faculty to learn and locate material.

With the installation of the Permanent Learning Center for both LEXIS and WESTLAW this summer, law students will have enhanced training in computerized legal research. The Center will provide more than the orientation training sessions of the past, and will concentrate on advanced searching and efficient use of the data bases, so that the transition from law school to law firm will be more satisfactory. In addition, training in specialized data bases such as NEXIS will also be available.

Alumni and Lawyers Gain Services

As the major legal research facility in Indiana, the library receives requests each week from alumni and lawyers in the state for books and photocopies. The Law Library is heavily used by practitioners, particularly those in Southern Indiana. Books are sent to attorneys at no cost and a nominal fee is charged for photocopies. The addition of a telefax machine in 1988 has greatly improved the service the library is able to provide alumni and practitioners by expediting the delivery of rush requests.

Scholarship and Technology Grow in Tandem

In the past ten years, the Law Library has experienced remarkable growth in the size and the quality of its collection, in its staff and services, and, of course, in its facilities. But this growth is occurring in tandem with the explosion of legal scholarship and technological opportunities within the legal environment. This makes a quality research library not just a luxury but the keystone of effective legal training and practice. ❑