

Bib·li·o·Těch

NEWS FROM THE MIT LIBRARIES

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY VOLUME 16, NUMBER 1 SPRING 2004

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

“In order to be truly practical we must know the material with which we work, the implements which we use, the character and properties and forces of those materials, and the mechanical qualities and properties of them, too, and in knowing this we must be scientific.”

William Barton Rogers, President of MIT
Address to the graduating Class of 1881



Photo by Richard Howard

Who would have guessed that William Barton Rogers, founding President of MIT, could speak so eloquently to the instructional challenge that the MIT Libraries face in the year 2004?

To be sure, we speak today of “user-friendly access to information resources” and the need for students to develop “lifelong learning skills.” But it is as true today as it was in 1881, that students must know the information systems with which they work, understand the strengths and weaknesses of the tools that deliver information to them, appreciate the character and properties and

motivations of the publishers and other information providers who create the information, and be scientific in their approach to using published and unpublished research.

This practical knowledge is an essential skill in the information age. Anyone who has attempted to find the answer to an apparently simple question using an Internet search engine knows all too well the truth of the wisecrack that “you can spend four hours on the Internet looking for what you can find in four minutes in a library resource.” The problem, of course, is that the library resource is in the library, and the person who has the question may well be at home, and the hour of need is sometimes 3:00 AM.

“The library’s teaching role should put...more [emphasis] on the need for students to acquire lifelong skills in locating, filtering, evaluating, and using effectively the wealth of information available to them.”
Report of the Task Force on Student Life and Learning, September, 1998

Over one hundred years after Rogers’s address, the challenge of helping MIT students acquire information skills is greater than ever. There is no SAT to assess students’ “information literacy,” and MIT students arrive at the Institute with dramatically diverse and highly varied experiences with information resources and information research skills. All across America, school libraries have been replaced with banks of Internet-connected computers. The research paper assignments that once taught high schoolers the basic skills of gathering, interpreting, and documenting information are no longer a predictable component of the curriculum.

MIT takes care to assess the mathematical and verbal skills of incoming students, but faculty rely increasingly on the MIT Libraries to teach needed information skills. With the Libraries’ help, our outstanding students can discover how to navigate the wealth of information resources that the Institute provides. The Libraries welcome this challenging educational role.

The information resources and the information tools that are available to students and faculty at MIT are vast and powerful. Online resources complement rich collections of media, microform and print. Teaching MIT students to locate, evaluate, and use information in many formats, both tangible and intangible, on the campus and on the net, will, as a first order of business, ease and improve their educational experience while they are at MIT. Equally important, as the Task Force on Student Life and Learning sagely noted, once students leave MIT they will discover how important such information research skills can be in their business, professional, and personal lives.

The MIT Libraries have developed many techniques and tools to help students acquire lifelong learning skills. We work with faculty to design instructional modules within courses. We have structured the Libraries’ web site to be friendly to the way students seek information. We offer orientation, discipline-targeted instruction, and—yes—online guides for the desperate at 3:00 AM.

As MIT’s faculty revisit the educational commons of the Institute in the months ahead, the MIT Libraries look forward to the continued opportunity to ensure that MIT students “acquire lifelong skills in locating, filtering, evaluating, and using effectively the wealth of information available to them.” We are confident that William Barton Rogers would approve.

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CONSERVATION: *Decision Making and Ethics*

In 2002 the MIT Libraries were able to expand the Conservation Lab due to generous support from E. Martin (1947) and Ethel Wunsch, an anonymous donor, and the Institute. This expansion allowed the existing preservation program to include conservation treatment for the rare books, manuscript collections and archival records of the Institute. With the completion of the E. Martin and Ethel Wunsch Conservation Laboratory, staffed by a full time conservator and a conservation technician, the Libraries are capable of providing a variety of treatments ranging from basic stabilization to complete restoration of function. Although akin to the repair that is undertaken for the circulating collections, this new work to conserve MIT's most precious artifacts opens up possibilities and requires much more complex approaches.

Research materials found in special collections and archives are generally in their original formats. As a consequence, these materials have meaning or value as artifacts in addition to their intellectual content. In many cases, the physical attributes of a book or document may add to its intellectual content by providing evidence of its historical or social context. Examples in MIT's collections include the correspondence and other papers of William Barton Rogers, the earliest volumes of the MIT Corporation Minutes, and the 2nd edition of the Bible printed in Algonquin (1685). Treatment decisions, therefore, must be informed by an understanding of the value of that item and its significance within the collection.

All of the lab's treatment work is conducted in accordance with the standards for professional practice and ethics as set forth by the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works. Repairs should be reversible and sympathetic to the look of the original book or document without being too difficult to distinguish from the authentic or original materials. Treatments that involve any alteration to an item's original physical state must be documented and these files must be maintained for future conservators and researchers.



Conservator, Christine McCarthy mending a rare book.

At the MIT Libraries, each treatment undertaken in the lab begins with an examination to prescribe a course of action and ends with a written report that describes the treatment process. The conservator and the technician record various types of information about each item such as evidence of ownership, significant aspects of the original construction or binding style, and



Photo by Christine McCarthy/MIT

The broken textblock of a notebook kept by MIT founder, William Barton Rogers, is re-sewn after mending. It will be reattached to its original binding, which was also repaired.

the nature and extent of the damage or deterioration. They often include visual records such as diagrams and photographs to better represent the state of a book before and after treatment.

Conservation involves complex decisions weighing the benefits of the repair against the potential risks and costs of treatment. Treatment proposals are reviewed with the appropriate collections staff for approval before treatment begins. Once treatment is complete, a final report is written. This report describes all important aspects of the treatment such as significant changes to the original item's structure or appearance, any new materials added, and the results of any testing that may have been done on the item prior to or in the course of the treatment.

In addition to treating individual fragile materials, the conservator surveys collections: making recommendations for care and handling and assisting collection staff with on-going efforts to identify conservation priorities. She and the technician provide staff with guidance on any aspect of their work or the use of the materials that may have an impact on physical well-being of the collections and compromise future use. By combining preventative care with physical treatment, the MIT Libraries conservation program offers a holistic approach which ensures that the Libraries' collections of rare books and papers, many of which tell the story of MIT's history, will be in a usable condition and available to the MIT community and researchers for many years to come.

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E - BOOKS: *Dusty With Bytes*

When we picture libraries, we often think of the shelves full of books and journals. But the reality is increasingly different. Today, users access many library resources directly from their desktops. Most users are familiar with MIT Libraries' electronic databases and journals, but may not know that they have access to an increasing number of electronic encyclopedias, handbooks, dictionaries, and traditional books from their desktops.

More than just instantly accessible, e-books have some exciting interactive features. You can quickly search the full-text of multiple reference books for that elusive

quote, reference, or piece of data. Some books even have interactive graphs where you can plot your own data and tables that can be downloaded and manipulated according to your needs.

Our e-book collections contain materials on a wide variety of topics, including medical books, general reference and language dictionaries, classic philosophy texts, American and English literature, early English books, engineering and scientific handbooks, information technology and economic development books.

Start looking for e-books just like you would any library resource by searching our online catalog, Barton: <http://libraries.mit.edu/barton>. If we also own the paper copy of a book, the link to the e-book may appear in the same Barton record or it may have a record of its own.

Here's a taste of what you can find in our collections!

Books24x7 contains the full-text of information technology guidebooks.

Britannica Online includes full-text of the Encyclopedia Britannica and Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.

Early English Books Online is a collection of over 125,000 works covering the years 1475-1700 by authors such as Malory, Spenser, Bacon, More, Erasmus, Boyle, Newton, Galileo and more.

Gallica is a selection of thousands of French-language digitized documents from the National Library of France, available free to all on the web.

Knovel contains full-text of some of the leading scientific and engineering reference handbooks, databases, and conference proceedings. Many of these handbooks have interactive tables and graphs that you can download and manipulate yourself. A few sample titles include:

- * **Lange's Handbook of Chemistry**
- * **Marks' Standard Handbook for Mechanical Engineers**
- * **Perry's Chemical Engineers Handbook**
- * **Yaws Chemical Properties Handbook**

Literature Online (LION) is a library of over 250,000 early and modern works of English and American literature, including poetry, fiction, drama, and various bible editions.

Oxford Reference Online includes dictionaries on a variety of subjects including art, economics, history, law, literature, languages, politics, social sciences and sciences, quotations, etc.

Past Masters includes the full-text works of Aristotle, Darwin, Hobbes, Locke, Plato and more.

Some books won't have records in Barton since many individual electronic books are "hidden" in large e-book packages that contain hundreds or thousands of books. We have created a web page to help users to familiarize themselves with the e-books packages we subscribe to: <http://libraries.mit.edu/e-books>. These packages are also listed in Vera, our interface to electronic resources: <http://libraries.mit.edu/vera>.

In addition to the e-book packages the MIT Libraries purchase, our subject specialists have identified some quality e-book collections that are freely available on the Internet. Our e-books guide lists these, but you can also find links to general reference books in our Virtual Reference collection: <http://libraries.mit.edu/virtualref>. Off-campus access to our licensed e-books is limited to current MIT faculty, students, and staff, but anyone is welcome to come to campus and use these e-books in our libraries.

The MIT Libraries are a leader for many exciting innovations in academic libraries. Electronic access to library materials is a trend that our users have quickly embraced. E-books are the latest part of this trend, and we are expanding this collection all the time.

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

With the announcement of Charles M. Vest's intention to step down as MIT's president and the initiation of a search for his successor, now is a good time to reflect upon the history of his MIT presidency. History should remember President Vest for numerous contributions including attention to diversity issues, the expansion of MIT's endowment, and the commitment to the open dissemination of scholarly knowledge with efforts such as OpenCourseWare and DSpace.

The Archives contains records of all the presidents from Rogers to Vest. The records of the Office of the President shed light on the issues facing each administration and provide a window on the workings of the office, while the records of the Corporation contain information on the governing decisions. Complementary information on the administration of MIT, as well as research and outside activities, is contained in the personal papers of MIT's presidents, faculty, and administrators.

A hallmark of President Vest's presidency has been a commitment to openness and the sharing of information. MIT's commitment to openness is reflected in its view regarding access to its records. The rules governing access to MIT's official records were enacted by the Corporation in May 1980 (*see <http://libraries.mit.edu/archives/managing/policy-access.html>*). Access policies regarding records embrace two seemingly contradictory concerns: openness and privacy. The importance of access came to the forefront in the mid-1970s, largely in reaction to increasing awareness of deception in the public record in the aftermath of Vietnam and Watergate. Government and private institutions enacted laws and policies to ensure that the public had access to information it needed, while protecting the privacy of individuals. The recent Enron and WorldCom scandals, as well as concerns surrounding the Patriot Act, have once again raised awareness of these issues.

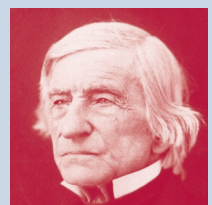
MIT's restrictions of 20 years for administrative records and 50 years for the records of the Corporation are far less stringent than the restrictions typical of other private academic institutions. While public institutions are subject to numerous open records laws by virtue of their "public ownership," private institutions are not. MIT has chosen to make its records publicly available more expeditiously than other similar institutions, an openness that has allowed scholarly researchers access to information about and related to a research institution in the 1970s and 1980s which they cannot easily get elsewhere. However, concern for privacy is also ensured via longer restrictions on student and personnel information contained within the records. The time-consuming but important task of reviewing collections for restricted material is performed by the Archives staff.

Many researchers have used the collections in the Institute Archives and Special Collections to find answers to questions across a broad range of topics. The Archives web site lists works already produced using the collections, giving some idea of the richness of the holdings at MIT.

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2004: *A Very Presidential Year*

As the United States is in the midst of a presidential election campaign and MIT is searching for a successor to President Vest, 2004 also marks several notable anniversaries related to the MIT presidency. This year is the bicentennial of the birth of MIT's founder and first president, William Barton Rogers. Born in 1804, Rogers was president of the Institute from 1862 to 1870, and again from 1879 to 1881. Rogers's founding vision continues to guide MIT's educational mission. 2004 also marks the centennial of the birth of James Rhyne Killian, MIT president from 1948 to 1959. Killian led MIT during the crucial post-World War II era in which MIT positioned itself as the educational leader in science and technology, while still asserting the importance of the inclusion of humanistic studies. This year is also the 50th reunion year of Paul Gray, graduate of the Class of 1954 and president from 1980 to 1990. Gray, like Killian, went from student to president.



William Barton Rogers and Charles M. Vest

PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH THE TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

In 1998 the Task Force on Student Life and Learning challenged MIT Libraries to “become more engaged with the teaching activities of the Institute.” Since then the Libraries have worked closely with faculty and staff to provide instruction for students that cultivates “lifelong skills in locating, filtering, evaluating, and using effectively the wealth of information available to them.” Over the past five years, instructional activity has increased dramatically. One of the most successful efforts has been at the undergraduate level where Instruction coordinators have partnered with faculty to offer hands-on workshops and in-class instruction geared to students’ course specific needs.

During the fall semester of 2003, the Libraries offered workshops supporting at least a dozen different courses. From traditional classes like *Introduction to Psychology* (9.00) to newer ones such as *Solving Complex Problems* (12.000), the Libraries offered instruction customized to the subject matter and goals of each course. Due to the diversity of the subject matter, the workshops also drew on the strengths of individuals from all areas of the Libraries. Often library staff from different disciplines would collaborate in a team-teaching approach. Workshops were taught in a variety of settings, some directly in the classroom and others in the Libraries’ new Digital Instruction Resource Center (DIRC). Workshops would typically run an hour with half the time devoted to instruction and the remaining time allotted to students for practice and questions. Material covered in class was supported with course specific web pages on the Libraries’ website.

In the popular *Introduction to Psychology* (9.00) workshop, library staff taught students how to find valuable print and electronic resources, evaluate information, cite sources and build a bibliography. While participation was voluntary, 194 out of 300 Psychology students took part. The high turnout was attributed to the strong partnership built between course instructors and library staff. Patty Durisin, Instruction Coordinator for the Humanities Library, commented that the faculty and teaching assistants of 9.00 encourage their students to attend the workshop because they notice it has helped them with major assignments. Feedback generated from student evaluation forms also has been positive. As one student commented, “I learned how to make my searches more precise and accurate,” while another enthusiastically declared, “I learned how to access many psych journals from just one web site—very cool!”

In *Solving Complex Problems* (12.000), first year students take an interdisciplinary approach to examining real-world problems. Because the new course requires them to seek expert advice and research, Science Library Associate Head, Howard Silver saw the problem-based learning model as a natural fit for the Libraries. Initial involvement with 12.000 began informally, but library instruction has evolved along with the course itself and now has become an integral part of it. Professor Kip Hodges feels the Libraries’ participation “has been essential to the success of 12.000.” He goes on to say “with the help of librarians from throughout the MIT community, we have been able to ensure that all the participating students become ‘power users’ of the libraries

With the help of librarians from throughout the MIT community, we have been able to ensure that all the participating students become “power users” of the libraries in their very first semester at MIT.

in their very first semester at MIT. Many of the students have shared with me the opinion that the development of good research skills has been an unanticipated benefit of 12.000, and I feel that this has been due largely to the efforts of the

Libraries staff.” During the fall semester, librarians from Dewey, Rotch, Lindgren, Science and Barker were assigned to individual project teams based on their topics and also were given class time to present information on library resources related to this year’s topic: the environmental debate over potential oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). Librarians have noticed more interaction with course 12.000 students this year and a gradual increase in the use of resources over the past three years the Libraries have been involved with the course. Silver is encouraged by the response of the faculty, teaching fellows and students. Both he and Hodges foresee their collaboration continuing well into the future.

Building on successful partnerships, finding new ways to support students’ growing educational needs, and providing insightful and effective instruction that teaches research skills essential to learning and life, are priorities the Libraries will continue to focus on in the years ahead.

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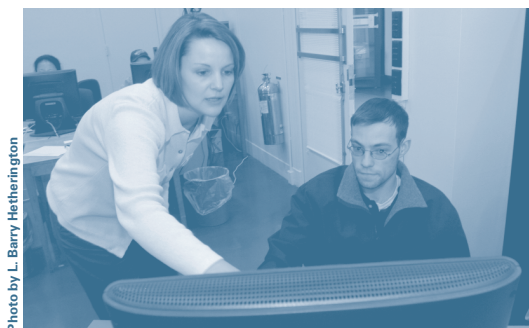


Photo by L. Barry Hetherington

Humanities Library Instruction coordinator Patty Durisin works with students in an *Introduction to Fiction Class Workshop*.

STUDENT LIFE AND LEARNING AT THE LIBRARIES

What is Student Life and Learning at MIT? It encompasses a broad range of issues that affect students—and that’s what makes it so interesting—and so important! MIT alumni consistently have proven themselves to be strong leaders in the fields of science, technology, business, public affairs, and beyond. Today, the increasing complexity of the world students encounter after their life at MIT demands more of them than just knowing the facts in their chosen field. Leadership demands a global perspective and the ability to communicate, motivate, and build teams. The Institute must provide today’s students with a broader range of skills to sustain the vital tradition of educating tomorrow’s leaders.

The Presidential Task Force on Student Life and Learning undertook a comprehensive review of MIT’s educational mission and its implementation. The Task Force’s Report, issued in 1998, was a milestone for MIT and continues to serve as a guide for many departments on campus. The MIT Libraries have responded to the challenges from two of the Report’s recommendations. First, the Libraries need to become more engaged with the teaching activities of the Institute. And second, that MIT provide more attractive and convenient spaces for community interaction, especially spaces that encourage informal learning and team-oriented study.

The first recommendation confirms the importance of the Libraries to teaching and learning and augments the traditional role of libraries. Instruction at the Libraries supports MIT’s students by going beyond just teaching facts. They are introduced to the critical skills of locating, evaluating, filtering and processing information—skills needed to thrive throughout their lives. The instruction program has benefited from the creation of the Digital Instruction Resource Center, a space designed to teach students—individually or in groups—how to use the latest digital resources to support their studies and research.

The Libraries are committed to providing library spaces that facilitate intellectual life on campus. In addition to individual work areas, students and faculty need fully-networked spaces for groups to work close to information and data. This teamwork introduces students to the collaborative work approach that has become the industry standard. A good example of a space that meets these needs is the 24-Hour Study Room, which opened in October 2002. “MIT students think around the clock and learn around the clock,” says Ann Wolpert, director of MIT Libraries, “so when they asked us for a study space that would be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, that became one of our highest priorities.”

Located at the entrance of the Hayden Library, the new 24-Hour Study Room has been in constant use since it opened. To accommodate the different ways students like to work and learn, it provides both individual study areas with a variety of seating options and two group study rooms, each containing work tables, a blackboard, network hookups, and user-controlled lighting. Library staff worked closely with students to determine the right mix of amenities—computer workstations, wireless network access, a printer and a photocopier—and also the security systems the students wanted



Photo by L. Barry Hetherington

Students using 24-hour study room in Hayden Library.

to feel comfortable at 3 o’clock in the morning. The Libraries were fortunate to receive funding from the Institute and from alumna Elizabeth Yeates for this much-needed space.

There are many ways to support Student Life and Learning at MIT. Some of the projects the Libraries hope to implement to improve the environment for students include an emerging technologies laboratory, numerous multimedia group study rooms, a center for geographic information services, and an enhanced facility for the Rotch Visual Collections. Now that we have all these good ideas, the next step will be to secure the funding! For more information on these or any other Student Life and Learning projects at the Libraries, contact MJ Miller.

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MITLibraries

BiblioTech: News from the MIT Libraries, an official publication of the MIT Libraries, is published twice a year, in the Fall and the Spring.

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Designed by Korn Design, Boston

WHAT'S NEW IN THE LIBRARIES?

IMPULSE BORROWING: *Tempting Reads for Hungry Minds*

Based on the idea of "impulse buying" (a marketing concept with which Sloan students are certainly familiar), Dewey Library has created an "impulse borrowing" display. Much like enticing candy and convenience items are placed strategically at super-market checkouts, Dewey has had success displaying thought provoking books of current interest by their circulation desk. Subjects of interest include: investments, management, corporate biographies, current politics and international relations. Suggestions for the display come from library users and library staff who often select titles based on recent reviews in business magazines and newspapers. Some of the most circulated books in 2003 include Stephen Covey's *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* and *Why Stock Markets Crash* by Didier Sornette.

For more information contact **Elke Piontek-Ma** at epm@mit.edu.

ON A ROLL: *Books, Music and DVDs on Wheels*

Strolling through Lobby 10 on a Friday before a long weekend, you may be pleasantly surprised to find that new mystery novel or jazz CD you've been meaning to pick up. Based on the idea of the traditional Bookmobile, the MIT Humanities Library started a book(cart)mobile this past fall featuring popular books, music CDs and DVDs. The first cart rolled into Lobby 10 the Friday before Columbus Day weekend and due to an overwhelmingly positive response, has returned many Fridays since. The goal of this outreach effort is to make the MIT community aware of the wide variety of Library materials available to them that may not necessarily be related to course work or research. Popular items checked out include biography, mystery and cookbook titles as well as world music, classical and jazz CDs. Dates for upcoming book-mobiles will be posted on the MIT Libraries homepage <http://libraries.mit.edu> under "Spotlight." To view new fiction and non-fiction titles go to the Humanities Library's Virtual Browsersy at <http://libraries.mit.edu/humanities/browsersy/index.html>

STUDYING IN STYLE: *Barker's New Group Study Space*

The Libraries recognize the importance of comfortable study spaces that offer students convenient access to library resources and services. Thanks to a recent renovation in Barker Library, what was once an underutilized copier room is now a new group study space. Just off the Barker reading room—under the Dome—students will find an inviting lounge with comfortable couches and chairs, along with two group study rooms each offering seating for eight, complete with large tables, blackboards, and network access.



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