

Bib·li·o·tech

NEWS FROM THE MIT LIBRARIES



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 From the Director


One of my favorite things about working on a college campus is the annual sense of renewal that arrives every fall along with the students. My first autumn at MIT brings new beginnings and invigorating possibilities. Two new senior leaders have joined the team—Greg Eow as our new Associate Director for Collections, and Amy Brand as the new Director of the MIT Press. You can read more about both Greg and Amy (and the MIT Press) in this issue of *Bibliotech*.

In another development that will surely bring renewed attention to the MIT Libraries and more generally, the role of research libraries in the modern age, MIT's Provost Martin A. Schmidt has asked me to lead an Institute-wide task force of faculty, students, staff, and other experts on the Future of Libraries. We hope this conversation will include many voices, so I encourage you to look inside this issue for more information, including the website address where you can join the discussion.

Of course, the future of libraries will always include the responsibility and privilege of collecting and stewarding our cultural and scholarly history. To that end, I have allocated a portion of our collections budget to the acquisition of rare books—thus establishing the first fund at the MIT Libraries exclusively designated for rare books. I hope you will be as pleased as I am by such inaugural purchases as a first edition of Émilie du Châtelet's French translation of Newton's *Principia Mathematica*. There is more inside *Bibliotech* about this wonderful book and the extraordinary woman who wrote it, and about MIT's use of rare books in the classroom.

All of us at the MIT Libraries are deeply grateful for the generous support of our donors. Much of the work we do would not be possible without the gifts made by those we acknowledge in our Donor Honor Roll. As we move into the next phase of innovation and renewal for the MIT Libraries, your continued support will be ever more crucial to our success, so I hope you will take this opportunity to give generously to our future.

Chris Bourg, PhD

DIRECTOR OF THE LIBRARIES

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BIBLIOTECH

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Bold New Vision

Task force charged with reinventing the research library



A new task force has begun engaging the MIT community in a discussion about the future of libraries. At the request of Provost Martin Schmidt, MIT Libraries Director Chris Bourg will lead an ad hoc group composed of faculty, staff, and students to develop what Schmidt called “a bold new vision for a library system,” one that might help define “new models for a modern, innovative research library.”

With the goal of issuing a report by the end of the 2015–2016 academic year, the Ad Hoc Task Force on the Future of Libraries will solicit input from key stakeholders and subject matter experts in considering a wide range of topics, including:

- The development of innovative platforms and tools for discovering, accessing, and preserving information
- The optimal role and design of physical library spaces at MIT
- The function of tangible collections in the life of the Institute
- The relationship of MIT libraries to the global library community
- Ways to leverage libraries to MIT's competitive advantage in the recruitment of new faculty and researchers, and to attract prospective students

The task force, said Bourg, represents a unique opportunity for the MIT community to strategize about “the role of libraries in the context of transformative changes in higher education, technology, publishing, and research.”

For more information visit: →

future-of-libraries.mit.edu

 Staff Profile

Greg Eow
 Associate Director
 for Collections

In academic libraries, preservation, general collections, and special collections don't typically fall under the same organizational umbrella. This is one of the reasons Greg Eow is excited to be the new associate director for collections at MIT Libraries, a position he began on August 3rd.

“It's a rare and irresistible opportunity to work with these departments together in one portfolio.”

Eow came to MIT from Harvard, where he served as the Charles Warren Bibliographer for American History, and helped build humanities and social sciences collections. Prior to that, he worked at the Yale University Library.

At MIT, Eow hopes to “foster a holistic philosophy” among the departments he oversees. “When we build a shared awareness that we're all part of a larger enterprise, we'll find synergies and be more effective in our different areas of operation,” he said. “I'm keen to bring these communities together in a way that benefits them all.”

Young Press, Major Impact

Although youthful compared to its centenarian peers, the 53-year-old MIT Press is one of the largest university presses in the world. It publishes more than 200 new books each year along with 30 journals in the arts and humanities, the social and natural sciences, and technology, among other disciplines. With a deep bench of

200 
NEW BOOKS EACH YEAR

30 
JOURNALS IN VARIOUS DISCIPLINES

authors and a reputation for risk-taking, the Press has established a significant presence in the publishing world for books in such areas as architecture, social theory, and cognitive science. Committed to serving both the MIT community and a global readership, the MIT Press offers a range of publications in both print and digital formats, and continues to seek innovative methods for delivering pathbreaking content.

Special offer to Bibliotech readers: →

Visit mitpress.mit.edu and use code **MBIBLIO40** at checkout for a 40% discount off orders of any MIT Press books now through January 31, 2016.



Meet Amy Brand

New director shapes future of MIT Press

When Amy Brand PhD '89 first arrived in Cambridge for graduate studies in cognitive science, Kendall Square was “a bleak place,” she said, with a greasy spoon diner as the only walkable lunch option. But, Brand recalls, she also had a “gleaming oasis”: the MIT Press Bookstore, where she’d spend hours poring over the latest offerings.

Thirty years later she is astonished to find herself in a bustling, vibrant Kendall Square, taking direction of the MIT Press, where, she said, “the excitement of renewal is palpable.”

According to Chris Bourg, Director of the MIT Libraries, Brand is “the ideal leader for the MIT Press at this time of tremendous change and opportunity for scholarly publishing.”

Brand most recently served as a vice president at Digital Science, and prior to that she was an assistant provost at Harvard University and a program manager in Harvard’s Office for Scholarly Communication. From 1994 to 2000, she was an executive editor for MIT Press in cognitive science and linguistics.

Brand will oversee traditional print acquisitions for the press, and help develop new technologies for digital content delivery to a worldwide audience. “The MIT Press has a stellar reputation and history of taking risks and I’m looking forward to breaking new ground,” she said.

★ Featured Special Collection

Hidden Gems

Building a Contemporary Artists’ Book Collection

—Lareese Hall, Architecture and Art Librarian

MIT’s Rotch Library is home to a small but growing collection of contemporary artists’ books—a type of art object that defies simple definition and embraces many forms. Some artists’ books resemble traditional books, while others use the printed book as a starting point. A search for “artists’ books” uncovers books about making books, the history of the book, and some actual artists’ books. Many artists’ books are clever, some are funny, others are somber, but all invite engagement through some form of physical manipulation.

The Rotch collection focuses on artists’ books published from the 20th century through the present, and is deliberately interdisciplinary, reflecting the interests and mission of the Institute. The collection explores key areas such as the technology of the printed book (construction, type, interactivity, portability); the connection between research and making; the ways in which art and science methodologies and techniques can inform and influence one another; and the relationship between digital and analog technologies.

Future additions to the Rotch collection will include explorations in experimental bookmaking, printmaking, graphic design, technology, and contemporary print culture.

In the coming year, MIT Libraries plan to raise the visibility and use of these artists’ books. The collection will undergo a thorough audit, and new Rotch Library display cases will make these unusual and often hidden gems accessible for viewing and experiencing.



photography credit: L. Barry Hetherington



Top: Peter & Donna Thomas, *The Actual Accordion Book* (2014) / *The Pencil* (2010).
Laura Davidson, *Architectonic*. (1999).
Thomas Parker Williams, *Traveler No. 1*. (2012).

Left: Peter & Donna Thomas, *Not Paper* (2010).
Edward Ruscha, *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* (1969).
Heidi Neilson, *Atlas Dream Sequence* (2011).
Walter Hamady, *Hunkering: The Last Gæbberjab²⁹⁶ Number Eight and IXXViths, or, Aleatory Annexations* (2005).
Werner Pfeiffer, *Zig Zag: A Book* (2010).
Maret, Russell, Euclid, Thomas Little Heath, & Daniel E. Kelm, *Interstices & Intersections or, An Autodidact Comprehends a Cube: Thirteen Euclidean Propositions* (2014).

Right: Warja Lavater, *Little Red Riding Hood* (1971).

From the Archives

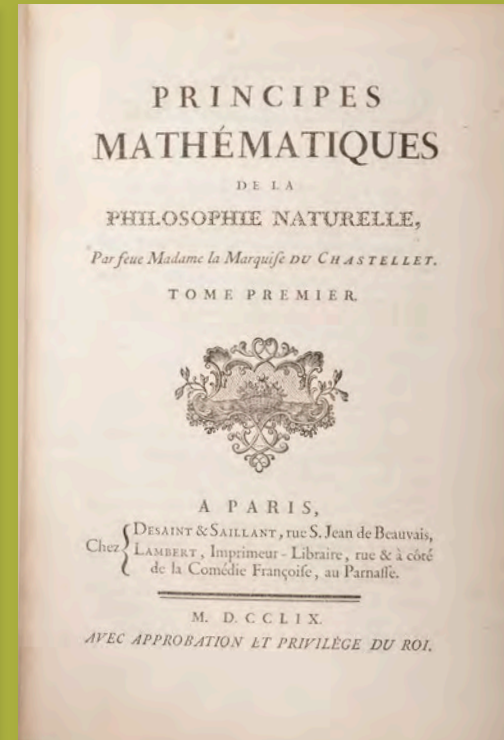
Tomes

Rare book fund fuels new acquisitions

—Stephen Skuce, Program Manager for Rare Books

For more information →

about the collection, contact mithistory@mit.edu



Left: Photographs of
Principes Mathématiques
(1759)

Right: Scan of opening page
for *Principes Mathématiques*
(1759)

As the Libraries' rare book collections grow, they become an increasingly rich teaching resource.

This year, for the first time, the Libraries allocated funds specifically for the purchase of rare materials with the twin goals of filling gaps in the collection and broadening its scope. Acquisitions made with these funds are already making an impact in the classroom.

Principes Mathématiques (1759) arrived in July. Written by mathematician/physicist Émilie du Châtelet, a woman whose accomplishments astonished Enlightenment-era France, the volume was featured in a rare books session for incoming freshmen. Students have also been examining two other recent purchases: a cuneiform tablet from 2000 BCE, and Ephraim Chambers' groundbreaking *Cyclopaedia* (1728), which rounds out the Libraries' substantial collection of encyclopedias.

These rare books will be housed in the Institute Archives and Special Collections, adding to an already varied and vibrant repository of educational items. In these collections, students are invited to examine such monuments in the history of printing as a 1493 *Nuremberg Chronicle*. They may compare William Barton Rogers' personal copy of Newton's *Principia* with an alchemical manuscript handwritten by Newton himself, or analyze the differences and similarities between a lavish manuscript book of hours from 1450, and Gutenberg Bible leaves from the same decade.

With ongoing financial support, MIT Libraries aims to make rare books an even more valuable teaching resource across MIT's curriculum. On the shopping list: additional works by women in science, a parchment scroll, a title by Robert Boyle, and a printer's woodblock, among others.

Spy-proof Letters

Researcher details historic techniques for securing correspondence



In addition to a dictionary of letterlocking, Dambrogio has also created replicas of locked letters, which she displays in interactive exhibitions.

Long before the digital age, safeguarding correspondence and important documents from prying eyes was a concern. Research by Jana Dambrogio, MIT Libraries Thomas F. Peterson, Jr. (1957) Conservator, has revealed that for centuries "prominent figures as well as everyday people" deployed clever methods to deter snooping into private written communications.

In historical collections worldwide, Dambrogio has uncovered hundreds of examples of what she calls "letterlocking": elaborate techniques that involve folding, cutting, and sealing messages written on paper and parchment.

Dambrogio first encountered letterlocking while a fellow in the Vatican Secret Archives. She found letters from the 15th and 16th centuries with peculiar slits and sheared-off corners. Close examination showed some documents had been folded

and "locked" by piercing a paper security tab through a slit, wrapping, and sealing it shut with wax.

Dambrogio began turning up other examples of letterlocking in such collections as the British Library and Harvard's Houghton Library. She learned that Queen Elizabeth I, Galileo, Marie Antoinette, John Donne, and MIT's own William Barton Rogers, among others deployed letterlocking techniques.

In addition to developing a dictionary of letterlocking, Dambrogio employs replicas of locked letters in her teaching sessions. A recently uncovered European archive promises to show "letterlocking like you've never seen it," she said. And a book is on the way. Dambrogio admits feeling "evangelical" about an area of study obscure even to fellow scholars. "This is such a brand-new field," she said.



For more information visit: →

janadambrogio.com/letterlock/

[#letterlocking-format-categories](https://twitter.com/letterlocking)

techtv.mit.edu/collections/letterlocking

What's New?

Survey findings reveal key preferences in MIT community

Results are in from the most recent MIT Libraries survey, conducted January-February 2015. More than 5,400 MIT community members responded.

Key findings include:

- Students value librarian involvement in a class, indicating they were able to apply acquired skills to that class (73.8%) and generalize those skills elsewhere (90.1%).
- The MIT community demonstrates low awareness (below 15%) of the Libraries' Research Data Management services, yet more than 50% of respondents rate such assistance as important or even essential.
- More than 80% of the community continue to express a strong preference for journals and conference proceedings in electronic format.
- Students seek but find it difficult to locate campus spaces where it is OK to be "loud in private," such as rooms for conducting an interview or making a phone call.
- Preference for electronic textbooks has edged out print textbooks by 2.6%, 43.9% to 41.3%.

80% 

PREFERENCE FOR ELECTRONIC JOURNALS

100th Anniversary



THE GREAT STRIDE.

"The Great Stride" Exhibit commemorates MIT's move

2016 marks the 100th anniversary of MIT's move across the Charles River from Boston's Back Bay to its current location in Cambridge. In honor of the occasion, MIT Libraries will stage an exhibit, *The Great Stride: MIT Moves to Cambridge*, in the Maihaugen Gallery early in the new year. The show will feature the people who planned, labored, and provided the resources to build a "New Technology," and it will also offer information and images from the three days of festivities in June of 1916 to celebrate the new campus. The exhibit is one of a variety of Institute-wide activities being planned by departments across campus. In addition to staging the exhibit, the MIT Libraries will be represented at an Open House at MIT on April 23, 2016, *Under the Dome: Come Explore MIT*, where members of the MIT community, neighbors, and friends will be welcome to learn first-hand about MIT, past and present.



Festive retirement party

Former Interim Director of Libraries Steve Gass enjoyed a festive retirement celebration in September



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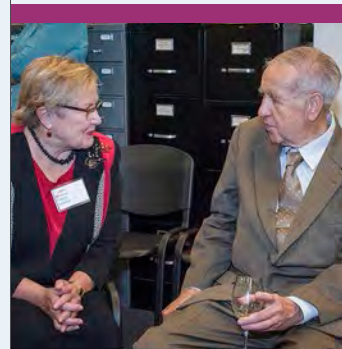
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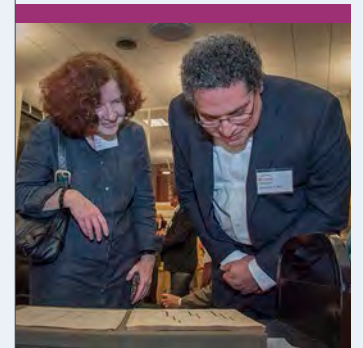
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Events 2015–2016

DECEMBER EVENTS

Open Performance

Open Mic

December 4

noon–1 PM

Lewis Music Library (14E-109)



Study Break

Cookies with Canines

December 10

2–3:30 PM

Hayden Library (14S-100)

JANUARY EVENTS



Workshops & Classes

IAP—Independent
Activities Period

January 4–29

Offered daily throughout
the month

FEBRUARY EVENTS

Visiting Scholar/Musician

Dmitri Tymoczko

February 5

3:30–5:30 PM

Lewis Music Library (14E-109)

MARCH EVENTS

Study Break

Furry First Friday

March 4

2–4 PM

Hayden Library (14S-100)

APRIL EVENTS

Workshops & Classes

IAPril

April 1–29

Offered throughout the month

Study Break

Furry First Friday

April 1

2–4 PM

Hayden Library (14S-100)

Music Concert

14th Annual Prokopoff

Violin Music Concert

Date to be announced

noon–1 PM

Lewis Music Library (14E-109)



Event Series

Preservation Week

April 24–30



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