

## Comments from Divinity School Students about the Library

April 2009

with Library responses (November 2009) in red

### Technology:

1) One student writes: “The microfilm machines are not in the best shape and print horribly, and the scanning software, when available, is awfully clunky. It's actually easier to hold a camera up to the screen! I've spent a decent amount of time with chant manuscripts on microfilm, where it can be very important to be able to distinguish small marks, so I would be very glad if the comfort and usability level could be improved in this area.” We now have eight new state-of-the-art microfilm reader/printer/scanning machines installed. (6 in Regenstein, 1 in Law, 1 in Crerar)

2) One student writes regarding an issue I (Joy) had raised in one of our meetings. She wrote: “I would like to see all library messages emailed in text, i.e. not as attachments. Besides the general hassle, many of these attachments don't even open. Upon inquiring, I was told this has something to do with the system not supporting certain characters. But because the library has chosen to transcribe book titles using these characters, I would like to see them send notices (whether for recall, overdue, whatever) IN TEXT, or at least in an accessible] way--I would like to know what book I have that is being recalled.”

FROM JOY: I believe Jim said that this problem was being addressed and would be handled soon, but I couldn't remember if he said by when? Do you know?

Most notices should arrive in text, but a bug in our email notices system continues to cause certain messages to open as attachments. Until recently, we were uncertain if we would be continuing with our present system or moving to a completely different library system. A decision has been made to continue with our present system for the next three to four years – and so now our systems staff is working to fix this problem and address other notice-related issues.

3) One student writes: “It would be better to have Xerox machines that are also scanners: this way one can send the documents to an email address, which is good for the environment (you don't have to waste thousands of thousands of paper every year for xerox-copy), and low-cost for students. I think that would be great if they could invest in that when they change their machines.” We have introduced state-of-the-art multifunction devices that will allow you to scan, copy, and print—and soon, fax. You can save your scans to a flash drive (we are working to allow the option to save your scans to your webshare account). This week Regenstein Circulation began selling 2GB USB drives for \$10/drive.

4) One student writes: “In terms of technology, it would be nice to have a scanner available on each floor for those of us who are going to scan our photocopies anyway.” The multifunction devices described above are now on each floor of Regenstein and in all other libraries.

5) Two students voiced the strong opinion that either all printers should be able to print two-sided, or that the default setting on the first floor printers should be for two-sided printing and you should have to change to one-sided if that's what you need. The student who thought that all printers should be able to print double thought that this would be a big investment now for a good payoff later. Both students concerns were based on environmental factors. **The default setting for all the new multifunction devices is duplex (there is an option to print single-sided as well).**

6) One student writes: "I'm not sure what the difference is between lens and the regular library catalogue. This should be more clear."

### **How is Lens different from the Library catalog?**

Lens expands your search into other Library resources including electronic database information, e-journals list, archives and manuscripts finding aids, tables of contents, summaries, and the Library's website. We will be adding additional sources in future versions.

Many users will find that Lens offers more flexibility for discovering resources than the existing Library Catalog. Some of Lens' features include:

- Search results ranked by relevancy with other sort options available
- Ability to refine search results by a wide array of facets
- Tables of contents, summaries and book review links

For additional information about Lens, visit: <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/lens/faq.html>  
[From Beth: I've addressed this in at least one newsletter to the Div School community. I also address it in most of the workshops I lead. If Joy thinks it would be helpful, we can work together to schedule a session just on Lens.]

7) Regarding the internet connection, one student writes: "The internet service can be REALLY slow sometimes."

We are aware that wireless access during peak usage times may have been slow in the past. We have been working with NSIT to increase wireless capacity in Regenstein – in summer NSIT conducted a wireless signal audit and upgraded routers where necessary. Library workstations do not use wireless and should not be slow unless there are general network problems. Over the December interim, we will be shifting many of the cubicles on the first floor of Regenstein to avoid people inadvertently kicking and unplugging the network cables. If you do encounter difficulty on these machines, please contact us through <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/about/suggestions.html>

## Library Website

1) One student writes: “Regarding the website, I think the basic search feature is usually unhelpful. Usually I have to type exactly what I’m looking for, and even then it often does not appear in the results. Sometimes, even very popular sources are listed very far down search results, if they show up at all. For example, try typing "Oxford English Dictionary" into the search field. The actual "Oxford English Dictionary" is so far down, that I don't know if it even shows up.

Maybe changing the singular "search" field to multiple search fields any of which could be used to find a reference: Keyword: \_\_\_\_\_ Author: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Publisher: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_.

Basically this would just bypass the need to click on Advanced Search every time you need to look for something.”

Over the summer, our systems staff made some changes in Lens searching so that putting your search phrase in quotes (“Oxford English Dictionary”), while not exactly the same as Google-like phrase searching, now addresses this problem. We are also working on redesigning the home page of Lens, and are considering adding multiple search boxes. [From Beth (bbidlack@uchicago.edu): I’m on the working group redesigning the home page of Lens and welcome input from Joy and other students.]

2) One student writes: “When I am trying to renew books, I cannot discern from the long checklist if any of these books have different due dates, or perhaps have been recalled, without scrolling painstakingly through the whole list of books (and believe me, I have a lot of books out). I suggest that in the renewal checklist, they either put recalled books in a red font (or something else quite eye-catching), or they incorporate a feature allowing you to sort the materials by due-date.”

From the “Items Out” page of “My Accounts,” you can sort items by due date or any other displayed category by clicking on the underlined heading (including “Title,” “Out,” “Due Date” and “Times Renewed.”)

## Resource Availability and Accessibility

1) One student writes: As an M. Div student, I often find that books needed for courses are not available in the Library, or if they are, they are older editions with significant differences. In fields such as pastoral care or worship, for example, it is starting to get to the point where I don't even bother going to the Reg; it is actually easier to go straight to the JKM library where titles are more likely to be available and checked in (often in multiple copies). While I am certainly glad that the JKM complements the Regenstein's offerings, I do think that it would be appropriate if books used in courses were available on our own campus, and ideally placed on reserve by the instructors. As it is now, I often have to ask instructors to place their personal copies on reserve, if at all. I have also

become a frequent user of Interlibrary Loan when it comes to topics of Christian liturgical history or theology.

If a faculty member requests that materials be placed on reserve and the item is not owned, reserve will attempt to purchase the book; if the book is out of print or unable to be purchased, a faculty member can elect to put his personal copy on reserve.

From Beth: I'm happy to work with students and faculty on this. I just need some specific details because I don't have access to course syllabi so can't see what's used in courses. You're right that we try to work in a complementary way with the Hyde Park seminaries to make the most of our budget, especially during these economic times, however, we are certainly committed to our own students and faculty.]

2) Having the religion reading room on the 4th floor but the stacks on the 3rd is annoying, especially when some materials do not have a stacks copy for check out.

The opening of the Mansueto Library will allow us to reorganize our collections and reader space. Over the summer, two Library task forces explored space options and collection arrangements for Regenstein after the initial load of items into Mansueto. The task forces examined the links between the bookstacks and the print reference collections, and decided to consolidate most print reference items (including the reference items now housed on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor) into a single collection on the second and third floor reading areas. This consolidated collection will give needed space for collection growth, eliminate costly duplication, and facilitate interdisciplinary research.

#### **Fine structure:**

1) Quoting in full from a student email: "I've had a problem this year with the fine structure around recalls, since it's not appropriate for Christmas break. I left the week of Christmas for a 12-day break, and on Dec. 23rd (!!!) someone recalled 3 books from me - and I had a \$30 fine when I got back! The same thing wouldn't have happened if they had recalled them in the week after Christmas, since I would have returned within the 7-day grace period. It's unrealistic for people to return all their 60+ books at home over christmas break (the response of the circ desk to me), as it is if someone is gone for the entire summer. Because spring break is only a week, the same dynamic doesn't come into play then. Could the fine structure be reduced, or the grace period extended for the time between fall and winter quarters? I never recall books from people at the beginning of Christmas break since I don't want to stick someone with fines, but it seems some library patrons don't have that same common-sense courtesy."

While we understand that receiving a recall over winter break is inconvenient, the Library is used quite heavily during this time by faculty and students who choose to remain on campus. For many patrons, this interim is the best (perhaps only) time to do research between September and March, and it's equally inconvenient to them to not have the books they need.

Library departments (such as Reserve) sometimes place recalls over the break, and we do try to be as flexible as possible in these situations.

### **Library Accessibility**

1) One student writes: “I think the library should open before 8am.” Another writes: “The hours of the library are ridiculous. 24hrs a day, 7 days a week is what I'd push for.”

The A-Level of Regenstein is open 24/5 (it closes at 10pm on Fridays and Saturdays). Harper Memorial Library Commons is also open 24/5 (closing at 6pm on Fridays and 10pm on Saturdays).

Keeping the entire Regenstein building open 24 hours poses security concerns; in addition, custodial staff cleaning occurs during the closed hours Monday-Friday.

### **Other**

1) One student writes: “The coffee shop should be funded, not just dependent on sales, so that it too can run longer and better hours.”

The Ex Libris coffee shop in Regenstein is run by ORCSA (the Office of the Reynolds Club and Student Activities), who also run Cobb, Common Knowledge café in Harper, and Uncommon Grounds on the second floor of the Reynolds Club. ORCSA does subsidize the coffee shops, although they would like them to break even.

The Library is exploring a more pleasant location for Ex Libris within the library proper.

The Law School café is run by Plum Catering.

2) One student writes: “Not enough study rooms, or big tables (the cubicles are claustrophobic).”

The Library task force on Regenstein space recommended increasing the number of collaborative study spaces; however, this depends on securing needed funding to remodel interior space. We also have requested funding from the University to replace the existing cubicles with a more modern design. This request has yet to be funded.

3) One student writes: “I hate it when people intentionally mis-shelve or hide books for their own use.”

So do we! Library staff do shelf-read the bookstacks: when bookstacks staff reshelve a book, they shelf-read the given shelf. We also have a comprehensive shelf-reading program underway; the size of the Regenstein bookstacks means it will take 3 years to read every single shelf.

We also do periodic sweeps of lockers to find uncharged material.

4) One student writes: “There should be more space where food is permitted other than Ex Libris. (But I doubt that's doable.)”

We hope to increase the café seating in a new location.

5) One student writes: “My library experience would be much improved by the presence of a hot water maker on the 4th floor, as it is rather disruptive to have to pack up one's things to trek down to ex Libris each time one is in need of a mug of tea.”

We have no plans to implement this.