

California State University Virtual Library: A Vision of the CSU Council of Library Directors

The CSU Council of Library Directors is proposing the creation of a shared virtual library in order to provide universal access to CSU students and faculty.

The CSU Libraries have a long history of effective deployment of technology. Now the technological systems exist to fulfill our collective vision of powerfully linking our resources and services for the benefit of our aggregate academic communities.

California State University stands upon the principle that students from all socio-economic levels and all geographic locations should have access to education. However, the campus resources deployed to students have been dependent upon location and therefore upon campus enrollment-driven budgets and other campus issues. A CSU student can receive very different levels of resources depending upon the relative wealth of the campus where he or she is enrolled.

America's libraries have always been engaged in continually advancing access for all who seek knowledge. Similarly, the CSU Libraries, pivotal in their role in providing the knowledge resources for teaching, learning and research, are committed to providing broad access to our academic community.

The CSU Libraries have long been very forward-thinking in their approach to library service and very progressive in continually adding new services and resources as they become available in the marketplace. From the early years of technology and the subsequent expansion of the web, the CSU libraries have aggressively developed their electronic resources and services in order to provide extensive remote access 24/7. At the same time, the CSU libraries have continued to support the disciplines that are dependent upon print collections, special and archival collections and sound and image collections. The significant challenge has been in responding to hundreds of disciplines and fields of research with collections in all formats in order to support the quality of education promised by the CSU to the people of California and to support the vibrant research of our faculty as they create new knowledge.

As we have continued to seek fiscal resources to match the demands of students and faculty, the collective result of the CSU Libraries'

efforts and our focus on expanding our knowledge resources are impressive. The collections of the CSU Libraries should be a point of pride—representing as they do the commitment we have toward California as a knowledge-based society that continually invests in its people and spurs dynamic growth with new research.

Importantly, for fifteen years, the CSU Council of Library Directors (COLD) has been engaged in strategic planning. Then, over a decade ago, the California State University launched the Integrated Technology Strategy (ITS) which, in addition to the development of the technological infrastructure vital for university life today, also embraced and supported the directions and initiatives of the CSU Libraries. These powerful efforts have resulted in an unprecedented level of collaborative projects including the establishment of an electronic core collection of journals and databases; cooperative buying to leverage our dollars; new systems for resource sharing across libraries; providing 24/7 reference assistance; establishing collective standards for new library buildings; and leading the nation's libraries in information literacy.

Linking and expanding on these separate, but interrelated initiatives and taking advantage of current and emerging technologies, we are poised to move forward with the CSU Virtual Library under the leadership of COLD.

What does a virtual library mean in the context of the CSU?

Imagine the future CSU students and faculty when our virtual library is implemented. Students and faculty will have access to the **virtual library** from their home, their office, their library or anywhere in the world. The **CSU Virtual Library** will present the students and faculty with a single portal from which they can access the **combined resources of the CSU Libraries** regardless of their home campus.

Every CSU library today has a strong electronic presence with many resources and services online—some of which are held uniquely by a campus. The CSU Virtual Library will unite these disparate resources allowing future students and faculty the ability to search the combined electronic journals, electronic databases, electronic books, streaming media, repositories, digital archives, and catalogs of the holdings of libraries. These can then be interwoven and leveraged with jointly managed services and support. Additionally, new resources will become available that include learning objects and information research instruction modules that can be integrated into online

instruction and embedded into learning management systems. From this single portal, library users will be able to request electronic document delivery, have books sent from one campus library to their home campus library because still only 5% of information is digital, and have a virtual reference consultation with a librarian when assistance is needed. Additionally, social networking tools will be used extensively to build an online library community that embraces the virtual reality of shared digital resources in research, pedagogy and multi-media creation.

The importance and significance of this virtual library is that it supports all students and faculty wherever they are in the CSU system. Everyone will be able to benefit from and use the combined resources of our collective CSU Libraries. Libraries who have collections that are broad and deep substantially improve research and education. Faculty are attracted to and retained by campuses that provide extensive scholarly resources so that they can excel in teaching and research. Students become engaged in learning when their understanding is deepened and enriched by exposure to a wider world of knowledge. An engaged student is more likely to persist in their education.

Considering the current scale of learning and research activities in our libraries, we expect the use of the CSU Virtual Library to be dramatic. Currently, there are eight million service interactions per year by library personnel with and on behalf of our students and faculty. Nearly a quarter of a million students attend information research instruction and presentations annually. The physical use of the library facilities remain high with the average gate count across all CSU libraries at over a half million persons per week.

Invisible to future students and faculty will be the effort that will go into the creation of a virtual library. Strategic choices among technologies and resources; collaborative work; out of the box thinking; the research for and deployment of new systems as well as innovative uses of proven technologies; new agreements; connections to other major CSU initiatives such as the Digital Marketplace; authentication of all users; changing partnerships; extensive support and a different way of working among the partner libraries are among the challenges that will face us as we move along this path but it is imperative that we begin. Budget requirements for resources, technology and staffing will need to be defined. Fiscal support for the CSU Virtual Library will be drawn from local campuses as well as the

system. The CSU Virtual Library is a significant consortial effort in which everyone can benefit because everyone contributes.

The CSU Council of Library Directors proposes this “Next Wave” of strategic planning to optimize the resources and maximize the collective power of the CSU Libraries. The CSU Virtual Library is our boldest vision to date in support of our students and faculty as they engage in teaching, learning and research.

Virtual Library Scenario: One Student’s Experience

For the research paper in her capstone history course, Debbie signs onto her campus library portal to access knowledge resources. When she signs on, she enters the seamless environment of her campus resources as well as the electronic resources powered by the CSU Virtual Library. This portal authenticates and authorizes her for full access to all licensed resources, including electronic journals and databases, repositories, digital archives, catalogs of the holdings of libraries, learning objects and information research instruction modules. She seeks advice from one of the CSU library faculty members who is a subject specialist in history, asking her question using instant messaging, and gets advice on the best sources for her research, including the CSU History Research Learning Commons. The online catalog of CSU Libraries holdings includes user-generated “tags” and other recommended books associated with individual titles. She retrieves full text journal articles available electronically by clicking on the links in the *America History and Life* database. Debbie then requests other articles not available online by clicking on the document delivery link that automatically fills in the bibliographic information and her own contact information for delivery to her campus library or e-mail address. All the books and articles she selects are automatically entered into a database of citations that can be formatted in any required style for her bibliography. She is especially pleased to find the primary sources she is required to use in the CSU digital archives, as well as some images to include in her paper. Debbie shares her research experience with other history students in the CSU social networking space.

Virtual Library Scenario: One Faculty Member’s Experience

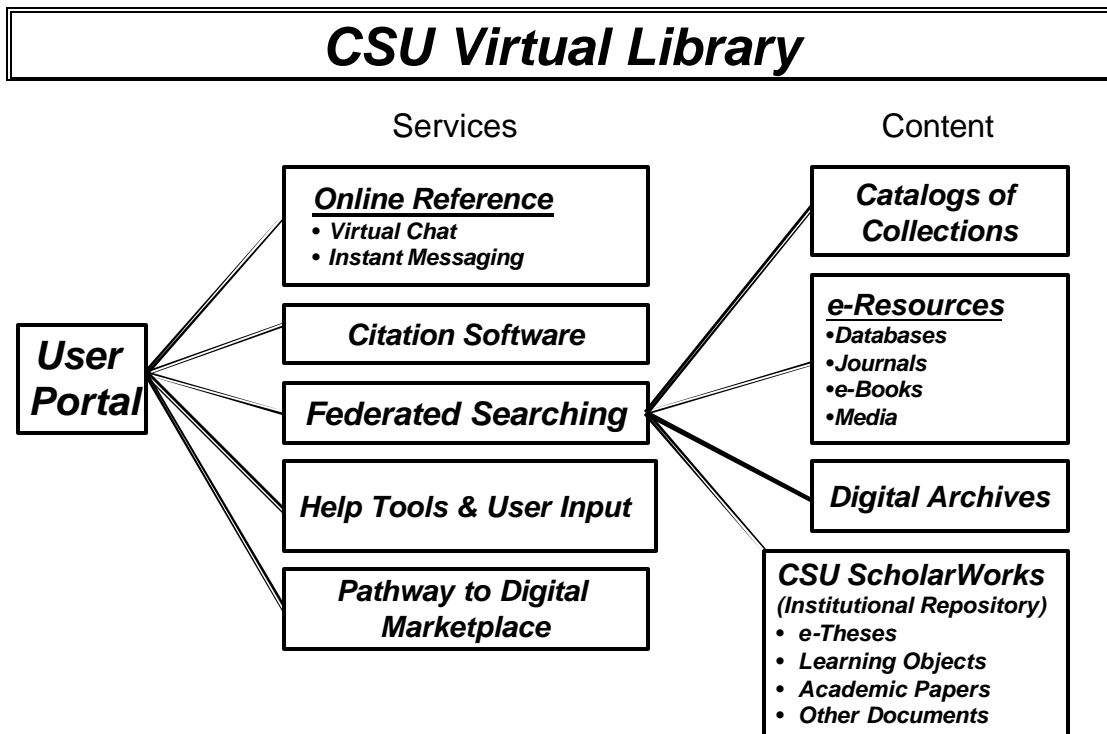
Richard is a long-time faculty member in Engineering and an expert on construction that can tolerate powerful earthquakes. Richard is about

to make a presentation before a huge audience of engineers in South America on his award-winning work when he realizes that he needs some additional information on his topic as well as a full citation for an article that he wants to cite. From his hotel, he uses his computer to log onto his campus library portal which authenticates him and gives him full access to the library's licensed resources. Quickly, he uses federated searching across the major engineering journals and locates the information that he desires. Then, he searches a top engineering database for the full citation of the work he wishes to highlight. While Richard is in the search process, he realizes that a photo of earthquake damage of parking structures would be very useful. He sends an instant message to the engineering librarian at his campus library and asks about photographs. She directs him to the digital archives of the CSU libraries. He searches the digital archives and discovers some excellent photographs which he imports into his presentation. When Richard returns, he places his presentation into *CSU ScholarWorks*, the institutional repository, and grants access to a few select colleagues with whom he has been working. Richard also has an idea to create a learning object from one of the engineering problems he has been working on. He develops the learning object and loads it into *CSU ScholarWorks* so he can use it in a variety of his courses especially making it available in the learning management system. Richard is a very satisfied and skilled user of the CSU Virtual Library.

Virtual Library Scenario: One Freshman's Experience

During Barbara's teen years, the only libraries she used were her small school library and her little neighborhood public library. When she was online and not engaged with *MySpace* or *Facebook*, Barbara used *Wikipedia* or sometimes just googled the information she wanted. Now Barbara is starting college. Barbara signed up for University 100 at her parent's insistence so she could be more ready for her college career. That was when Barbara realized that the type of searching she did before would not be suitable for a young scholar as it was too superficial and did not use scholarly sources. When she had her first research assignment in English, Barbara did not know where to turn but she went to the library and seeing students lining up at the Reference Desk joined the queue. There a librarian showed Barbara how to log onto the portal, how to search the basic resources and how to have a virtual chat with a librarian 24/7 whenever she needed help. Importantly, during University 100, there was a library research week in which Barbara learned how to form a search strategy, how to identify a scholarly source, how to cite works that she was using and

how to respect intellectual property. She also learned how to use the learning objects embedded in the course management systems so she could improve her own searching skills by taking these online information research tutorials. Barbara now felt much more comfortable doing research and knew that she would just keep learning and learning until she became a very skilled searcher. Barbara increasingly became one of the CSU Virtual Library's most frequent users and is now considering a career in library and information science.



COLD
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Action Plan for the CSU Virtual Library

2008-2009

- Develop overall design for the Virtual Library
- Establish priorities
- Identify major policy issues
- Develop budget estimates
- Establish timelines
- Develop organizational structures for development
- Consult with users
- Assess progress