Mail From the Library

Ever since the library began service, we have received requests to have the circulation notices sent via email, instead of paper copy. After many months of development work by the library system vendor and library staff, we are now ready to implement such a program. The email address of each HKUST library patron has been entered into the library system. Starting during the third week in April, all recall, pickup or overdue notices will be sent via email instead of on paper.

This will greatly speed up the delivery of library notices, and should prove much more convenient for all our patrons. So the next time you request a book, start looking for an email message with the header "MAIL FROM THE LIBRARY", it could be telling you your material is ready.

Collection Spotlight -- Interactive Videodiscs

There are five interactive videodiscs currently available on a Macintosh workstation in Media Resources. Each offers an opportunity for learning at your own pace. We encourage you to try them out.

1. **Life Cycles** is a visual database on reproductive biology with both motion picture and still frame images of animal and plant life from cell division to courtship and birthing, from pollination to budding.

2. **Redox** provides students with images of reactions and lab equipment not usually available for hands-on experiments.

3. **Biotechnology** was designed to provide technicians, upperclassmen, postgraduate students, and postdoctoral researchers with clear demonstrations of biotechnological techniques.

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Online News Service Available!

NEW: LEXIS/NEXIS information service.

A wealth of full-text information is available from LEXIS/NEXIS. The LEXIS service provides access to U.K. and Commonwealth, French, and U.S. legal sources, for example, ALR annotations, Congressional Record, Federal Register, and law reviews. The NEXIS service provides company and financial information as well as information on sports, energy, transportation, technology, computers and many other topics from journals and newspapers. There is also a country information service, which includes countries of Asia/Pacific as well as Europe, the Mideast/Africa, and North/South America.

Presently, one PC with modem access has been set up in the database room at Reference. A Reference librarian eventually will be able to search for you by other means. We will be evaluating use of the service over the next couple of months with the idea of determining what arrangement is best for next fall, when we have more faculty and more students.

We encourage you to take advantage of this wide-ranging resource.
Rubbings of Chinese Inscription: An Exhibit

Forty-two outstanding examples of rubbings of Chinese Inscription are currently on display in the Library Gallery. These rubbings are on loan to us from the collection in the East Asian Library at the University of California, Berkeley.

This exhibit provides viewers an introduction to early rubbings, which preserve impressions of countless inscriptions now defaced or completely lost. They are invaluable historical sources.

The East Asian Library's collection of Chinese rubbings is second in number (over 2,700), outside East Asia, only to that of the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago.

You Want Copiers? You Got Copiers!

There have been a lot of requests for the Library to increase the number of photocopiers. Since September, 1,539,531 copies were made on the seven public copiers in the Library. Many of you have complained about having to wait in long lines to make copies. You will be glad to know that three more copiers are on order, and will be installed for use as soon as they arrive. While we are on the subject of copiers, let's address a few other issues:

New coins: The newer Hong Kong coins weigh less than the older coins, and so will not work in the card dispenser or value-adding machines provided in the Library. You may have noticed that these coins do not work in most coin-operated machines throughout Hong Kong. We are following this issue closely, and exploring possible solutions. In the mean time, remember to use the older coins in these machines.

Cost: Each copy made on these machines costs 20¢. This is the same rate charged at each of the seven UPGC institutions' libraries, and is far less than the 50¢ per copy charged by the public library system.

Paper trays: The copiers in the Library have been fitted with locks on the paper feed areas. This should help increase the reliability of the machines, and prevent certain abuses. One person complained that they could no longer choose to use the copier to do double-sided copying, but the feed slot had to be locked to prevent users from accidentally inserting the wrong kind of transparency film, which melted inside the machine.

Please be reminded that you should obey the Copyright Act when making copies on these machines. Copying entire books and journals constitutes a violation of the Act.

Spotlight - continued from page 1

4. The First Emperor of China presents the treasures of Qin Shi Huang Di, discovered in 1974 in Xi'an. There is film footage of the first days of the excavation, archival material, a tour through the Qin Museum, a still frame video library of over 2,000 slides, and bilingual Chinese-English commentary by several scholars.

5. The Video Encyclopedia of the 20th Century includes almost 80 hours of an archival collection of historical sights and sounds, recorded between 1893 and 1988. It allows you to review many of the significant people and events that have shaped the 20th century.

Media Resources staff have prepared instructions for entering each program, and they are also willing to assist with any questions.
Faculty - Library Communication

There are now Library Coordinators, one for each academic department, who work with librarians to improve collections and services as well as to discuss issues and concerns. This group met for the first time in February and will meet again in April.

There is also a Library Faculty Committee, a standing committee of the Senate, made up of two representatives for each school. These advise the Senate on the provision, use, and effectiveness of library services as they affect the needs and mission of the University.

To further facilitate communication, the Library has now assigned four librarians as school contact persons:

- Science: Steve Yip
- Engineering: Tom Lundstrom
- Business: Louisa Kwok
- Humanities & Social Sciences: Danny Chin

While you will still contact librarians in charge of certain activities, these individuals may assist in smoothing communication.

Library Signage

Our users must have noticed that the paper signs have mostly disappeared, replaced by proper directional and informational signs. As a physical entity, the Library is an open and public place which needs to be easily accessible by all members of the University community. In order to make it easier for patrons to find their way around in the Library, and to use its collections, a library signage specialist was brought in to develop a comprehensive signage proposal which would address the layout and organization of the Library. The project also had to be designed around a constantly changing set of circumstances, from the opening of new floors, to the reallocation of storage spaces.

Over the past few months, the first phase of this signage project has been implemented. By the Fall semester, the second phase will be in place. A third phase will then begin, focusing on the future expansion to LG4.

If you have specific comments or suggestions about the Library's signage, please send e-mail to LIBRARY. Your feedback is an important part of the evaluation process. After all, the signage is there to make using the Library easier for you.

HARNET Upgrade

As of this term, the Hong Kong Academic and Research Network (HARNET) has been upgraded from 64 Kbps to T1 (1.544 Mbps) lines. This upgrade, along with some additional TCP/IP connections at the other institutions, has allowed us to add the library catalogs of the other UPGC institutions to the Connect to other databases menu in the Main Catalog. The only exception is Lingnan College, which is in the process of purchasing an online library system.

Each of these systems has a different login procedure, so please read the on-screen instructions carefully. Should you have any questions, please contact a librarian at the Reference Counter.

The overseas link from HARNET to the Internet remains a 64 Kbps line. The load on this line is substantial, and is being evaluated by the University and Polytechnic Computer Centre. It will likely be increased to 128 Kbps later this year, which should help improve response time from overseas systems.
Suggestions, We get suggestions . . .

In this column we will respond to some of the suggestions and comments placed into the main catalog’s suggestion box. Brief responses to common suggestions may also be found in one of the main catalog’s I > Library INFORMATION screens.

Reserve: There seems to be some confusion about the circulation policies for items in the Reserve Collection. One user feels “It would be perfect if those books can be borrowed overnight.” In fact, these items can be borrowed overnight. If you borrow a 2-hour reserve item during the last two hours the Library is open, it will be due back during the first hour the Library is open the following day. Keep in mind that not all items in the Reserve Collection are limited to 2 hours. Some items are on 3-Day Reserve.

Items Missing from the Shelves: With over 150,000 items in the collection, Library staff cannot perform a full inventory often. If you find that an item appears to be missing, and it is listed as “Available” in the main catalog, please fill out a Search Slip at the Circulation or Reference Counter. Library staff will then try to locate this item for you.

New Books Display: At the moment, the Library receives many hundreds of books each week. It is not feasible to have this volume of material in any form of new books display. However, we are exploring posting a list of new materials each week on the campus’ Electronic Notice Board (ENB). We will notify you when this service is in place.

Alumni Borrowing Privileges: HKUST’s first graduates will complete their schooling this summer, and would like to know what borrowing privileges they will have following their graduation. Details of policy and procedure are currently being worked out, and you will be notified of the result prior to your graduation.

Library E-Mail Addresses

Please use the following e-mail addresses for questions relating to specific library operations:

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Some Statistics

Some of our readers may find the following information answers some of their questions. As of 5 April, 10,824 library materials were checked out, by 1,991 of our 4,862 patrons. On average, each borrower had checked out 5.4 items. Faculty borrowers averaged 9.4, graduate students averaged 8.7, undergraduate students averaged 4.2, and staff averaged 3.4.

This year, roughly half of the items borrowed are from the book collection, 40% from Reserves, and 10% from Media.