

Touring Libraries



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Visiting Libraries & Learning Resource Centers

When programming and designing new or remodeled library space it is important for the users and designers to look beyond the existing facilities and not to try to just fix their existing spaces or replicate them in a slightly modified form. Touring other libraries is an important part of the preparation process to programming and designing new library space. It can help break the conceptual limits that we all tend to have about the possibilities and opportunities in the design of new libraries.

There are an astonishing amount of recently constructed facilities throughout the United States that are helping to refine the vision of what an outstanding contemporary library or learning resource center can be. We urge everyone involved in the process of creating a new or renovated facility, whether administrators, facilities managers, librarians, teachers, library staffers, architects, interior designers or engineers, to go out and experience as many new facilities as they can.

The following outline is an attempt to provide library visitors with a guide to various design elements that one encounters as they tour libraries or learning resource centers. The list is meant to be a starting point and not all-inclusive. It is focused on common features of both academic and public

libraries with special sections on issues relevant to academic and public facilities. The purpose of the guide is to focus the visitor on certain key elements of the design and to have a structured way to visit and understand any library.

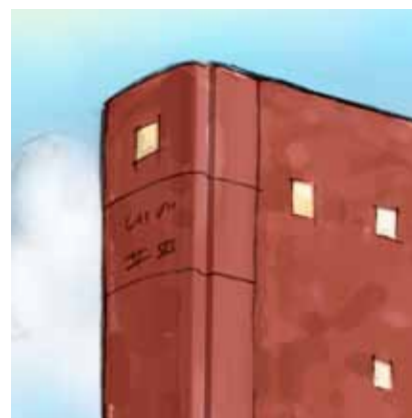
We have created this guide in a workbook format to enable you to jot notes and capture thoughts and ideas as you tour a site or review plans.

There are number of other resources available from the American Library Association and other organizations if you wish to pursue things further. Of particular note is the Libris Design web site: that has a number of publications and downloadable monographs on public library design topics. This is one of the best [resources on contemporary library design](#).

Happy Touring!

—Alan Butler & Will Baty

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The Authors



Alan Butler, AIA, is a senior principal with TLCD Architecture, a 70-person firm with offices in Santa Rosa and Fairfield, California. In his 22 years with the firm he has led a diverse range of educational and institutional projects with emphasis on collegiate campus planning and library design. Notable projects include two phases of development for the 210,000 square foot Petaluma Campus of Santa Rosa Junior College, including the 35,000 square foot Mahoney Library currently under construction. The new Frank P. Doyle Library, a landmark 140,000 square foot brick library co-designed with the noted firm of Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott of Boston, was completed in 2006. In recent years, Mr. Butler has extensively toured libraries looking at evolving trends in library design. He has a Masters of Architecture degree from the University of Oregon and brings a background in fine arts and environmental planning to his practice. He has served on the Design Review Board of the City of Santa Rosa and past president of the Redwood Empire Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.



Will Baty has been actively engaged with libraries, technology issues and facility planning throughout his professional career. He has been a working librarian for over 28 years and the Dean of Libraries and Learning Resources at Santa Rosa Junior College since 1985. He has served as a facility consultant and library programmer for the last ten years. His ongoing professional interests have focused on the nexus between library collections and services, technology integration, and access to information. "The iconic role of libraries in our culture and society remains a critical issue that requires an ongoing dialogue between the consultant, the architects and each community."

TOURING LIBRARIES

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Eugene Public Library.



Canadian Center for Architecture Library.



Middlebury College Library.



Tour Notes & Ideas

Good ideas:

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What Happens Here

Vehicular drop off
Public transit stops
Pedestrian access
Entrance plaza & building entrance
Book drops
Main signage
Shaded / rainy weather waiting area
Parking
Landscape features
Cafés
Other public functions

What to Look For

What are your first impressions?
What makes it welcoming or off-putting?
Is there a vehicular drop off?
Is the entrance clearly readable?
Is the site signage clear and readable?
Do special features mark the entrance?
Public art
Entrance plaza & landscape features
Architectural features marking the entrance
Is there a clear accessible path to the entry?
Is the pedestrian path separated from the vehicular?
Is there a covered enclosure at entry?
Are there comfortable shaded places to sit, wait, and visit?

How does landscaping support library activities?

Are there special purpose outdoor rooms?

Reading courts
Light courts
Public gathering areas
Outdoor cafés

Observations and Trends

First impressions are critical. Entrance plazas have become a place for public art, places to gather and to greet. The entry experience sets the tone and tenor for the facility as a whole.

Mixed-use facilities are becoming more common, incorporating neighborhood centers, day-care, and recreation facilities in the public library sectors. Academic libraries often house tutorial facilities, art galleries, media services, classrooms and assembly spaces.



Seattle Main Library: landscaped & protected entry is an urban oasis.



San Jose State / San Jose Public Library Entry: the café is accessible from the street and the library lobby.



Mountain View Public Library: rear gardens create outdoor rooms.



Eugene Public Library: a sculpture at the forecourt enlivens the entry.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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What Happens Here

Exterior book drops

In-wall

Freestanding mailbox-type

Drive-up

Employee entrances

Delivery pathways (see delivery access / loading dock section)

Building entrance

What to Look For

What happens to the books after they go in the drop?

Direct to circulation / re-shelving areas

Remote closet?

Employee has to leave the building to pick up materials?

Where are the employee entrances?

Safe night time access?

Front, back or side of the building?

Observations and Trends

Employee entrances tend to be separate from building entrances so that queuing patrons don't try to get in as the employees arrive.



Vancouver B.C. Public Library: an exterior book drop delivers materials to the basement level of the library.



Monterey Peninsula College: book drop chute and cart in technical services area.



The Dublin Public Library book drop delivers books direct to a sorting and cart table.



Dublin Public Library: employee entry and exterior book drop.



Ballard Library: Accesible book drops with a handy shelf and nearby seats to wait make an inviting entry.



Rohnert Park Public Library: entry with adjacent exterior book drops.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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The Building Envelope



What Happens Here

Building orientation will often determine how the skin of the building is designed.

The building envelope is the interface with climate.

The materials will often express the character of the space within.

What to Look For

What are the exterior materials?

Are they durable and low maintenance?

Are the facades of the building responsive to their orientation?

For example:

South: Low angle winter sun is an issue. Horizontal shading devices work best.

East / West: vertical shading works best for early and late sun.

North: Best for getting natural daylight into the building. Late afternoon in summer can be a problem.

How are windows treated?
Clear, tinted, reflective?
Shading devices used?

Observations and Trends

Daylighting is an increasingly important factor in library design. Clear glazing with protection by exterior shading devices or other building elements optimize natural light within the building while blocking solar heat gain.

Public agencies often have budgets to build new facilities but are hard pressed to adequately maintain new facilities. First cost investment in durable low maintenance materials can avoid future maintenance costs for replacement, painting, cleaning, etc.



U.C. Riverside Science Library: South facade at entry. Horizontal shading devices help give articulation to the facade.



Monterey Peninsula College: trellis and shading devices at south-facing entry.



Riverside Community College: stucco is a cost effective and durable material, but it needs periodic painting.



U.C. Riverside Science Library: investment in durable materials reduces long-term maintenance.



Monterey Peninsula College: unshaded north facade in a temperate climate is the main source of natural daylight.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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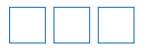
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Things to avoid:

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First Impressions of the Building



What Happens Here

First impressions will color a patron's whole experience in the library. The exterior of the building and the entry sequence give the library an immediate impression of what the library experience will be.

What to Look For

Style of the building:

Modern

Traditional

Eclectic

Regional

What kinds of materials are used and what impressions do they evoke?

Mood:

Warm and comfortable

Light and airy

Institutional

Quiet and hushed or active?

Is there an apparent theme to the design?

Clarity of organization:

Easy to understand where to go and what to do? Does the building explain itself?

Clear wayfinding systems?

Is the entry space:

Inviting?

Clean?

Cluttered?

A place to linger or pass through?

Observations and Trends

Try to analyze what elements create the feeling of the place you are visiting.

Some things that visitors most frequently respond to positively:

Natural light

Comfortable materials and furniture

Easy understanding of where to go and what to do.



Frank P. Doyle Library, Santa Rosa Junior College: design responds to nearby historic buildings.



Dublin Public Library: an exuberant approach to the design.



Middlebury College Library : a clearly modern building.



Salt Lake Public Library: a grand civic experience.



Lillis Business School, University of Oregon: embedded solar panels in facade make statement about sustainable design intentions.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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What Happens Here

The lobby is often the hub for:

- Public rooms / meeting rooms / conference rooms.
- Restrooms
- Elevators /stairs
- Interior book drops
- Public information and bulletin board areas
- Directory signage
- Display areas / cabinets / exhibit areas
- Non-library building functions
- Access to garages & parking lots
- Cafés & coffee bars
- Friends of the library book sales & gift shops

What to Look For

What rooms are accessed off the lobby and outside the library control gates?

Where are the book drops inside the library?

Observations and Trends

Lobbies can be more than pass-through circulation spaces. They can be informal social spaces with seating, locations for cafés and coffee bars, and for larger facilities locations for the “retail” functions such as book stores and gift shops. They can also be the hub to non-library functions in a mixed-use environment.

Careful attention should be paid to after-hours access. Many libraries have problems with having to escort users through a closed library to meeting rooms and auditoriums having off-hour activities. Do people, such as vendors, need to visit staff during off-hour periods? How do they get to administrative offices?



Eugene Public Library: spacious public lobby has café and friends-of-the-library bookstore.



Middlebury College: history display in lobby.



San Jose State / San Jose Public: banners in lobby create welcoming atmosphere.



Dublin Public Library: concealed glass doors separate lobby from library for after-hours events.



Salt Lake Library: with café tables and storefronts, the lobby is an urban streetscape.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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Cafés & Coffee Bars



What Happens Here

Cafés and coffee bars

Tables and chairs

Lounge furniture

Food service

What to Look For

Is the café inside or outside the library security system?

Does the café connect to outdoor spaces?

Is this an after-hours facility?

What is the level of food service?

Food preparation on-site can trigger health department restaurant requirements:

Vending machines / self-service

Coffee cart

Coffee and pastries at a permanent facility

Off-site prepared deli items

On-site prepared foods and light meals

If it is inside the library itself, what is the food and drink policy in the library?

Is there a designated dining area?

What kinds of floor finishes are used?

Is it run by the library or an outside caterer or food service?

Does it have wireless access?

Does it have music or television?

Does it have good delivery access?

Observations and Trends

In the era of "Borders Books" and "Starbucks", a most familiar reading and study environment is the coffee bar or café. More and more public and academic libraries are constructing cafés as an integral part of a new facility. Some consultants consider this to be a standard element of a new library.

Policies on food and drink within the library are rapidly changing. Covered drinks now seem widely allowed in college libraries. A book is as likely to get damaged at a user's home as in the library, though spills and cleanup are a consideration. The new Middlebury College Library allows pizza delivery anywhere in the facility!



Eugene Public Library: coffee bar adjacent to friends-of-the-library bookstore.



Monterey Peninsula College café has direct access to the forecourt of the library and accessible to southern sun.



Eugene Public Library has a generous public café in the entry lobby.



Middlebury College Library café is a full service cafe with food service.



Doyle Library, Santa Rosa Junior College: the small café is inside the library proper.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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Public Rooms



What Happens Here

Public meeting rooms
Auditoriums
Galleries
Special collections

What to Look For

Is there access independent of library hours?

Does the public room have catering access and a sink or kitchen?

Does the meeting room have chair and table storage for events?

Is there access from the meeting/public rooms to restrooms and lobbies?

Are there good bulletin board and display spaces and display lighting?

Are the rooms equipped with projection screens, public address systems and other audio-visual infrastructure?

Can lighting be varied for different uses?

Observations and Trends

Public rooms may be used for library events such as story hour, book talks, and other cultural programming. Very often they are multipurpose community or campus facilities used for events, training, receptions, and a host of other uses. Access during non-library hours is critical as is access to public restrooms. If carefully located the rooms can act as library reading rooms and be closed off for special events.

Furnishings should be flexible to adapt to a variety of uses with plenty of storage.



Almaden Public Library: easily accessible community room.



Doyle Art Gallery Doyle Library, Santa Rosa Junior College: libraries can bring lots of foot traffic to galleries and provide observation of gallery spaces.



Seattle-Ballard Branch: many branches have community outreach centers where one can pay bills or meet with neighborhood representative.



Seattle-Ballard Branch: intimate meeting room serves community and as acoustically separate room for children's book readings.



Almaden Public Library: community room can serve a variety of library and community needs.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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What Happens Here

Directory signs

Detector gates and library book security system

Information desks

Circulation & reference desks

Security station (security guards in some larger libraries)

What to Look For

How are the detector gates configured?

Are they confining?

Ugly or attractive?

Close enough to circulation desk to be easily monitored? Can a circulation staffer easily get to a patron when the alarm goes off?

What do you see when you first come in? Where do you want to point people first?

Central information desk
(Remember you need to staff this all the time if you have one.)

Circulation desk

Displays and directory signs

Is there a clear sense of direction and good directory signage?

Is there a display of information on how to use the library and other sorts of general public information?

Observations and Trends

There are a huge variety first-points-of-contact in libraries. Some libraries have a concierge or information desk to take care of the first line of questions. How do I find...? Where is the...? Frequently these desks cannot be staffed because of budgetary concerns and are effectively abandoned.

Some public libraries are using a single service point combining reference, circulation and information functions. There are lots of issues here about best use of professional staff.

Traditionally, a circulation desk is the first point-of-contact. In some libraries this is being replaced by "self-check-in" units with an information / security desk and reference services deeper in the facility.



Middlebury College: central Information desk is the first point of contact.



Eugene Public Library: attractive detector gates have a wood veneer overlay.



Bellevue Public Library: information desk is first point of public contact.



Dublin Public Library: public and library Information area.



Dublin Public Library: directory sign just inside main Library space.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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What Happens Here

General library plan organization

What to Look For

Staffing requirements:

How many individuals does it take to staff an area or floor?

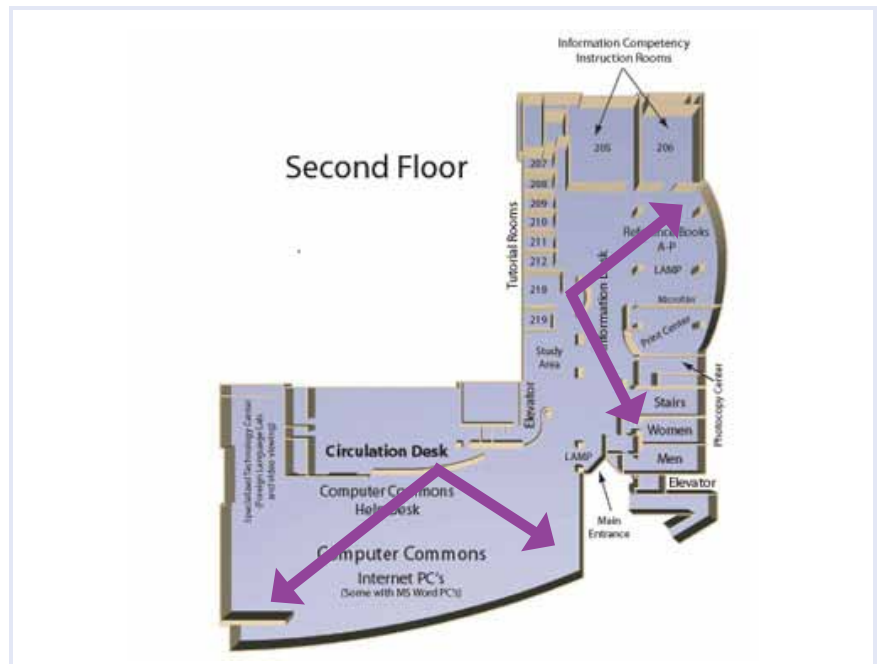
How good is their observation of their zone?

Organization of the building, (do you get lost?). Single or multiple points of entrance?

Is the circulation system clear?

Vertical circulation (elevators and stairs) easily apparent?

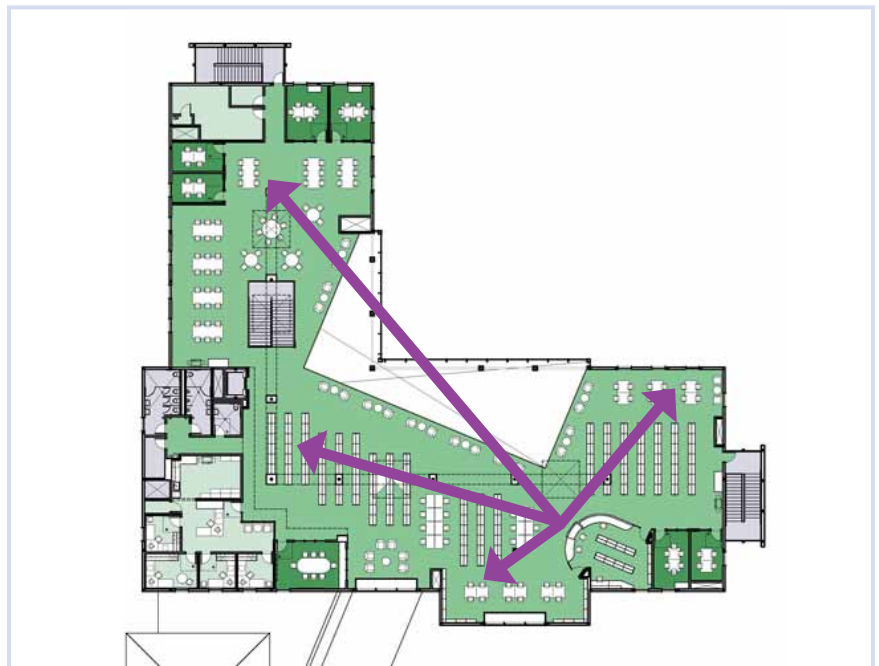
Are all areas under staff observation?



Plan organization influences number of staffing points and observation of library spaces.

Observations and trends

Staffing for new facilities is always of paramount concern. While institutions may have one-time resources to build or renovate a library, additional staffing is often difficult to obtain and not always proportional to the size of the new facility. One of the major issues of library design is minimizing the number of public desks that require regular staffing while creating an environment that feels secure and adequately served. Buildings that are easy to read and explain themselves reduce the number of wayfinding and directional inquiries of staff. Clear observation of the library from staffed vantage points make the staff and the patrons feel more secure.



Petaluma Campus SRJC: second floor plan with observation from periodicals desk.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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Circulation Desk



What Happens Here

Literature and media circulation:

- Check-out: staffed or self-check

- Book returns

- Line-up areas for patrons

Usually nearby:

- Holds or reserves

- Book security system

- Main entrance to the library

- First contact collections

- Public and library information areas

What kind of staff offices or work areas are immediately adjacent?

- Stacks for reserves and holds, interlibrary loan, AV materials

- Laptop checkout carts

- Space for book carts

Observations and Trends

Self-check, particularly in public libraries, is becoming more widely used in place of traditional staffed circulation desk. RFID type book security systems can make both self-check and traditional circulation easier, but retrofitting and cataloging existing collections can be prohibitively expensive. Self-check and kiosks can also facilitate user return and check-in of library material.



Seattle-Capitol Hill: A lot happens in a small space at the circulation desk. Note dual face monitors and RFID scanning mats.



Solano Public Library: All self-check—has no circulation desk and open “holds” shelving.

What to Look For

Is there space for patron lines?

Self-checkout? (Public libraries, in particular, are going to self-check.)

- Provide accommodations for future self-check units?

Book security system layout:

- How far are the gates from the circulation desk?

- Can you easily call to a patron who sets off the alarm or catch them if they are running?

Circulation work areas

- Is the desk the right depth to reach across and help someone? (Most are stand-up with a stool.)

- Do keyboard drawers distance the clerk from the desk and the patron?

- Are library computers and work materials unsightly?

- Is there shielding for the computer and circulation equipment?

- Is there wheelchair access to the desk?



Riverside CC Library: low shield at circulation counter hides clutter and protects staff materials.



Middlebury College: circulation desk and adjacent reserves desk at left.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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Library Stacks



What Happens Here

Library stacks
Reader seats
Computer seats
Book displays
Closed or limited access stacks

What to Look For

What kind of shelving is used?

Traditional three-foot wide stack units

Face-out display shelving

Book displays

Low shelving in reference areas with tops for stand-up reading

How tall? What is the library's provision for high shelf accessibility for the disabled?

Where are oversized books held? Integrated or separate sections?

How are the stacks laid out?

Is the continuity of the sequence of shelving apparent?

What guides you to the stacks?

Building Directory

Clear range finder signs

Overhead signs

How are the stacks lit?

From ambient library lighting?

Pendant or ceiling mounted fixtures just above the stacks?

Are fixtures perpendicular or parallel to stacks? Energy regulations may drive this.

Stack mounted lighting?

Special display lighting?

Natural daylight from windows? (Stacks perpendicular to windows facilitate this.)

Are there reference computer terminals integrated in the stacks?

Are there special stack or display areas that break out of the cataloging sequence?

End panel displays?

Special book display units?

Browsing collections? (See *special section in public libraries chapters.*)

Are there closed or limited access stacks?

How are materials requested and retrieved?

How full are the shelves? What is the provision for growth with available shelf space or stack expansion capabilities?

Observations and Trends

Some institutions, due to space limitations or desire to conserve public floor space, have substantial closed or limited access stacks. Others have used robotic warehousing and retrieval systems. If stacks are not accessible then request and retrieval means must be clearly incorporated into the planning.

In planning new or expanded facilities the nature of collection growth must be carefully assessed. Digital resources are slowing the growth of physical collections. Unless the mission of the institution is archival, moving a collection is an excellent opportunity to assess the relevance and usefulness of current collections and weed out outdated materials.



Almaden: end panel computer station facilitates searches.



Eugene Public Library: stacks oriented perpendicular to windows maximize access to natural lighting.



Claremont Colleges: special high density stack floors efficiently store research collections.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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Reading Rooms



What Happens Here

Zones of the library that are predominantly seating not shelving.

Reading and studying in a variety of seating types.

Computer use via fixed or wireless networks is often integrated.

What to Look For

What is the primary function of the room?

Traditional open reading rooms with lots of tables

Quiet rooms

Casual reading areas with comfortable seating

Study areas with alcoves or carrels for additional privacy

How are computers integrated into these spaces?

Dedicated computer carrels

Wired network access at work stations / tables

Wireless network access

How are the rooms being used?

Individual reading or study

Collaborative activities

How is the room lit and how does it affect the atmosphere of the room?

Ambient room lighting

Daylight - where are people sitting relative to windows in the room?

Task lighting at tables.

Observations and Trends

Reading rooms are often the character defining area of many libraries. Think of traditional libraries and a majority of people will think of the reading room of the New York Public Library or similar spaces. The architecture and furnishing of these spaces can evoke an atmosphere that can color the whole experience of the library.



Eugene Public Library: large reading room with four-person tables.



San Jose State: study cubicles and tables overlook the central atrium.



Doyle Library SRJC: Fourth floor reading room is focused on comfortable seating and views. Movable furniture allows easy reconfiguration for events.



Seattle Main: tenth floor reading room is cutting-edge modern.



Capitol Hill, Seattle: Intimate main reading room is beautifully daylight and has large variety of seating types.



Tour Notes & Ideas

Good ideas:

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Things to research:

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Things to avoid:

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Study & Reading



What Happens Here

There several main categories of library seating:

- Study and reading tables & carrels
- Collaborative work spaces - group study rooms
- Comfortable seating
- Computer workstations (see *computers section*)

What to Look For

What is the ratio of each kind of seating and what is actually being used? Where do people gravitate?

Study and Reading Tables:

- How many do they seat? Four, six, eight? How many people are actually using the table?
- Do they have task lights?
- Are they switchable by user?
- Power and data access?
- Wireless?
- Data jacks?

Easily accessible power for laptops?

What kind of chairs?

- Wood-padded or hard? Which are really comfortable?
- Ergonomic-adjustable office seating?
- Type of base: Sled? Legs? Casters?

Observations and Trends

Library users have a lot more personal items, (laptops, backpacks full of books, drinks, etc), and require more space than previous generations. Library tables seem to be more flexible with room to spread out. Carrel spaces need to be wider than they were traditionally to accommodate laptops in addition to reading and writing materials.



Middlebury College: library study tables with task lights.



Seattle Main: The Mixing Chamber is a vibrant, active seating area combining table and computer access. These tables are semi-private with low dividers.



San Jose Main: Spacious carrels accommodate study materials and maximize daylight while maintaining privacy.



Doyle Library SRJC: well lit alcoves are always a desirable seating preference.



Monterey Peninsula: Facing individual study carrels. Very open configuration with task lighting and power.



Tour Notes & Ideas

Good ideas:

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Things to avoid:

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Collaborative Work Spaces

- Are they acoustically isolated?
- How many rooms or spaces relative to the size of the library. Is it enough?
- How is access controlled? (First come/ first served, checkout, time limits?)
- How many seats?
- What kind of furnishings? (White boards, media viewing, tack walls, network access, etc).
- Are they easily supervised / observed?

Observations and Trends

A frequent remark in the facilities we tour is that they could have used more group studies. Collaborative work spaces that don't disturb others seem to be in great demand and increasingly frequent in public as well as academic libraries.



Doyle Library SRJC: The center for new media is a collaborative study and project development space for faculty and staff.



Doyle Library: A variety of table sizes seems preferable. Note low window sills for easy staff observation.



San Jose State University: Collaborative study spaces can be loose and informal.



Doyle Library SRJC: Collaborative spaces don't necessarily need to be isolated. Sound masking systems can control noise in large rooms.



Mountain View Public Library: quiet study table by a window.



San Jose Main: group studies can be quiet places for individuals to get away.



Evergreen Community College: group study.



Tour Notes & Ideas

Good ideas:

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Comfortable Seating

Which seating would you want to spend an afternoon reading in? Is this what you want to support?

Are there side tables and places to put things.

Can the furniture be moved and is that what you want?

Are the seats adapted to writing or laptops? Power nearby? Wireless access?

Observations and Trends

Comfortable seating for sustained reading and study are and increasingly important part of the library seating profile. The comfortable chairs looking out a window are always the first to be used. The wireless laptop has added a new dimension to this kind of seating.



Monterey Peninsula College: comfortable seating areas include couches and leather chairs.



Monterey Peninsula College: Library furniture does not have to look institutional



Middlebury College: lounge chairs with tablet arms for laptops or writing.



Seattle Main: Giant foam blocks are the main comfortable seating element.



Ballard: custom designed modular furniture in midst of main reading room gives opportunities to comfortably browse materials in stacks.



Doyle Library SRJC: rolling furniture can allow flexible rearrangement of space.



Tour Notes & Ideas

Good ideas:

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What Happens Here

Computer access for:

Library research: catalog access, data bases, online resources

Internet access: personal computing including shopping, e-mail and recreation

Productivity: word processing, note taking, presentations, etc.

What to Look For

What kind of computers does the library have?

Fixed desk top computers on tables or carrels

Laptop check-out program

Hardwired or wireless network or internet access for patron laptops

What is the computer furniture?

Stand-up stations- for quick access, particularly in reference or stack areas

Sit-down stations, single or collaborative

Does the library control access to the computers or limit time at the stations?

What is the ratio of computer stations to library seats?

Observations and Trends

Wireless access and web based searching and access have become the norm in newer libraries. To bridge the digital divide a combination of an adequate number of fixed terminals and laptop check-out programs can provide access to everyone.

Social networking programs, such as "My Space", can be a problem and tie up terminals for long periods of time denying access for patrons in facilities with limited numbers of public computers. A variety of strategies including web blocking and stand-up terminals can keep stations free for quick searches.



Seattle Main: simple computer stations in the Mixing Chamber is one of the most popular areas in the library.



Doyle Library SRJC: adjustable height tables provide universal access.



Doyle Library SRJC: basic computer carrel can be designed for sit-down, stand-up, multiple user, and ADA access.



San Jose Main: computer stations in main lobby for quick access and searches.



San Jose Main: simple counters provide network access and ample room for laptop users.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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Signage



What Happens Here

Main Building Signage:

- Entry signs
- Hours of operation
- Building directory
- Building map
- Donor walls
- Regulatory signs
 - Exit, Emergency
 - Occupancy

In the Library

- Room signs
- Zone signs
- Rangefinders on stacks
- Donor signs

What to Look For

Are the signs easy to find? As you enter the library are the right kinds of signs immediately available?

Are they clear and legible?

What kinds of materials and systems are used?

Printed plaques

Free-standing raised letters

Illuminated signs

Electronic signs

How is secondary user generated signage handled at the circulation and reference desks? This often gets to be a clutter of ad-hoc signage.

Observations and Trends

Electronic signs may be the next generation of library information systems. Content can be easily changed and can present more information than a static sign.

Signage can be one of the most problematic aspects of library design. Bad signs or missing signs are quickly replaced by impromptu homemade signs. Good signage, well placed, can relieve the library staff of patron questions about locations of library functions. Let the patron get into the space and get a sense of the layout before they encounter major building directories. Patrons often walk right past signage that is presented too near or outside the entrances.



Doyle Library SRJC: large clearly visible signs at major access points are critical.



Doyle Library SRJC: with the advent of less expensive flat screens, electronic signage is becoming more common.



San Jose Main: attractive, portable sign units allow for posting as well as pamphlets.



Doyle Library SRJC: the central rotunda feature acts as a locator element for all floors and a place for a main directory.



Dublin Public Library: directory sign placed just inside the main reading room gives a clear simple picture of library layout.



Tour Notes & Ideas

Good ideas:

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What Happens Here

Library security has a number of aspects:

Book Collection Security

Patron / Staff Security

Premises Security

What to Look For

Book Collection Security

How many entrance points?

What kind of book detection system is used? Magnetic strips / RFID? How does it affect the circulation process?

How are the gates placed relative to the circulation desk or self-check stations?

Are the gates well integrated into the architecture and accessible to the staff monitoring the entrances?

Patron / Staff Security

How clearly can the library floor be seen from staffing points?

Are there security personnel?



Dublin Public Library: Employee entry is well lit and visible giving employees a sense of security.

Are key desks observed by other staff either in the same area or within line of site?

Premises Security

How are emergency exits controlled? Alarms?

Does the library have security personnel at building entrances or patrolling the facility? (Usually only in much larger libraries.)

Do non-public zones have security controls such as electronic card lock systems?

How are deliveries made if not through the front door? Are there intercom or buzzer systems at delivery entrances or are the generally open?

Where does the staff enter? Is it a well observed, safe entry? Night lighting?

Is there an easy way for staff to light their pathway in the building after hours?

Are there alarm activation devices at major desks or control points?

Where are public restrooms located? Are they easily

observed? In public libraries observation of restrooms can be of concern.

Does the library have clear policies about permissible behavior? How is this communicated?

Observations and Trends

Seattle Public Library has published very clear standards for permissible behavior that are actively enforced. Well observed spaces whether by staff or patrons are a key factor.



Seattle Main has a card access system that can record who enters the building.



Larger libraries tend to have security guards and a security station at major entrance points.



The San Jose Joint Library has a LED display that counts everyone passing through the gates, an interesting way to emphasize use of the library.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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What Happens Here

Reference desk
Ready reference shelving
Filing areas for pamphlets and fliers
Work areas

What to Look For

Is the desk easily visible and well integrated into the information commons / reference area?

Is patron access stand up, sit down or both? Sit down is desirable for extended reference consultations.

Can the reference librarian easily show the computer monitor to the patron?

Can the librarian maintain work privacy while at the same time making comfortable contact with the user?

Is there a convenient literature rack with information on library uses and procedures nearby?

Can the librarian easily leave the desk to show a patron nearby materials?

Is the desk wheel chair accessible?

Observations and Trends

Increasingly reference desks are being integrated with reference collections, computer access stations, and a variety of furniture types. The Librarian is available for providing assistance and instruction utilizing a wide variety of information formats.

Reference desk layouts often include staff space and work areas that support printing, faxing, ready reference collections and additional staff space.



Mountain View: sit down reference desk with ready reference behind.



Bellevue: substantial reference desk has commanding view from mezzanine level.



Monterey Peninsula College: stand-up reference desk.



Seattle Main Mixing Chamber reference desk has an artist's display behind showing what is being currently searched on the library's systems.



The San Jose Joint Library has dual monitors at the reference desk so patrons and the librarian can both watch a search.



Doyle Library: reference desk has a stand-up counter at front and sit-down consultation at the side.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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What Happens Here

Public Rooms

- Special subject collections
- Locked storage cabinets
- Locked shelving
- Reading and study areas for scholars and visitors
- Display cases for books and three-dimensional materials

Staff Work Areas

- Stacks
- Archives processing areas
- High-density storage for extensive collections
- Flat file storage for oversized materials

What to Look For

Is the special collections room generally open or is it a limited access facility? Is it staffed when open?

Are the materials on open display or in locked displays?

Are there publicly accessible displays in conjunction with the special collections?

What types displays work best? (Horizontal or vertical display cases, shelving, display walls.)

Is there special lighting or temperature / humidity control to protect materials?

Observations and Trends

Archives and special collections may be widely varied including local or institutional history repositories, scholarly collections, collected papers of scholars and writers, or very eclectic collections donated to an institution.

If this is a collection that will be visited by scholars doing extensive research, are adjacent locked offices or study rooms located where they can leave out materials between visits?

Special collections can be very private zones with limited access or open to public visitation depending on the nature of the materials and



San Jose Joint Library has extensive public displays as part of its special collections.



Doyle Library: locked cases in special collections means patrons can use room without attendant.



Middlebury College: reading and study area in archives.



Middlebury College: display cases.



Middlebury College: high-density storage for extensive collections.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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What Happens Here

Two and three dimensional art displays

Library oriented displays

Archives & special collections

Cultural displays

Institutional history / events

Topical & seasonal displays

What to Look For

What kinds of permanent displays are there?

Where are they located?

Are they well lit and easily visible?

Are they made of durable materials or otherwise well protected or placed?

What kind of temporary displays spaces does the library have?

Galleries

Display walls

Displays cases

Tack walls for more casual displays

Electronic Displays

Is there special lighting for displays and does it work well?

Where are the displays placed relative to staffed workstations?

Observations and Trends

Galleries and display spaces can add richness to a library. Permanent artwork can be part of the defining character of the library, such as "Patience and Fortitude", the lions on the front steps of the New York Public Library. Display spaces can be either exterior in forecourts and gardens or within the structure.

Galleries are often difficult to operate because of staffing costs unless there is a very committed program. Placing displays near staffed desks can give a higher degree of security to displayed items while not requiring an attendant.

There are two types of displays related to the library and its functions, and can be open displays with circulating materials, or secure displays that feature themes or collections of special interest. (See *browsing collections*.)



Mountain View Public Library: well lit display space.



Middlebury College main atrium has permanent murals.



San Francisco Public Library: flying books mobile sculpture.



Middlebury College: college history display.



Doyle Library: a fully outfitted gallery space adds a major cultural component to the library complex.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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Donor Walls & Signage



What Happens Here

Signs recognizing donors to the library:

- Main donor recognition signs
- Individual room or furniture signs
- Site signs incorporated into paving and landscape elements

What to Look For

Ask about the institution's donor programs. They often have printed information that can be helpful to your prospective program.

Are the signs in prominent locations?

Are they easy to read?

Observations and Trends

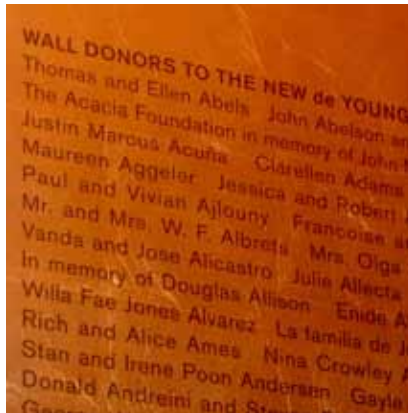
Donor programs can generate both construction enhancements and operating endowments to enrich library activities. Donor programs frequently have sign programs that name many things—from pieces of furniture to the entire building.

A variety of donor opportunities, from very large donations that

may name the building, to smaller opportunities of a few hundred dollars, allows everyone to have an opportunity to participate.

Operating endowments can enhance collections and programs. Often institutions can build or renovate facilities but are hard pressed for ongoing operations and collections funding.

It is important to plan for these opportunities.



de Young Museum, San Francisco.



San Jose State: Meeting Suite.



Burlingame Public Library: donor plaques were inserted in drawer faces from the old card catalog.



de Young Museum, San Francisco.



Monterey Peninsula College: pavers in entry walk bought by donors.



Room sign has integrated locale for donor information.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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What Happens Here

Copy machines
Computer printing
Special reproduction services
Document assembly / production

What to Look For

Are copy and printing services distributed throughout library or centralized?
Are they self-service or staffed?
How is payment handled? Debit cards, change machines, student / user accounts?
Who services machines, refills paper and fixes jams? Are they nearby?
Is there enough counter space to layout materials and collate copies?
Are recycling bins provided?

Observations and Trends

The approach to copy and print services varies widely and ranges from highly distributed printers and copy machines, to copy rooms in major zones or floors, or staffed centralized print and copy centers that may offer a wider range of services such as color output and on-demand printing of class or reserve materials and large format printing of maps and graphics.

Copy rooms generally need isolated ventilation systems because of heat generated and sensitivity of some individuals to fumes generated.

These facilities need to be easy to find and easy to use.



Print Center, Riverside Community College: centralized printing and copying.



Print Station at Monterey Peninsula College with computer terminal and debit card reader.



Mountain View: change machines and debit card chargers.



UC Riverside staffed copy center with large format printing for maps and charts.



Monterey Peninsula College: self-serve copy center has plenty of sorting tables.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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What happens here

Deliveries

Interlibrary delivery

Mail and parcel services

Service vehicles

Parking

Storage

Recharging

Trash storage and collection

Recycling and collection

What to Look For

Note size and location. Open, covered canopy or indoor loading?

How are materials protected during inclement weather?

Raised dock or at-grade door? Are library materials being delivered by car, van or semi-truck? This will determine height of dock.

Indoor loading area?

Roll-up doors for drive in access?

Secure storage for library vehicles?

Foul weather protection of materials?

Where do things go after they are unloaded? Is there a direct access path to the:

Mail sorting

Storerooms

Is there a trash enclosure?

Are there separated recycling bins and enclosures?

How do delivery people enter?

Just walk in

Call through intercom or buzzer

Keypad or access card entry

Observations and trends

Larger facilities may have a drive-in loading area for weather protection and secure vehicle storage.

Intra-library loan materials may arrive in hand-carried bins or large rolling containers determining the type of loading facilities. (See *Automation*.)



U.C. Riverside Science Library: loading dock



U.C. Riverside Science Library: sorting and receiving area.



! An expansive loading dock two floors below library is rarely used for deliveries.



Rohnert Park Public Library: small truck dock and trash enclosure with secure gate.



Dublin Public Library: employee entry and delivery entrance.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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What Happens Here

Administrative offices

Librarian offices

What to Look For

Administrative offices

Location? Accessible to visitors during off-hours?

Separate from librarians?

Conference rooms?

Librarian offices

How accessible are librarians' offices to both the public and to fellow workers?

Size and configuration: special function design? Room for book carts?

Collaborative work areas?

Conference areas?

Part-time staff areas?

Observations and Trends

Most librarians and technical services offices need to be larger in order to accommodate book processing carts.

As far as privacy goes we see the gamut from very private offices to very publicly accessible offices. Grouping offices with common areas encourages collegiality among staff.



Monterey Peninsula College: typical librarian's office.



Evergreen Community College: note profusion of book carts in cataloging work stations.



Bellevue: call-in librarian's station has ready access to reference materials.



Bellevue: Larger libraries tend to have open office environments for professional staff.



Doyle Library: librarian's office are built around a common work and gathering area to reinforce communication and contact.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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What Happens Here

Technical services
Materials processing / ordering
Interlibrary loan processing
Break rooms / Staff restrooms
Computer support

What to Look For

Technical services
Types of work areas- private or open office? Roomy enough for book carts?
Storage systems- stacks and carts
Workrooms
Materials processing
Flow of materials and deliveries?
Easy flow from delivery door?
Mail sorting area?
Book processing and repair area? Covers, detection strips, repairs.
Mail handling and packaging areas?

Holding shelves or areas for incoming or outgoing book deliveries? What kind of bins?

Break rooms / staff restrooms

Lockers or secure storage for staff?

Does the break room have a kitchenette, comfortable furniture, double as meeting room?

Easy access to exterior?

Separate staff restrooms?

Computer support

Larger work areas to accommodate computer repair / setup?

Training space for staff?

Server rooms for library computing services?

Staging area or storerooms for new and backup equipment?

Observations and Trends

Technical service areas generally seem to be open and flexibly designed in newer facilities. Open office layouts support a collegial work environment and easy communication.

In smaller libraries in particular, there never seems to be enough storage space and overcrowding is endemic. Where staffing is a problem the build-up of book carts and unprocessed materials can impact workflow.



Monterey Peninsula College: lockers for employees' belongings.



Adequate storage for book carts is essential!



Monterey Peninsula College: technical services work area.



Evergreen Community College: library break room looks out on the circulation desk so observation of library activities is excellent.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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Information Technology - Computer Support



What Happens here:

Technology Support Desks on the Library public floors.

Technology Support Space for computer/telecommunication technologies.

Equipment repair and staging

Library servers

What to Look For:

Are there public support desks for technology assistance?

If a patron has a technology problem who deals with it?

How are the cable runs/trays handled?

- In conduit and traditional wiring paths

- Special computer floors

- Raised floors

- Wireless

Is there a dedicated server room?

Is there adequate space for servers, switches etc?

Are there repair and technology staging areas on-site?

Does IT support areas have good access to elevators and building services?

Observations & Trends

With the large number of computers in almost every library, some larger facilities now have dedicated technology support desks so that librarians or circulation staff are not having to provide computer and software support and instruction

As the sophistication of technology and infrastructure improve the technology should be more transparent. Computers and monitors are smaller, good furniture can avoid tangles of cords and cables and good building infrastructure can be flexible and easy to evolve.

Special consideration has to be given to power conditioning, battery back-up, UPS and HVAC control of technology rooms. Also layout of rack systems needs to include ability to expand as new technology is added.



Hartnell College: provides a computer support desk at the heavily computerized floor of the library.



Doyle Library SRJC: large signal closets are the hub for telephone and computer wiring and the fiber optic backbone.



Doyle Library SRJC: provides separate spaces for both faculty and student training in software use. Editing suites provide areas for special projects.



Riverside CC: A video conferencing suite has it's own closets for switching and playback equipment. Note AC vents at tops of closets.



Hartnell College: Large storage areas are provided for both media equipment and storage and staging of computers.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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What Happens Here

Automated book sorting and handling systems:

- Centralized system wide sorting and distribution

- Local delivery sorting and processing

Automated book return and check-out kiosks (sometimes remote from library).

What to Look For

Does the library and system use an automated sorting and handling system?

What system do they use and how do they like it?

What kinds of identification systems are used? RFID or traditional bar codes?

How is initial scanning handled? Completely automated or manual?

What kinds of bins or transport systems are used? Does this affect the type of delivery vehicles and loading docks?

Is there enough room at branches to accommodate bins, sorting and scanning areas?

How large are holds areas at branches? Staffed or self-service?

Observations and Trends

In a recent visit to Seattle Public and King County library systems in Seattle we saw how automation can enhance capabilities of branches. A 15,000 s.f. branch had over 1,500 visitors a day with huge circulation and large self-service holds areas. With good inventory control and quick turnaround, the local branches could be as effective as the central libraries and became vital social and cultural centers in the neighborhoods.

Conversion of large existing collections to newer RFID type systems can be an expensive task. Sorting systems we viewed with manual scanning of bar codes seemed to work extremely well.

Sophisticated rolling bin systems that we saw required loading docks and more allocated space for the bins and sorting areas in the technical processing zone of the branches.



Seattle Main: central sorting facility serves entire system.



Seattle Main: RFID tags are read by scanners and sorted for distribution.



Seattle Main: Books can be sorted to bins for transport or to carts for shelving. They still have to be ordered manually for shelving.



Ballard Branch Seattle: large holds area generates 1,500 visitors a day to this small branch.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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What Happens Here

Mechanical and natural ventilation systems.

What to Look For

Does the library have operable windows or natural ventilation?

Is it in both public and staff areas?

Is it patron or staff controlled?

In newer facilities, ask what kind of mechanical ventilation and air conditioning system is used. Do they like it?

Observations and Trends

In newer facilities, natural ventilation and operable windows are more frequently used in conjunction with mechanical heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) systems.

Libraries on the west coast of the United States tend to be internally load dominated most often requiring cooling to offset lighting, patron and computer generated

heat generation. Newer systems and controls can adapt to open windows and natural convective ventilation without throwing the mechanical systems out of balance.

Raised-floor and similar kinds of displacement ventilation systems have proven very effective in new libraries. A raised floor system acts as a giant duct distributing air to floor outlets.

The ventilation air is typically ten degrees warmer than traditional air conditioning and is generally user controllable. It can convect up to high outlets or return air grilles. This works well in conjunction with natural ventilation systems. These systems tend to be 100% outside air and do not tend to mix pollutants and airborne microbes homogeneously throughout the indoor environment, as do traditional HVAC systems. This makes for healthier indoor environments. The raised floors also act as pathways for power and data systems giving greater flexibility to accommodated changing needs.



Doyle Library: thermal energy storage units make ice for cooling during off-peak evening hours.



Doyle Library: photovoltaic panels feed power back into the campus grid reducing utility costs.



Lewis & Clark College, Howard Building: glass panels in raised floor system inform users of how systems work.



Salt Lake: floor outlets are part of a displacement ventilation system.



Monterey Peninsula College: operable window and no air conditioning in this mild coastal climate are comfortable and energy efficient.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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What Happens Here

Electric lighting systems

Natural daylight

What to Look For

What portion of the library has natural daylighting? How does it affect the character of the spaces?

Does the electrical lighting system respond to daylight contribution and reduce itself? (This is called a daylight harvesting system.)

How deep is the daylight penetration into the room? (A rule of thumb is 2x to 2.5x the height of the windows. Look for skylights and clerestory windows and how they contribute daylight.)

How is the lighting system designed? Look for three elements:

- ambient lighting

- task lighting

- accent lighting.

What elements are most effective and aesthetically pleasing?

How is lighting integrated into furniture and shelving?



San Jose Joint Library: Fritted glass with a silkscreened pattern reduces glare in south windows while keeping vistas open.

Observations and Trends

Forty percent of the load of HVAC systems is offsetting the heat generated by electrical lighting. Use of natural daylight can reduce cooling loads and add to the quality of the space. We'll bet that the rooms you like best in any library will have a substantial natural daylight component.

Because of the need to light bindings of books from top to bottom of the stacks and the need for a good reading environment, libraries tend to have high lighting demands. Recent trends in lighting design have replaced luminous ceilings that had high overall lighting level. Newer libraries tend to have lower ambient lighting levels with task lighting at tables and stack mounted lighting providing higher lighting levels at the areas of need.



Ballard Library: Exterior roof swoops up to north to gather natural daylight. Note shading devices on high windows.



Ballard Library: inside clerestory windows help push light deep inside the space and balance daylight at perimeter.



Doyle Library: a combination of indirect cove lighting and direct-indirect pendants provide glare free lighting for computer stations.



San Jose Joint: Sail like canopies help reduce glare at exterior work stations. They are also reflectors for electric lighting fixtures.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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What Happens Here

Exterior and interior finish materials
Durability and protection of finishes
Contribution of finishes to indoor air quality.

What to Look For

Do the exterior and interior have durable low maintenance finish materials?

Do the materials have a high recycled content?

Do the finish materials have low VOC content? (Volatile Organic Compounds that off-gas from new materials.)

Are the finish materials well protected by corner guards, chair rails and especially damage resistant finishes where they are subject to abuse and damage by book carts and patrons?

Observations and Trends

Besides energy efficiency, a cornerstone of sustainable design practice is the use of finish and construction materials that are resource efficient and contribute to overall indoor air quality. The most sustainable materials in institutional buildings are those that require little maintenance and have long useful lives. Consider the cost-benefit of using more durable materials in points of high use. These practices can also result in lower operational and maintenance costs.



Ballard Library: green roof on library clearly marks the library as a sustainably designed structure.



Ballard Library: displays in the lobby inform visitors of finishes and systems that meet green design standards.



Doyle Library: carpet tiles can be replaced at high wear areas.



Doyle Library: terrazzo flooring and carpet tiles are high wear finishes in heavy traffic areas.



Doyle Library: the art gallery and reading alcoves are floored with bamboo, a renewable resource.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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What Happens Here

Student computing
Collaborative learning spaces
Integrated instructional spaces
Mixture of different furniture types
Technology enhanced spaces

What to Look For

Space should be designed around users and learning

Social interaction is often encouraged

Quiet study spaces integrated into commons

Often a separate entrance is provided to support

Longer hours

Computer furniture that supports collaboration

Public service desk integrated to provide support

Copying/printing facilities integrated

Furniture types and zoning of space very important

Observations and Trends

Implementation of wireless often increases the flexibility of the spaces

Increasingly sophisticated presentation and video technologies are being integrated.

Many libraries are providing librarian and technical support

Cafes are often adjacent or integrated into the learning Commons



Santa Clara University; Hands down the most popular study area in the library is the covered outdoor patio with teak patio furniture.



San Jose Joint City / University Library; More traditional study settings provide ample counters facing the central atrium.



Santa Clara University; Their new learning commons contains a huge variety of seating options.



San Jose State University Learning Center; Set up on a stage like platform the computer commons has privacy screens and overhead canopies that define the study pods. Ability for 2 or 3 students to sit at a computer station is a must.



Santa Clara University; If a comfortable chair can move it will be pulled face out at a window. Note the number of surfaces in use for study.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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Study & Teaching Spaces



What Happens Here

Group Studies (*see library seating*) - Allows groups, usually 4-10, to work together in an acoustically isolated room

Bibliographic Instruction – usually a computer lab used for teaching library research skills

Quiet Study Rooms – rooms with clear restrictions on visiting or talking

Pullout Teaching Rooms – areas where an instructor can bring a class and teach and review library assignments without disturbing other patrons

Tutorial Centers / Learning Centers – centers for individual or group tutoring

What to Look For

Group Studies (*see library seating*)

Is there good observation from staffing points?

Does the room include media playback equipment, computer facilitation, white boards, and pin-up space?



Middlebury College: lockers for frequent users.

What is the reservation or use policy?

How many for this size library?
Ask if it is enough.

What seating capacity seems best?

Bibliographic Instruction

Is this a face-forward lab focused on instructor or some other arrangement?
Are computers separated from lecture seats?

How is the lab used when not in use for instruction?

How much space is allocated for each student? Does the furniture work well?

How are the teacher station and audiovisual facilities laid out?

Quiet Study Rooms

Is it a zone or separate room?

How is it signed?

Is it easily monitored?

Pullout Rooms

Is this a single purpose room?

What kind of furniture and audiovisual equipment?



Evergreen Community College: group study.

Observations and Trends

Many of these study facilities are not single purpose rooms so flexibility of use and furnishings is important. Integration of technology and media capability is important.



Monterey Peninsula College: bibliographic study lab separates lecture from computers, most combine use.



Almaden Branch Library: a quiet room with a variety of seating types.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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Tutorial & Learning Centers



What to Look For

What kinds of tutoring activities are taking place?

- One-on-one?
- Small group?
- Self-paced computer tutorials?
- Large group?

What kind of furniture and layout is used?

- Open tables?
- Computer carrels?
- Modular cubicles or other open plan dividers?
- Separate group studies or classrooms?
- Open computer labs?

What kind of white or chalkboards are used?

How do students check-in and wait?
Turnover is often rapid and frequent.

Is there space for tutors bags and materials? A break room?

Supervising offices or help desk?

Does the center do testing too?
What are the formats and room configurations?

Observations and Trends

Tutorial activities and formats vary widely from institution to institution. Some centers have a much higher degree of tutor/student privacy while others are very open. Small group instruction will often require acoustic isolation and white boards.



Monterey Peninsula College: Linda Mood Bell study cubicle.



Doyle Library: separate tutorial room serves one-on-one tutoring in open environment with some group rooms.



Evergreen Community College: mixed open table and study rooms for tutorial functions.



Monterey Peninsula College: computer tutorial tables with audio facilitation.



Monterey Peninsula College: open tutorial area.



Evergreen Community College: large computer tutorial lab.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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What Happens Here

Media Assembly / Distance Learning Rooms – multi-site origination and reception rooms

Media Viewing Rooms (small) - viewing rooms for small groups

Media Viewing Open Carrels – Individual viewing stations

Media Circulation System / Desk-
Distribution site for media

What to Look For

Media Assembly / Distance Learning Rooms

What is the room layout and sight lines?

What kinds of desks or tables are used?

Is there special lighting and acoustical control?

What is the layout of screens and instructors station?

Is the site instructor controlled or through a staffed control room?

Media Viewing Rooms (small)

How many patrons does it serve?

What kind of AV facilities?

Computers?

Media Viewing Open Carrels

What kind of playback equipment? Computer or analog VCR/DVD player and monitor?

Media Circulation System / Desk

How is media played back? DVD?, VHS?, Network?

Is media checked out or distributed through central playback?

How is media stored?

What kind of media is in current collections and how are they adapting to change?

Observations and Trends

Storage and distribution of audio and video resources will likely evolve to computer networks in the near future as throughput and storage capacity of the systems continue to grow. In the meantime

institutions are facing the question of how to deal with their legacy collections of films and tapes. Costs of transferring large collections along with copyright issues can be substantial. Storage systems need to adapt to size requirements of new media (e.g. VHS tape storage moving to DVD) and media facilities need to be fully ready for digital distribution.



Riverside Community College: video conference facility.



Doyle Library: Distance learning classroom. Teaching environment can link four sites simultaneously.



Doyle Library: media viewing is distributed to 16 carrels from central distribution desk.



Riverside Community College: Video conference room. Note cameras in wall and projection screen.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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What Happens Here

Production and Post-production Studios

Media Repair Facilities

Media Equipment Storage

Media Distribution

What to Look For

Production Studios

What kind of production facilities does Media Services provide?

Television / Video – on what scale?

Audio Recording?

Audio / Video Editing?

Photography – Film or Digital?

Are the production facilities for institutional support, instruction or both?

What special lighting, HVAC and acoustical considerations were designed?

Media Repair Facilities

Does media services repair equipment? If so to what extent?

Media Equipment Storage

How does new equipment enter the building?

How is unpacking, testing and staging for distribution occur?

What kind of AV equipment is stored?

Is there storage for special event equipment such as public address systems and portable stages?

Media Distribution

Is there a hub for media distribution in the facility?

What kind of media is handled?

Satellite downloads?

Broadcast television?

Streaming video?

Media duplication?

How much space does this require and does it have special electrical, data, cabling or HVAC requirements?

Observations and Trends

Media service functions have changed dramatically with computer technology advances. The era of 16 mm projectors or TVs on rolling carts is for the most part gone. Equipment like video projectors are now permanently mounted in classrooms and very little of the equipment can be repaired, (if it is repaired), on site unless the department has highly skilled technicians.

Photography, audio, and video editing have moved from realms with highly specialized technologies such as darkrooms and tape recorders to the common platform of the computer workstation. In general, facilities are less expensive and complex to build but acoustic and lighting concerns remain important. Every facility now must have strong digital interconnectivity.

More sophisticated media service facilities are moving away from equipment and media distribution and equipment repair and focusing attention on facilitating video-conferencing, distance learning and streaming video.



Santa Rosa Community Media Center: self-controlled production center for audio and video.



Santa Rosa Community Media Center: television studio with lighting grid.



Riverside Community College: Duplication rack for download and distribution of media



Tour Notes & Ideas

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What Happens Here

Reserves Distribution

Periodical and Serials Display

Closed Stack Periodical Distribution

What to Look For

Are reserve and periodical desks combined with other desks such as circulation?

How are periodicals displayed?

What kind of reading areas are adjacent?

Are bound volumes in public stacks?
How far back?

Do the periodicals have microform storage and microfiche readers? Are they being used?

How are closed stack materials requested and retrieved?

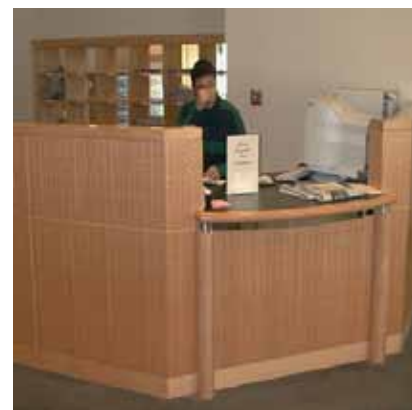
Are their processing or offices associated with these facilities?

Is there a copy room nearby?

Observations and Trends

In larger facilities circulation, reserves, periodicals, media distribution and inter-library loans may be separate desks. Smaller libraries may not have the demand or staff and will consolidate these functions.

In some cases separate desks may not be necessary but are desirable from a security or service point of view.



Mountainview: closed stack periodicals and general materials are passed from a non-public storage room to the service desk.



Middlebury College: the circulation desk and the substantial reserve sections are adjacent across from the Information desk.



Doyle Library: with a small reserve collection the reserve desk is a secondary reference desk as well as a staffed observation point on an upper floor.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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What Happens Here

Special interest collections

New books

Media displays

What to Look For

Special signs indicating collections

Special display shelving

Uniquely furnished zones

Observations and Trends

Many public libraries are using face-out display shelving mimicking retail display techniques used by bookstores. These displays may be general reading, special browsing collections or featured new books. End cap display shelving can do this at the end of stack ranges.

Display of DVDs can be seen mimicking the displays at video stores. These areas may require that the collections be refreshed frequently to keep patrons returning to browse.



Almaden: face out shelving is very prominent in browsing collections.



Bellevue: topical displays are scattered around the library.



Almaden: VHS and DVD displays look more like Blockbuster, complete with neon signs.



San Jose Joint: retail type displays in browsing area.



San Jose Joint: the browsing collection in the main lobby looks like a commercial bookstore.



Tour Notes & Ideas

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Children's Rooms



What Happens Here

Children's book collections
Story time reading areas
Children's librarian's desk
Special activity areas

What to Look For

Is there a theme to the décor or furnishings of the room?
Are the furnishings and equipment scaled to the children?
Are there special activity areas?
What special characteristics make this an attractive and functional space for children?

Observations and Trends

Three things seem to dominate the design of children's rooms: themed décor, bright colors and specially scaled furniture. The challenge is to make this space appealing to the variety of sizes and interests of the patrons who range from toddlers to preteens.



Seattle: children's room is bright and inviting.



Almaden: children's room has inviting face out shelving, but can small children see or reach top shelves?



Bellevue: a kid size entrance with tiles made by children invites patrons into the story room.



Bellevue: this children's area has a castle theme.



Almaden: children's furniture is appropriately scaled.



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What Happens Here

Special activity areas for teens

What to Look For

Is the room acoustically isolated?

What kinds of computers and video facilities are there?

What kinds of print materials are on display? How are they displayed?

How is the room furnished?

What special activities or programs are focused around this zone?

Observations and Trends

Providing special after-school spaces for teens is increasingly common. Computers seem to be one of the focuses of teen interest. Providing a welcoming and attractive space for teens can draw them into the greater world of the rest of the library.



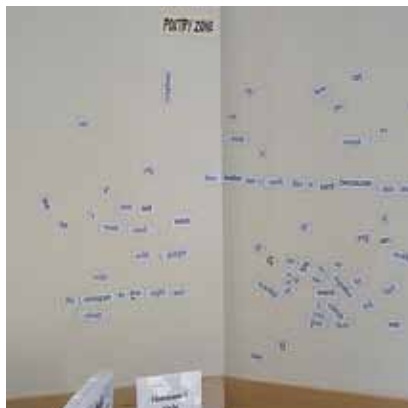
Almaden: the teen room has comfortable seating and a video lounge area.



Mountain View: display shelving doesn't have to be ordinary.



Almaden: display shelving in the teen lounge.



Mountain View: With magnetic paint and refrigerator magnets, a free-form poetry wall was created.



Mountain View: opportunities for self-expression seem to be greatly appreciated.



Seattle Main: computers and comfortable lounging areas mark this high tech teen zone.



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What Happens Here

Used or new book sales

Gift Items

What to Look For

Where is it located?

Is it staffed or un-staffed?

Observations and Trends

Public libraries frequently have gift shops or book sale areas. These are most often staffed by volunteers and are a fund raising opportunity for the institution and it's programs.



Eugene: bookstore and cafe are located in the bright and inviting public library.



Seattle: the library store is compact shelving that can be closed when the store is not operating.



Issaquah: book sales can be as simple as a shelf inside the main library.



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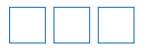
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"It Looked Good on Paper!"



Every library has its design flaws. Touring is an opportunity to learn from the staff and by observation what you might want to avoid in new projects. Signs seem to be the single biggest source of problems that we have observed.



User applied foam padding was added to reference desk with nice looking but bruise inducing support frame.



Glass signs can have glare and readability problems.



Tangles of computer cords are evident even in the newest libraries. Infrastructure flexibility and lots of ports really help



Note purse & bag shelf but lack of shielding of computer monitor.



If you can't read it or change it: inadequate sign systems are soon overtaken by the ad hoc sign.



Expansive dock two floors below library is rarely used for deliveries.



Tight enclosures at security gates are not welcoming, and the distance from circulation desk invites theft.



Top lit display cases can be problematic, as lower shelves are poorly lit.



Libraries We've Visited

Almaden Branch, San Jose Public Library

644 Camden Avenue
San Jose, CA 95120
408.808.3040
www.sjlibrary.org

- This library is part of a community center housing recreational, day care, and community meeting rooms
- The approach to displaying materials is very retail oriented

Ballard Branch, Seattle Public Library

5614 22nd Avenue
Seattle, WA 98107
206.684.4089
www.spl.org

- Probably the most published branch in the Seattle System
- A LEED Project with a green roof and many sustainable features
- A very active neighborhood place

Bellevue Regional Library, King County Library System

111 110th Avenue NE
Bellevue, WA 98004
425.450.1765
www.kcls.org

- The main library for the King County System
- Full featured with a new automated sorting system

Burlingame Public Library

480 Primrose Road
Burlingame, CA 94010
650.558.7444
www.burlingame.org/library

- Well-crafted modernization and expansion of historic library
- Unique donor wall
- Nice traditional reading room

Canadian Centre for Architecture Library

1920 Rue Baile
Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3H 2S6
www.cca.qc.ca

- Small specialized research library
- Nice finishes and furniture
- Private study alcoves for scholars

Capital Hill Branch, Seattle Public Library

425 Harvard Avenue E
Seattle, WA 98102
206.684.4715
www.spl.org

- Well crafted small neighborhood branch
- Warm and inviting and very efficient use of space

Frank P. Doyle Library, Santa Rosa Junior College

1501 Mendocino Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95401
707.527.4391
www.santarosa.edu/library

- The author's new library-Fall 2006
- A 141,000 s.f. facility with extensive media tutorial and gallery facilities
- Oriented to community college goals of teaching library skills and creating collaborative learning environments

Libraries We've Visited



de Young Museum

Golden Gate Park
50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Drive
San Francisco, CA 94118
www.thinker.org/deyoung/visiting

- The premier new museum on the West Coast
- Digital signs
- Donor walls

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library

150 E. San Fernando Street
San Jose, CA 95112
408.808.2000
www.sjlibrary.org

- One of the only joint public and academic libraries in the country, a big 8-story facility
- Overall, a well-crafted space with great furnishings
- Good graphics and signage
- Well-displayed library material and special collections

Dublin Public Library

200 Civic Plaza
Dublin, CA 94568
925.829.5148
www.aclibrary.org

- Lively entry sculptures
- Good day lighting
- Effective use of simple material palette

Eugene Library

100 West 10th Avenue
Eugene, OR 97401
541.682.5450
www.eugene-or.gov

- Outstanding new public library
- Great café in entry
- Good day lighting and public rooms
- Dramatic central stair

Evergreen Valley Community College

3095 Yerba Buena Road
San Jose, CA 95135
408.274.7900
www.evc.edu/it/library

- Large central reading room with a "forest" of exposed columns
- Distance Learning Classroom
- Large Computer / Tutorial Center

Hartnell College Library

156 Homestead Avenue
Salinas, CA 93901
831.755.6870
www.hartnell.edu/library

- New modern community college library with an emphasis on technology

High Point Branch, Seattle Public Library

3411 S.W. Raymond Street
Seattle, WA 98126
206.684.7454
www.spl.org

- Small branch library serving a diverse community.
- Very family oriented



Libraries We've Visited

Issaquah Library, King County Library System

10 W. Sunset Way
Issaquah, WA 98027
425.392.5430
www.kcls.org

- Very nicely done suburban branch

Middlebury College Library

Middlebury, VT 05753
802.443.5000
www.middlebury.edu/academics/lis/lib

- Expansive lobby and well-designed central information desk
- Outstanding archive rooms and special collections

Mill Valley Public Library

375 Throckmorton Avenue
Mill Valley, CA 94941
415.389.4292
www.millvalleylibrary.org

- Well-crafted modernization and additions to a mid-sized public library hanging over the redwoods and a creek in Mill Valley

Monterey Peninsula College

980 Fremont Street
Monterey, CA 93940-4799
831.646.4000
www.mpc.edu

- One of the best new medium-sized community college libraries in Northern California
- Exceptional custom furnishings and great spaces for a variety of study situations
- Extensive tutorial facilities

Mountain View Public Library

585 Franklin Street
Mountain View, CA 94041
650.903.6337
www.library.ci.mtnview.ca.us

- Well-integrated into a park and civic center complex
- Excellent electrical and day lighting
- Thoughtfully laid out with great attention to detail

Riverside Community College

4800 Magnolia Avenue
Riverside, CA 92506-1299
951.222.8000
www.rcc.edu/campus

- State-of-the-art media facilities

Libraries We've Visited



Rohnert Park – Cotati Regional Library

6250 Lynne Conde Way
Rohnert Park, CA 94928
707.584.9121
www.sonoma.lib.ca.us/branches/Rohnert.html

- Small branch library with day lit central reading room and comfortable reading spaces

Salt Lake Main Public Library

210 East 400 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84111
801.524.8200
www.slcppl.lib.ut.us

- A major civic facility by Moshe Safdie
- Soaring spaces with internal "streets"

San Francisco Public Library

100 Larkin Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
415.557.4400
www.sfpl.lib.ca.us

- A major big city library with very interesting special collections

Seattle Central Library

1000 Fourth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104
206.386.4636
www.spl.org

- Another blockbuster library designed by Dutch Architect Rem Koolhaas
- Very innovative stack and reading spaces
- Nothing else like it!

Solano County Library

1150 Kentucky Street
Fairfield, CA 94533
707.421.6510
www.solanolibrary.com

- One of the only libraries we've seen without a circulation desk, entirely self-check
- Good observation and layout fit into an existing space

Vancouver Public Library

350 West Georgia Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 6B1
604.331.3603
www.vpl.ca

- Major public library by Moshie Safdie
- Integrates mixed use
- Expansive public spaces

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