

Transformation of Academic Branch Libraries

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Goal

- Overview of transformation of branch academic libraries, with a special emphasis on science disciplines.
- Research published in ***Academic Branch Libraries in Changing Times***, Chandos Publishing, 2011



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Academic Branch Libraries in Changing Times

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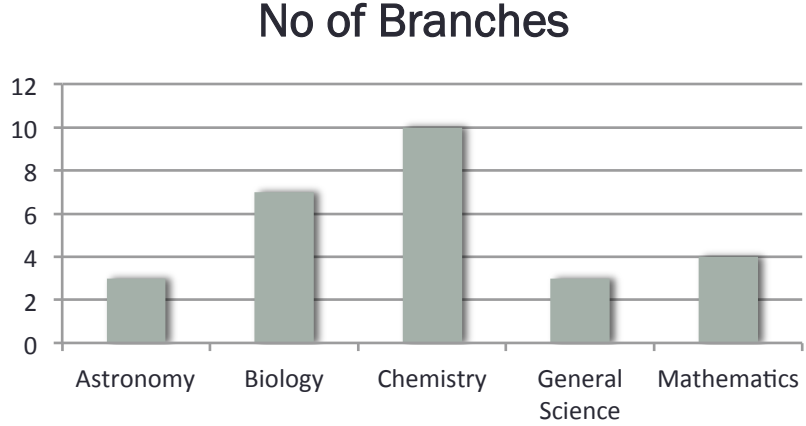
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Historical Overview

- 1929 Survey – Branch Subject Libraries in the Central West Colleges
- 1983 Survey – Branch Libraries in ARL Institutions (SPEC Kit 99)
- 1999 Survey – Branch Libraries and Discrete Collections (SPEC Kit 255)



Subject	No of Branches
Astronomy	3
Biology	7
Chemistry	10
General Science	3
Mathematics	4



Branch Subject Libraries in the Central West Colleges – 1929 Survey

Departmental Libraries by Mary C. Venn, reference librarian at Oberlin College Libraries



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1983 Survey -SPEC Kit 99

Branch Type	No. Branches	% of 89 Resp.
Architecture	33	37%
Business	34	38%
Chemistry	37	42%
Engineering	39	44%
Geology	31	35%
Mathematics	44	49%
Music	49	55%
Physics	38	43%
Rare books/Special Coll.	23	26%
Sciences	23	26%
Undergraduate	22	25%

1983 Survey - Continued

- 89 responded to the survey
- In the last five years (1978-1983)
 - 24 new branches were opened
 - 17 closed branches
 - 24 merged two or more collections
 - 2 planned to close branches
 - 27 planned to merge collections



1999 Survey – SPEC Kit 255

- 122 ARL member libraries
 - 54 responded (44%)
- Subject branches
 - Science/technology 82%
 - Arts/humanities 75%
 - Social sciences 61%



1999 Survey – Continued

- “Average” institution has 15 discrete collection locations
 - 4 science/technology
 - 2 arts/humanities
 - 2 area studies
 - 1 undergraduate
 - 2 other collections (media and maps most frequently mentioned)



1999 Survey – Changes by Broad Categories

	1995-1999 Changes			Anticipated Changes (2000-2004?)			
	Added	Closed	Merged	Add	Close	Merge	Renovate
Area Studies	2	1	0	0	4	5	5
Arts & Humanities	2	1	3	2	3	8	1
Combined/ Mixed	2	1	2	1	0	0	2
Science & Technology	3	11	4	5	5	22	4
Social Sciences	2	2	6	0	1	6	5
Undergrad	0	1	0	0	0	0	2



1999 Survey – Factors for Change

- Academic/Program Change
- Service/Access Considerations
- Political/Administrative Considerations
- Cost/Funding
- Technology Considerations



Current (2010) Situation for ARL Libraries

Branch Type	No. Branches	% of 101 libraries
Architecture	27	27%
Art	14	14%
Business	19	19%
Chemistry	20	20%
East Asian	10	10%
Engineering	27	27%
Fine Arts	17	17%
Geology	12	12%
Mathematics	27	27%
Music	46	46%
Physics	15	15%
Rare Books/Special Collections	22	22%
Science	17	17%
Science & Engineering	21	21%

Most Common Branch Libraries - Observations

- Music Libraries
- Chemistry Libraries
- Science & Engineering Libraries



1949 Correspondence

- *The [...] building is to be located next to the Chemistry Building just a few feet away, it would [...] be good library practice for your department library to combine with that of engineering at the time this large library is ready. It is hoped that mathematics and physics departments will also be persuaded to pool their resources, in a single, large library. (Rovelstad letter, March 2, 1949)*



1949 Correspondence - Answer

- The Chemistry department maintains that for maximum use its library should be located in the chemistry building. [...] [B]ooks and periodicals on chemistry are little used by others than chemists and chemical engineers. With the library in the chemistry building these books will be more easily accessible to both groups. I am sure that a common library would not provide us with better library service but actually with poorer service. (Drake response, March 23, 1949)*



Chemistry Branches

- Trend of closing branches/consolidating with central sci/tech library
- *Increased interdisciplinary research, coupled with the desire to make library systems more efficient and innovative drives this shift toward consolidation – Garritano (2007)*



Future of Academic (Branch) Libraries

- Top ten trends in academic libraries (ACRL 2010)
 1. Patron driven acquisition
 2. Libraries will evolve due to budget constrain
 3. Higher Ed changes – librarians diverse skills sets
 4. Accountability/Assessment
 5. Digitization of unique collection – costly
 6. New services for mobile devices/applications
 7. Collaboration – within and beyond
 8. Scholarly communications/Intellectual property
 9. Technology driven services/required skills
 10. Repurpose physical space/expand virtual space



Example of Changes

- University of Washington - 2009
 - Closed Chemistry, Fisheries/Oceanography, Natural Sciences libraries - holdings folded into main and Health Sciences Library
 - Closed Social Work Library - folded into Health Sciences Library
- Stanford – 2010
 - Downsized Engineering Library - moved into new building
 - Closed Physics Branch
- University of Texas, San Antonio – 2011
 - Opened bookless Engineering library
- Chemistry branches closings
 - Louisiana State U. (2005), University of Chicago (2006), Duke (2007), Pittsburgh (2009), UCLA (2010).



Final Thoughts

- Libraries (Branches) as Space
- Collections are increasingly digital
- Staffing
- Task Force - *Library Services to Support Scientific Research*
 - Report due May 2013



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Questions?

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