

Impacts of Information Technology on a Local Institution:
Transition of the Public Library in Local Communities

by
Akemi Yao

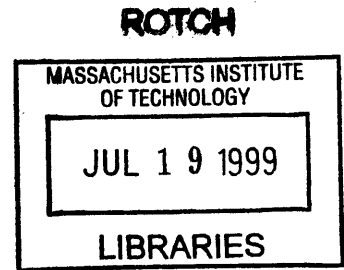
Bachelor of Science, Chemistry, Sophia University, Tokyo, 1989.

Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
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Abstract

Innovations in information technology in the 1990's have impacted society in many ways. Discussions about the implications for society have taken place from various points of view. In urban planning, the discussion has focused on the significance of physical communities in the information technology (IT) society. However, there have been few discussions about the use of information technology at local institutions, particularly focusing on information access and distribution.

Public libraries, which are among the most common public institutions found in local communities, once enjoyed popularity and an important position in local governments. However, more recently, these institutions have been regarded more or less as wallflowers by their local communities. Furthermore, the public library faces a paradox in the information age. Information has never been so important as it is now, and public libraries are supposed to be community resources for information. Yet, the public library remains at the margin of the IT society. Moreover networked information even calls into question the significance of the physical space of libraries. Still, there is community demand for information access and community space, which suggests potential needs to be fulfilled by public libraries.

This thesis spotlights the impacts of information technology on the transformation of local institutions, and focuses on the public library as an example. It examines the potential roles of the public library from the view points of communities and local governments by focusing on the extension of its historical roles and new social needs in the IT society. The thesis consists of three parts: Chapter 1 examines the contexts of public libraries in the information society, Chapter 2 analyzes a case in Union City, New Jersey, and Chapter 3 suggests future plans and extends lessons to other institutions.

The Union City case study demonstrates the possible important roles that public libraries could play according to local community needs in the IT society. After the countrywide initiative that created the Information Highway, it is time for local communities to promote locally tailored "Information Main Streets" reflecting community priorities. These would encompass the local economy, education, social issues and other community issues. The study suggests the need for local governments' active involvement in planning the local public libraries.

Thesis Supervisor: Lawrence Vale

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About the Author

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Introduction

The innovations of information technology (IT) in the 1990's have impacted society in many ways. IT also has had significant impacts on local development, affecting people in communities and local institutions. Discussion of these impacts takes two major forms: debate about the significance of physical space in communities and debate about accessibility to this new form of information. The first issue engages the idea that virtual communities created by information technology will overtake physical communities, and that physical public space in a community will become less important. The second issue addresses the gap between information "haves" and "have-nots," that is, the social groups who have access to networked information and those who do not. Certain social groups such as the low-income, elderly, and poorly educated are more likely to be without access to computers. This could result in an overall loss of community development opportunities in the communities that these people belong to.

The public library is a local institution that plays a part in these discussions. Public libraries have been community places as well as providers and repositories of information in the local communities. It could be argued that in accordance with its nature, a public library with physical space should provide access to networked information to people who could not have it otherwise. On the other hand, another argument foresees that "virtual libraries" in cyberspace will replace existing physical public libraries. Despite these two opposing views, the majority of the community remains indifferent about the future of public libraries. And the public library, which deals with information, remains at the margin of the IT society.

This thesis spotlights the impacts of information technology on the transformation of local institutions, and focuses on the public library as an example. It examines the potential roles of the public library from the viewpoints of communities and local governments by focusing on the extension of its historical roles and new social needs in the IT society. In 1993, there were nearly sixteen thousand public libraries in the United States. Public libraries are

one of the most common public institutions found in even small towns. And for small local communities, public libraries are often major public facilities on Main Street. Therefore, this thesis will pay particular attention to public libraries in smaller local governments. It consists of three parts: Chapter One examines the contexts of public libraries in the information society, Chapter Two analyzes a case in Union City, New Jersey, and Chapter Three suggests future plans for the public library and extends lessons to other institutions.

In Chapter 1, the impacts of information technology on local development are narrowed down to a case of the public library as an example of a local institution significantly influenced by information technology. In the context of information technology, the chapter analyzes the public library from several viewpoints: its historical background; its current situation in local communities; the ways that the library has historically been affected by technology; the competing markets for library-like services; the recent attempts to raise public popularity; and some positive potentials for future libraries. This last part consists of analysis of three large public libraries and a report on an experimental project. At the end, a proposition about the public library and the society in the information age is presented, which is to be further analyzed in Chapter 2.

To demonstrate how a public library system can better serve a community, Chapter 2 uses Union City, New Jersey as a case study. It analyzes the historic background, current conditions, and potential needs of the community. This case study demonstrates the importance of the public library in the IT society.

In Chapter 3, future plans and a strategy for Union City and the Union City Public Library are proposed as an example of community specific planning. It concludes the thesis by extending the lessons of information technology impacts on public libraries to other local institutions.

Chapter 1

The Changing Context of a Local Institution – A Case of the Public Library –



Fig. 1 The 100 Year Old Wall Painting at the Boston Public Library.
Telephone lines hint at telecommunications
in the future of the public library.^{1,2}

¹ Photo of artwork taken in the McKim building's grand staircase in Nov. 1997.

² Painter's description, "By the wondrous agency of Electricity, Speech flashes through Space and Swift as lighting bears tidings of good and evil." P. Puvis de Chavannes, "Description of the Decorative Paintings," Boston Public Library, 1895.

This chapter examines the various impacts of information technology in the context of the public libraries of today. The influence of information technology on a local institution is closely interlinked with the historical and social background of that institution and of the local community, as well as with other changing factors in the society. This context focuses on the public library as an example. This framework can be used as a basis to examine the impact of information technology on other institutions.

This chapter starts with a discussion of the current impact of information technology on the development of local institutions. Section 1.1 explains why in this thesis the institution of the public library has been chosen for in-depth examination as an example of a local institution profoundly influenced by information technology.

Section 1.2 presents the great importance towns and cities historically placed on public libraries, as well as the indifference toward public libraries in local governments today. It also discusses the historical popularity of libraries among community residents, in contrast with today's unpopularity. Section 1.3 discusses the history of how technology has been adopted by libraries in terms of the use of media, the amount of information, and the accessibility to information. In Section 1.4, the current dilemma of libraries is described by their recent attempts to appeal to transient popular tastes, and by the entry and overlapping of other sectors into the market that have traditionally been the domain of public libraries. Section 1.5 analyzes the positive signs of possible future library roles based on three major public library case studies and on my experimental local library project. A proposition concerning the public library and in the IT society is presented in Section 1.6, which will be evaluated in Chapter 2.

1.1 View from Information Technology

1.1.1 Information technology and local development

Recent progress in information technology has had a significant impact on society by breaking down geographical boundaries, and enabling better access to various and personalized information.

It has also had a significant impact on local development, affecting individuals, communities and local institutions. Discussion of these impacts takes two major forms of debate about a) accessibility to these new forms of information, and b) the significance of physical space in communities.

The first issue addresses the current discussion about the information "haves" and "have-nots" - a gap between the social groups who have access to networked information and those who do not. There is a concern that people in certain social groups, such as the low-income, the elderly, and the poorly educated, are more likely than others to be computer illiterate and/or without access to computers. This gap is illustrated by Fig. 1, Fig. 2, and Fig. 3, which show the percentage of households by income, educational attainment, and age that possessed a computer and a modem in 1994. These figures clearly demonstrate that market penetration of a computer with a modem is lower among those 55 years and older, those without a university education, those with incomes less than 35,000 dollars, and those in rural areas. The prevalence of information technology is expected to reduce the large gap.

However, quickly changing information technology could leave these people behind. In the IT society, members of these groups would suffer serious disadvantages in both their professional and private lives. This could result in an overall loss of community development opportunities in the communities these people belong to. Lawrence Vale, a professor of urban planning at MIT, is concerned that "If the availability of a computer

infrastructure is indeed to become essential for future economic development potential, there seems to be a real danger that the corporations that shape this aspect of a city's image could easily continue to promote segregated sectors of the information rich and the information poor¹."

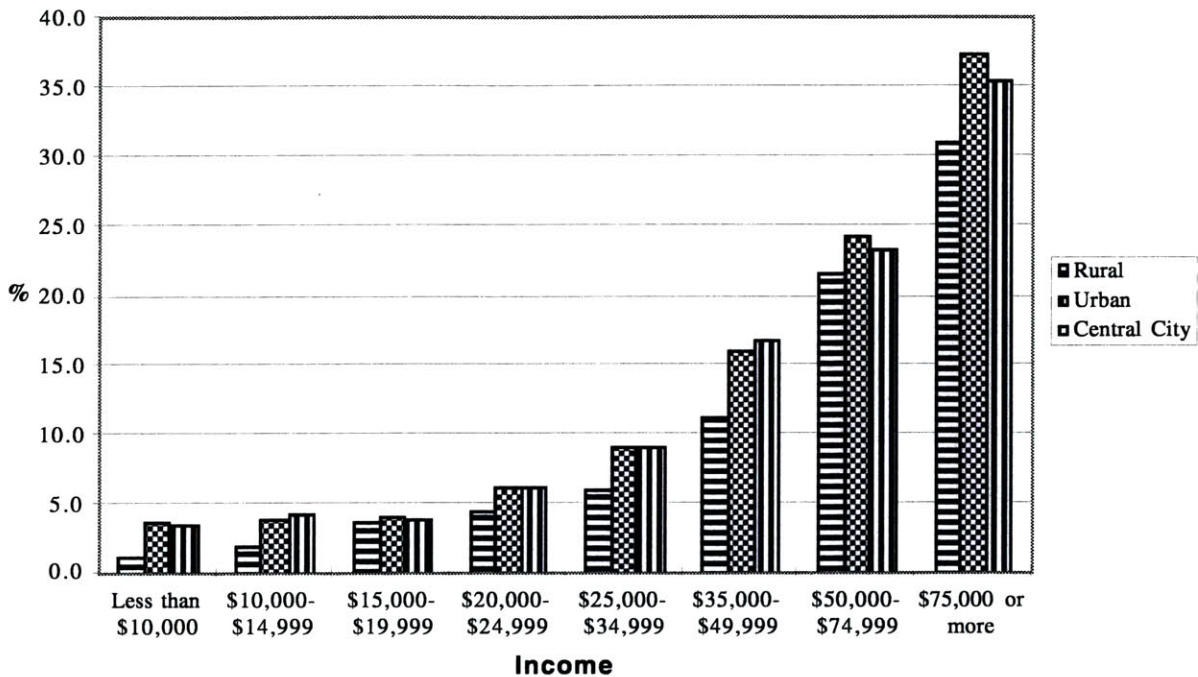


Fig. 2 Percent of Households with a Computer and Modem By Income²

¹ Lawrence J. Vale, "The Imaging of the City: Public Housing and Communication," *Communication Research*, Vol. 22 No. 6, Dec. 1995, p.658.

² Calculated from "Percent of U.S. Households with a Computer by Income, by Rural, Urban, and Central City Areas," and "Percent of U.S. Computer Households with a Modem, by Income, By Rural, Urban, and Central City Areas,"

Ronald H. Brown, David J. Barram, Larry Irving, "Falling through the Net: A Survey of the 'Have Nots' in Rural and Urban America," U.S. Department of Commerce, July 1995.

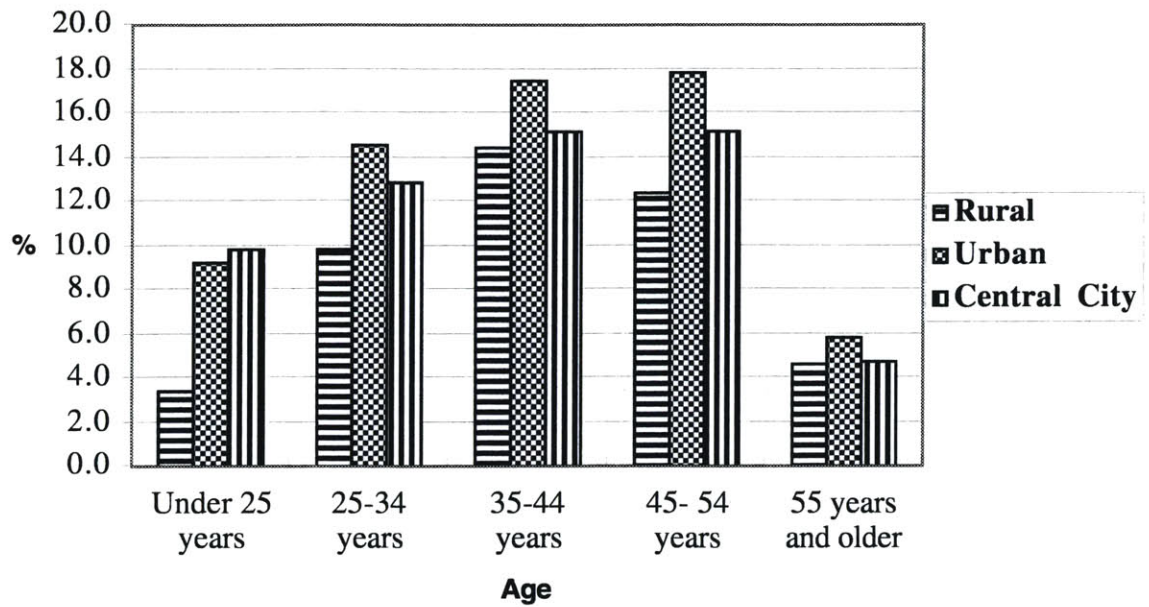


Fig. 3 Percent of Households with a Computer and Modem By Age¹

¹ Calculated from "Percent of U.S. Households with a Computer by Age, by Rural, Urban, and Central City Areas," and "Percent of U.S. Computer Households with a Modem, by Age, By Rural, Urban, and Central City Areas,"

Ronald H. Brown, David J. Barram, Larry Irving, "Falling through the Net: A Survey of the 'Have Nots' in Rural and Urban America," U.S. Department of Commerce, July 1995.

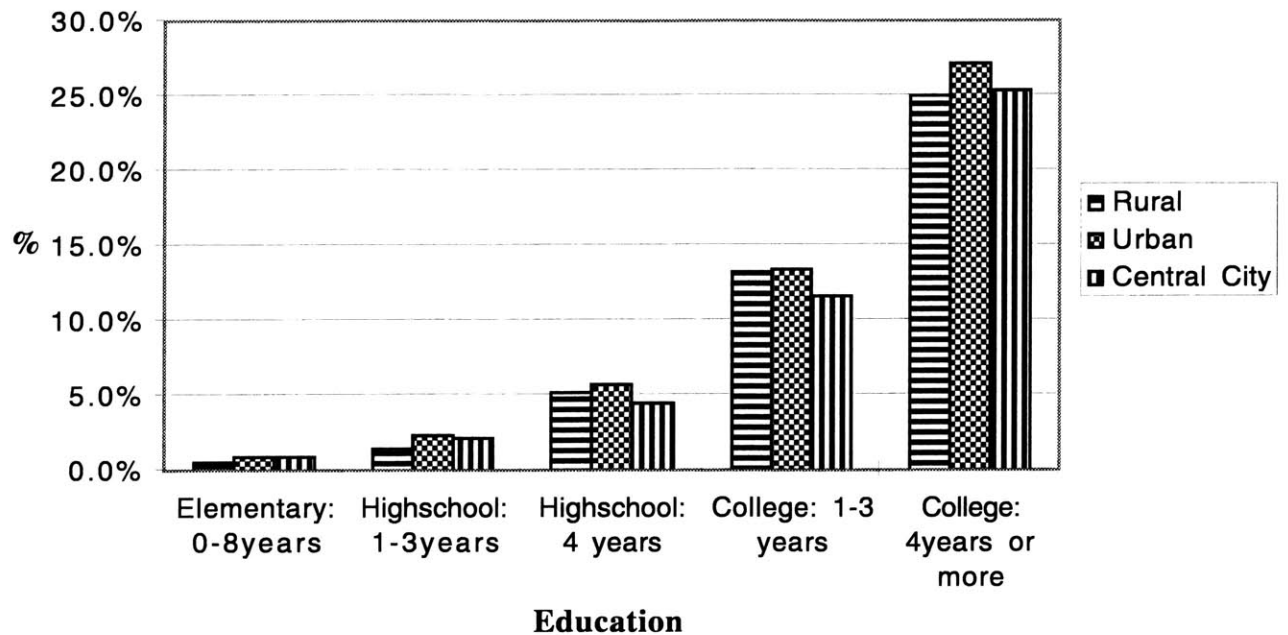


Fig. 4 Percent of Households with a Computer and Modem By Educational Attainment¹

The second issue of the impact of information technology is the idea that “virtual communities” enabled by information technology will take over physical communities. An example of this is the idea that the on-line shopping malls will replace downtown main streets or suburban shopping malls. The notion also holds that physical public space in a community will become less important, as public cyberspace is enhanced.

¹ Calculated from “Percent of U.S. Households with a Computer by Educational Attainment, by Rural, Urban, and Central City Areas,” and “Percent of U.S. Computer Households with a Modem, by Educational Attainment, By Rural, Urban, and Central City Areas,” Ronald H. Brown, David J. Barram, Larry Irving, “Falling through the Net: A Survey of the ‘Have Nots’ in Rural and Urban America,” U.S. Department of Commerce, July 1995.

1.1.2 Information Technology and the Public Library as a Local Institution

The public library is a local institution that plays a part in these discussions. Public libraries have been community places in addition to fulfilling their basic roles as providers and repositories of information to the local community. It could be argued that in accordance with its nature, a public library with physical space should be encouraged to offer access to network information in order to fill the gap between information "haves" and "have-nots." An example of such an opinion was expressed by Hardy R. Franklin, President of the American Library Association: "if we are to remain a vibrant democracy, we must ensure that all people living in this country have equal information opportunity, that libraries serve as the public access point, or the public 'on ramp' to the information highway."¹ Michael Dertouzos, Professor at the Laboratory for Computer Science at MIT, concurs that there is a need "...to help the poor access and use the new technology. This can be done through various assistance programs, some already established. Kiosk ... and public library – like computer centers ... will be much in demand and much appreciated, provided that they are supplied and staffed to take care of the many people who will flow toward them."²

On the other hand, some foresee that "virtual libraries" in cyberspace that are accessible by computer from anywhere will replace existing physical public libraries. Such notions, started by the "paperless library" where "Librarians need no longer operate within the four walls of an institution"³ by Frederick W. Lancaster in the late 1970's, have been made more realistic by recent remarkable innovations in information technology. At the conference titled

¹ Statement of Hardy R. Franklin, President American Library Association, "Libraries and Their Role in the Information Infrastructure: Hearing Committee on Labor and Human Resources United States Senate," U.S. Government, Apr. 19, 1994, p.20.

² Michael L. Dertouzos, "What Will Be: How the New World of Information will Change our Lives," 1997, p.242.

³ Frederick W. Lancaster, "The Future of Libraries in the Age of Electronics," Changing information concepts and technologies: a reader for the professional librarian, p.158, 1982.

“Global Library Strategies for the 21st Century” in April 1996, for example, Paul M. Horn, Senior Vice President for Research at the International Business Machines Corporation, said that the cost of information storage had been decreasing by 40% a year over the last 20 years and that he could see no change in the trend. He thinks that at some point in the future, it would theoretically be possible to store all 16 million volumes in the Library of Congress on a disk the size of penny.¹ William Mitchell, Dean of School of Architecture and Planning at MIT, sees the future of the library as one where “the huge stacks shrink to almost negligible size, the seats and carrels disperse, and there is nothing left to put a grand facade on. All that is solid melts in air.”²

Despite these opposite views, the majority of communities remain indifferent about the future of public libraries, even though the library is nearing a critical point for its significance due to the development of the information technology society.

In another way, the situation of local public libraries can be seen as a paradox. Information has never been so important as it is now, and historically public libraries are supposed to be a community resource for information. Yet, public libraries remain at the margins of the IT society. Furthermore, information technology has de-emphasized the significance of the physical space of libraries, making them easy targets for budget cuts. Public libraries are therefore representative of the transformation of institutions in an information society.

¹ William Grimes, “Libraries Ponder Role in the Digital Age,” New York Times, Apr. 29, 1996.

² William J. Mitchell, “City of Bits: Space, Place, and the Infobahn,” 1995, p.57.

1.2 View from the Public Library

1.2.1 Municipalities and the Public Library

In 1993, there were 8,887 central public libraries and 7,017 branch libraries,¹ for a total of 15,904 public libraries in the United States. According to the Federal - State Cooperative System for Public Library Data (FSCS), 94.9% of public libraries serve 99,999 people or less in their legal service area,² and 79.5% of public libraries serve 24,999 people or less.³ Public libraries are one of the most common public institutions found even in smaller towns.

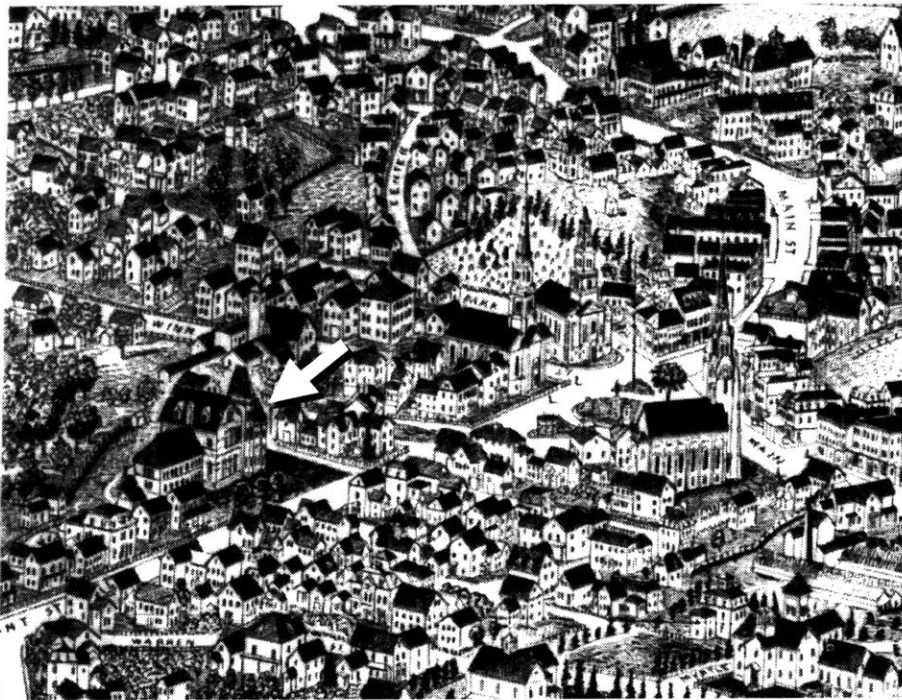


Fig. 5 A Public Library in the Historic Center of the Community^{4,5}

¹ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, "Public Libraries in the United States: 1993," 1995.

² 8462 libraries / 8921 libraries = 94.9%

Adrienne Chute, Elaine Kroe, Ellen Thompson, "Public Libraries in the United States: FY 1994," May 1997, p.59.

³ 7093 libraries / 8921 libraries = 79.5%

Adrienne Chute, Elaine Kroe, Ellen Thompson, "Public Libraries in the United States: FY 1994," May 1997, p.59.

⁴ Map by L. R. Burleigh, Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress, 1883,

Shown by Kenneth A. Breisch, "Henry Hobson Richardson and the Small Public Library in America; A Study in Typology," 1997, p.23.

⁵ Location checked by Woburn Public Library, "History of Woburn Public Library," <http://www.ultranet.com/~woblib/libhist.htm> (last accessed on Dec. 15 1998).

Many of those public libraries are located in the center of the communities, often on "Main Street." (Fig. 5) When they were first established in the latter half of the nineteenth century, libraries were placed "alongside sanitation, street lighting, public parks and hospitals as the minimum social services that a democratic society owed itself."¹ Also, "when smaller cities were competing to attract investment money to local business and real estate," the public library was a strategic "feature on a par with light, water and sewer systems,"² differentiating towns from their surrounding communities. "It was generally understood that a town which failed to educate its population would fall behind in the race for business supremacy"³ with "a frank concern for a prosperity which rival cities were seeking to destroy."⁴ "A public library on Main Street was brick-and-stone proof of civic superiority, concern for education and high-minded culture, and commercial vigor to support it."⁵ On the other hand, when the major projects of the Carnegie libraries were implemented later around the turn of the century, they were the only large public buildings in many small towns. They became "hubs of social activities like concerts, lectures, and meetings and did double duty as museums and community storehouses."¹ This all goes to say that at one time, the public library enjoyed an important position in those local governments.

Ever since the system of public libraries spread out all over the United States about a century ago, the public library remained an independent branch of

¹ Sidney H. Ditzion, "Arsenals of a Democratic Culture; A Social History of the American Public Library Movement in New England and the Middle States from 1850 to 1900," 1947, p.72.

² Herkimer Free Public Library, N.Y. "Proceedings at Dedication," 1896, Cited by Sidney H. Ditzion, "Arsenals of a Democratic Culture; A Social History of the American Public Library Movement in New England and the Middle States from 1850 to 1900," 1947, p.70.

³ Newburyport Public Library, Massachusetts, "Dedication Exercises of the Simpson Annex to the Newburyport Library Building of the City of Newburyport, 1882, p.27. Cited by Sidney H. Ditzion, "Arsenals of a Democratic Culture; A Social History of the American Public Library Movement in New England and the Middle States from 1850 to 1900," 1947, p.70.

⁴ Sidney H. Ditzion, "Arsenals of a Democratic Culture; A Social History of the American Public Library Movement in New England and the Middle States from 1850 to 1900," 1947, p.70.

⁵ Theodore Jones, "Carnegie Libraries Across America", 1997, p.17.

municipal governments. This independence effectively functioned to establish its steady role, but also brought a growing dissociation from city management even though local governments have been the main providers of support. Harris pointed out the library's inclination towards its own administration and organizational matters. As the public library system grew around the century, he wrote that as "administrative functions were becoming so extensive," the typical librarian had "less and less time for reflection on either his clientele or the library's purpose." Librarians "spent the majority of their waking hours attempting to reduce library work to a 'mechanical art,' " which made "the library a new bureaucracy adhering to more and more inflexible rules of operation." He thinks, as a result, the public libraries "began to lose touch with the founder's vision of the library's purpose."²

Despite this dissociation, local governments are still the major source of funding for local public libraries. The percentage of income provided by local governments is 78.2% for all public libraries,³ 78.3% for those serving 99,999 people or less,⁴ and 77.5% for those serving 24,999 people or less.⁵ At the same time, compared to other city functions, the expenditures for public libraries are not trivial in city budgets. For example, the City of Cambridge,

¹ Theodore Jones, "Carnegie Libraries Across America", 1997, p.3.

² Michael Harris, "The Purpose of the American Public Library : A Revisionist Interpretation of History," Library Journal, Sep. 15, 1973, p.2512.

³ Adrienne Chute, Elaine Kroe, and Ellen Thompson, "Public Libraries in the United States: FY 1994," May 1997, p.59.

Other Sources of Income: Federal 1.1%, State 12.3%, and other 8.4%.

⁴ $(\$658,202 * 77.9\% + \$646,359 * 79.8\% + \$555,721 * 79.6\% + \$212,775 * 75.5\% + \$82,116 * 75.1\% + \$46,911 * 70.1\% + \$12,450 * 65.0\%) / (\$658,202 + \$646,359 + \$555,721 + \$212,775 + \$82,116 + \$46,911 + \$12,450) = 78.3\%$

Adrienne Chute, Elaine Kroe, Ellen Thompson, "Public Libraries in the United States: FY 1994," May 1997, p.59.

⁵ $(\$555,721 * 79.6\% + \$212,775 * 75.5\% + \$82,116 * 75.1\% + \$46,911 * 70.1\% + \$12,450 * 65.0\%) / (\$555,721 + \$212,775 + \$82,116 + \$46,911 + \$12,450) = 77.5\%$

Adrienne Chute, Elaine Kroe, Ellen Thompson, "Public Libraries in the United States: FY 1994," May 1997, p.59.

Massachusetts spent 1.47%¹ of its budget on the public library, while it spent 0.92% for community development,² including 0.13% for its Economic Development Division.³ However, it seems that local governments are rather reluctant to be actively involved in discussions concerning the direction of public libraries other than to tightening their budgets. Fig. 6 shows a cartoon in a local San Francisco newspaper in 1960. It depicts the public library as a wallflower while other aspects of city life such as urban redevelopment, and transportation dance away.⁴ This tendency continues to the present.



Fig. 6 City and the Public Library⁵

¹ $\$3,706,440 / \$252,353,360 = 1.47\%$

City of Cambridge, "Annual Budget 1997 - 98," 1997.

² $\$2,320,210 / \$252,353,360 = 0.92\%$

City of Cambridge, "Annual Budget 1997 - 98," 1997.

³ $\$340,070 / \$252,353,360 = 0.13\%$

City of Cambridge, "Annual Budget 1997 - 98," 1997.

⁴ Peter Booth, "A Free Library in This City : The Illustrated History of the San Francisco Public Library," Apr. 1996, p.160.

⁵ Cartoon from the Chronicle, Apr. 13, 1960

Peter Booth, "A Free Library in This City: The Illustrated History of the San Francisco Public Library," Apr. 1996, p.160.

1.2.2 People and the Public Library

The public library, with its willingness to help people with their various pursuits, is a generous institution for anyone of any background, with any level of education, of any age, of any economic condition, and of any social group in the community. As a global institution with a local orientation, it could potentially be a very good resource and place in each community.

A public library is often a symbol of community identity representing a cultural center, civic pride, and physical landmark, particularly in a smaller city or town. Possession of a free public library once represented a source of considerable local pride. Almost all of the local libraries ended up featured on postcards. Those postcards were used in great numbers by local people to send to their relatives and friends in other towns to brag about the new library.¹ (Fig. 7) They also put images of their libraries on china and sterling silver souvenirs. It manifested the community's pride in the free public library as something representing their town at that time.² The public library also represented various kinds of opportunities for people. Nancy Finlay compares the New York Public Library as a "potent icon" of New York City along with the Statue of Liberty and the Empire State Building. She explains that "If the Statue of Liberty represented America's Golden Door standing open to great arriving immigrants, and Empire State Building represented commercial success, the New York Public Library represented opportunity for learning, free and open to all,"³ for people to acquire the skills and information for their success. During the Great Depression, public libraries such as the New York Public Library were crowded with the unemployed seeking job information from newspapers as well as seeking a haven. (Fig. 8)

¹ James H Billington, "Technological Flood Requires Human Navigators," *American Libraries*, June/July, 1996, p.39.

² By the way, it is interesting that on those postcards, the nineteenth century 's popularization of the modern technology of photography and the communication systems of the postal service were combined with the popularized modern social system of public library.

³ Nancy Finlay, "Artists Look at The New York Public Library," *Biblion*, Vol. 3, Number 2, Spring 1995, p.102.

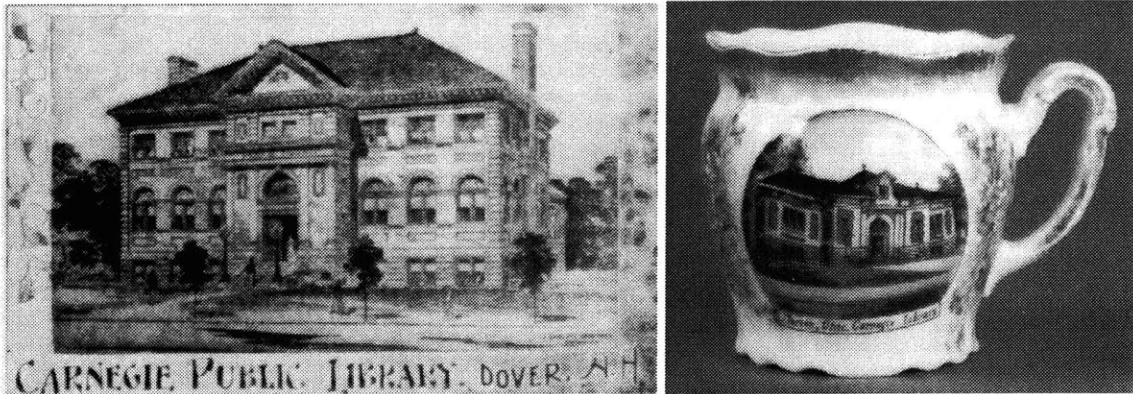


Fig. 7 Postcard and Mug showing off Local Pride^{1,2}

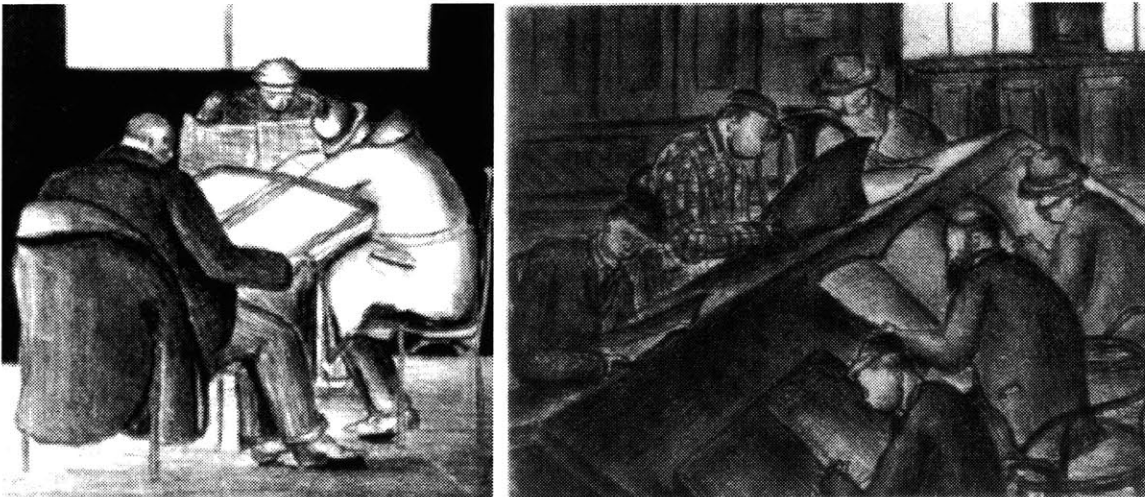


Fig. 8 The Great Depression, Unemployed, and New York Public Library³

¹ Image of Postcard : Paul Dickson, "The Library in America - A Celebration in Words and Pictures," Facts On File Publications, 1986, p.50.

² Image of Mug: Theodore Jones, "Carnegie Libraries Across America", John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1997, p.18.

³ Both Illustrations drawn by Grand, Arnold, "Scenes in the Newspaper Room." Lithographs, 1930 – Print Collection, The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Cited by Nancy Finlay, "Artists Look at The New York Public Library," *Bibliion*, Vol. 3, Number 2, Spring 1995, p.102.

However, the old saying "A library is an institution with no enemies and no friends,"¹ expresses the current overall library situation well. Many people think it is good, but not for them. The library is for other people. Despite its origins as a symbol of popular democracy, "historically only a very small portion of the eligible users have ever crossed the threshold of a public library."²

In the 1960's, Laurence Clarke, the city librarian at the San Francisco Public Library, confessed that "What we don't know is whether the people want it. If the handful of letters that come to the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors is any indication, people don't care." He compared the library with the city's other cultural institutions: "if the opera or the symphony, or the art gallery were in a bad way, the music and art lovers would stir up such a row, you could hear them from Twin Peaks to Telegraph Hill."³

In 1998, Steve Cisler reported that at the conference "Connecting All Americans," even after "a black librarian gave a good summary of the active role played by her library, a number of black people said during the breaks that the library was not a place to go, it was not cool; it was for white ladies, not for black youth, and that it did not have the kind of activities and information they wanted."⁴

On the other hand, another group of people, including the university librarians I interviewed, think public libraries are not for people like themselves, but are for "middle class people." And, this view seems

¹ Peter Booth, "A Free Library in This City : The Illustrated History of the San Francisco Public Library," Apr. 1996, p.152.

² Michael Harris, "The Purpose of the American Public Library : A Revisionist Interpretation of History," Library Journal, Sep. 15, 1973, p.2509.

³ Peter Booth, "A Free Library in This City : The Illustrated History of the San Francisco Public Library," Apr. 1996, p.154.

⁴ Steve Cisler, "Conference report : Connecting All Americans, Washington, DC, February 24 - 26, 1998," Mar. 2, 1998

<http://home.inreach.com/cisler/connect.html> (last accessed Mar. 19, 1998).

common as even public librarians themselves admit to defining the public library as “a middle – class institution,” while they themselves are “middle-class people serving the middle class.”¹

Recently, one of the typical images of public libraries is an outmoded institution covered with cobwebs. An example is the following comment about the mid-Manhattan branch library in New York, which opened in 1970. It describes the library as “generous” but “worn out.”

... an institution cube bursting with books - tired old books in library bindings that have tuckered out like an ancient coat and tired new books, the colors of their once - eye - catching covers fading. Lumpy, patient librarians sit at battered metal desks, answering the same questions over and over, taking people by the hand to show them the microfilm readers or the periodical desk or the phone book. Hairy-eared codgers with nothing better to do read their papers very thoroughly in carrels, while giggling school girls in their uniforms crib reports out of encyclopedias. Old ladies look over Consumer reports, and skulkers linger in the men's room hoping for furtive sex...²

Harris described the situation, “... there appears to be a relentlessly spreading indifference, if not hostility, in the minds of Americans. The American public seems disenchanted with the public library. People no longer see the library as important - at least not in relation to other community services - and public libraries everywhere find themselves in a precarious financial situation as a result.”³

¹ Nancy Pearl, “Gave’em What They Wanted,” *Library Journal*, Sep. 1, 1996, p.138, Interview with Charlie Robinson, Director, and Jean - Barry Molz, Deputy Director of the Baltimore County Public Library.

² David Berreby, “Cold Storage,” *The New Republic*, June 3, 1996.
A copy of this article was obtained from the public relations of the New York Public Library.

³ Michael Harris, “The Purpose of the American Public Library : A Revisionist Interpretation of History,” *Library Journal*, Sep. 15, 1973, p.2514.

1.3 History of Technologies and the Library

1.3.1 Transition of Media

Libraries have a long history, leading up to the establishment of public libraries. In the earliest times, there was no distinction between a record room and a library. In this sense, libraries can be said to have existed for almost as long as records have been kept.¹ As early as the third millennium BC, a temple in Babylonia was found to have a number of rooms filled with clay tablets, suggesting a well-stocked archive, or library.

The evolution of those libraries had a close relationship with the invention of new technologies. Historically, libraries have depended on available media to build collections. They were searching for a medium that maximized two main requirements: durability for permanence and relative ease of use.² The perpetual trials still continue, and this historical aspect of media is important for the long-term plans of today's public libraries.

An ancient medium of baked clay tablets, which was used in the aforementioned earliest library in Babylonia, is solid, but clumsy. They took up a lot of storage space, deteriorated rapidly, and were easily damaged. Stone provided permanence, but only a highly skilled worker could inscribe records on it over a long period of time. It also took up a lot of storage space, and it could neither be modified nor easily transported. Because of those constraints, stone as a medium was largely replaced by the other media before the Roman era. However, it is still valued for its permanence by modern society for inscribed stone monuments.

Through the ancient Greeks and Romans, scrolls of papyrus, vellum and parchment became available, and the choice of which to use was determined partly by purpose and partly by economic considerations. These media had flat,

¹ "Libraries: The History of Libraries," Britannica Online.
<http://www.eb.com:180/cgi-bin/g?DocF=macro/5003/74/1.html> (last accessed on Nov. 24, 1998).

² "Libraries: The Library Operation: Library Materials," Britannica Online.
<http://www.eb.com:180/cgi-bin/g?DocF=macro/5003/74/33.html> (last accessed on Nov, 1998).

flexible surfaces which more readily accepted handwriting with ink, and could be stored more easily than clay or stone by rolling or folding. Papyrus was fragile if bent, but the raw material was easily available and its size was adaptable. Vellum and parchment from animal skins were stronger than papyrus, less susceptible to dampness, and could be folded as well as rolled. The idea of a library in early times is illustrated by the greatest library in antiquity, Aristotle's library, which was apparently intended to collect the whole body of Greek literature. The library had a complex of lecture halls, study rooms, cloisters and an astronomical observatory. In the second century, paper was invented in China, and its use spread slowly westward over the next thousand years.

Codex,¹ which is the earliest type of manuscript in modern book form, was developed along with the rise of Christianity, with its demands for portable books for missionary activities. Compared to scrolls, a codex could conveniently contain longer texts because of its compactness, ease of opening, and use of both sides of the leaf. It is a good example of the acceptance of an information storage medium which is both effective and appropriate. Due to the general adoption of the codex, the materials to build library collections changed. Papyrus was never used for codex, as it is fragile when folded. The use of vellum and parchment gradually shifted to the use of paper. However, on the whole, paper was used for less formal purposes, and vellum or parchment were still common for formal or important documents through the fifteenth century.

In the 1440's, a method of printing using movable type was invented by Gutenberg. The most suitable surface for imprinting proved to be paper, and that caused parchment and vellum to disappear from use as the standard material for books and documents. Printed books could be produced in large quantities, and therefore were cheaper and more widely available than the previous handwritten books. Formats became smaller and books became lighter

¹ A collection of written pages stitched together.

and more portable. Gutenberg printing on codex was used without important changes until the twentieth century.

The invention of photography in the nineteenth century brought microphotography and then microfilm into general use for libraries around the 1920's.¹ It saved a considerable amount of space, and made it feasible for even a small library to store, for example, an entire set of newspapers or periodicals. (Fig.9) Microfilm also erased for the first time the constraint of paper technology for making copies. It was also the first medium which could not be directly read, and required the mediation of a machine. Later, in the 1990's, microfilm was largely replaced by digital media.



Fig. 9 Microphotography Reading Machines in the 1950's.²

During the early 1960's, computers were used for the first time to digitize text in order to reduce the cost and time required to publish two academic abstract journals. By the late 1960's, this digitized information constituted a new type of

¹ William F. Birdsall, "The Myth of the Electronic Library: Librarianship and Social Change in America," 1994, p.10.

² Paul Dickson, "The Library in America - A Celebration in Words and Pictures," 1986, p.172.

information source. However, this was started mainly by the database service industry, which is outside traditional information repositories such as libraries.

Recently, the Library of Congress announced its intention to have five million documents digitized by 2000.¹ According to Bob Zich, the director of electronic programs of Library of Congress, the single most important value of digitization is that it allows major portions of its collection to be available to the entire United States via CD-ROMs and online access.²

The digitalization of information not only saved time, but also brought greater convenience such as quick access to remote resources, and word searching from whole documents. However, like microfilm, the information cannot be read directly and requires the mediation of computers to retrieve, whose systems change from time to time due to innovation, and are not always compatible.

The appropriateness of media type for library collections was not an absolute, but a relative choice in terms of its suitability for a purpose as media continued to evolve over time. (Fig. 10) In that sense, the current dominating combination of paper, printing, and codex can be regarded not as an ultimate style, but as a transitional solution.

¹ R.W. Apple Jr., "Library of Congress Is an Internet Hit," *The New York Times*, Feb. 16, 1997.

² David Pescovits, "The Future of Libraries," *Wired*, Dec. 1995.

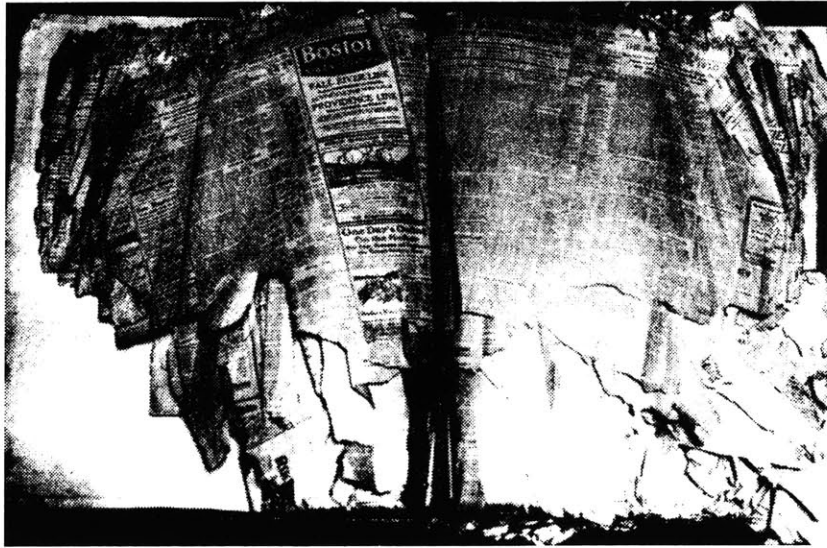


Fig. 10 Deteriorated Newspaper Collection at the New York Public Library.¹

¹ John P. Baker, "Rescuing the Record: A Centennial History of Preservation at the New York Public Library, Part I: 1895 - 1945," *Bibliion*, Vol. 4, Number 1, Fall 1995.

1.3.2 Amount of Information

In the Middle Ages, monasteries performed the functions of libraries. As well as libraries, monasteries had rooms called scriptoria where monks copied books by hand to add to their collection. (Fig. 11) They were in charge of reproduction and preservation of the books. Hand copying was so slow that a monastic library, which had 600 volumes, was considered fairly large,¹ and even the largest libraries had only about two thousand volumes.²

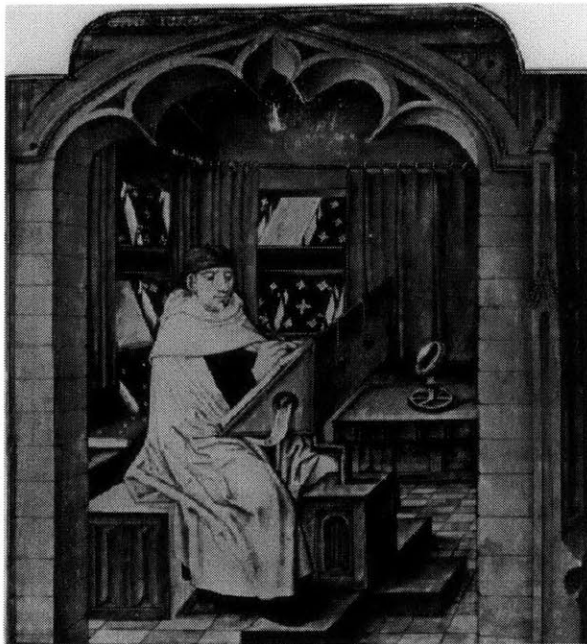


Fig. 11 Book Reproduction by Hand Copying by Monks.³

The invention of movable type printing by Gutenberg in the 1440's had a profound impact on society. Before the invention of printing, the number of manuscript books in Europe could be counted in the thousands. However, by 1500, within fifty years of the invention, the number of the books came to more

¹ "Publishing: Book Publishing: The Medieval Book," Britannica Online.

<http://www.eb.com:180/cgi-bin/g?DocF=macro/5005/38/11.html> (last accessed 13 December 1998).

² Thomas and Edith Kelly, "Books for the People: An Illustrated History of the British Public Library," 1977, p.8.

³ Thomas and Edith Kelly, "Books for the People: An Illustrated History of the British Public Library," 1977, p.8.

than nine million.¹ Scholars, who had not seen more than a few scores of books in their lives before, were able to consult libraries with thousands of printed books throughout Europe. That easier access to the growing store of knowledge by those scholars accelerated the creation of even more books. Gutenberg's invention of printing provoked the first information explosion. It seems a sense of information overload had already developed in the sixteenth century. Fig. 12 shows the idea of a "reading wheel" designed by Agostino Ramelli, an Italian engineer in 1588. His idea appears to attempt to cope with the information overload. Ramelli described it as follows: "With this machine a man can see and turn through a large number of books without moving from one spot."²

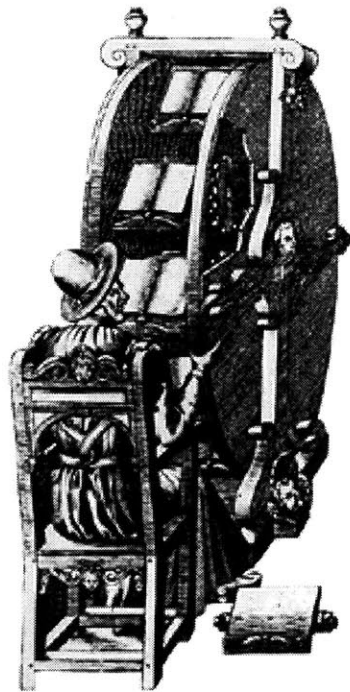


Fig. 12 Reading Wheel to Cope with Information Overload in 1588³

¹ "Publishing: Book publishing: The Early Age of Printing: 1450-1550," Britannica Online. <http://www.eb.com:180/cgi-bin/g?DocF=macro/5005/38/14.html> (last accessed 16 December 1998).

² Bruno Giussani, "Is it really Gutenberg All over again?" The New York Times, Jan. 6, 1998.

³ Image Credit: University and Public Library, Geneva, Bruno Giussani, "Is it really Gutenberg All over again?" The New York Times, Jan. 6, 1998.

Since then, the growth in printed materials escalated at ever-increasing rates. For example, between 1960 and 1987 alone, the number of volumes published in the United States increased 373 percent, from 15,012 to 56,027, and the world's book title output increased 213 percent over the same period.¹

The once prevailing attempt to collect all available information (books) in one library was becoming infeasible. Yet, libraries kept increasing in size, and they tended to be judged by their book capacity, which was a great source of pride.² It is expressed, for example, as in "The \$26 million project gave Boston a ten-story building with 550,000 square feet of floor area and a book storage capacity of four million volumes, the largest area and storage capacity to that time."³

The image of the libraries became one of massiveness. The upper right image of Fig. 13 shows seven layers of stacks in the New York Public Library, which opened in 1911. The upper left image shows a magazine advertisement indicating the Library of Congress as "the world largest 'IN' box". The lower right image shows the overload at the Birmingham Central Library in Great Britain in 1962. In 1965, the Detroit Public Library was giving its workers roller skates so they could move more quickly down the 250-foot long stacks. The center image of Fig. 13 was a film scene inspired by this fact, which suited the public perception of libraries.

¹ Michael Matier and C. Clinton Sidle, "What Size Libraries for 2010," *Planning for Higher Education*, Vol.21, Summer 1993.

² This is seen in every year's December issues of *Library Journal* featuring that year's new public library buildings.

³ Donald E. Oehlerts, "Books and Blueprints: Building America's Public Libraries," 1991, p.114.



Fig. 13 Massive Image of the Library^{1,2,3,4,5}

Next to Gutenberg's invention, the current significant information explosion was made possible by the innovation of digital and networking technology. The recent impact of the information explosion brought about by technology seems even larger than the one from Gutenberg's historic invention.

¹ Image, Upper Left: Advertisement for Xerox Corporation, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.58 No.2, Winter 1979/80, p.A4.

² Image, Left: Paul Dickson, "The Library in America - A Celebration in Words and Pictures," 1986, p.29.

³ Image, Upper Right: Paul Dickson, "The Library in America - A Celebration in Words and Pictures," 1986, p.63.

⁴ Image, Right: Thomas and Edith Kelly, "Books for the People: An Illustrate History of the British Public Library," 1977.

⁵ Image, Center: Paul Dickson, "The Library in America - A Celebration in Words and Pictures," 1986, p.180.

There is not an accurate estimate of the current amount of information available. However, David Lew said in 1997 of the recent information explosion that "More information has been produced in the last 30 years than in the previous 5,000."¹ According to Michael Lesk, in 1997, if only English-language materials from the last 18 months were counted, World Wide Web sites already have more text available than the Library of Congress.²

Unlike in the time of Aristotle's library, the growth of information has made the once prevailing idea of collecting all available documents in one library infeasible. Instead, following on the heels of digitalization technology which drastically reduced the physical size of information storage, current network technology is allowing information stored outside of the library building to be accessible.

In its history, the size of the libraries kept increasing along with the growth of the amount of information, and the emphasis was on massive capacity, though, at a certain point, the attempt to include every book around became far from feasible. However, it now seems that information technology has brought a chance for public libraries to give up emphasizing the massive image they created in the past, as networked information resources can supercede even the most massive collections found in library buildings.

¹ David Lewis, "Dying for Information," 1997. Cited by Bruno Giussani, "Is it Really Gutenberg All Over Again?" The New York Times, Jan. 6, 1998.

² Michael Lesk, "How Much Information is There in the World?" Time & Bite: Managing Digital Continuity, 1997
<http://www.ahip.getty.edu/timeandbits/ksg.html> (last accessed on Jan.1, 1999)

1.3.3 Locality and Accessibility of Information

Throughout the evolution of libraries caused by technological innovation, one of the most significant transitions is that information is becoming free from locational constraints. (Fig. 14) This transition is made possible by the aforementioned mass production and the physical transformation of media.

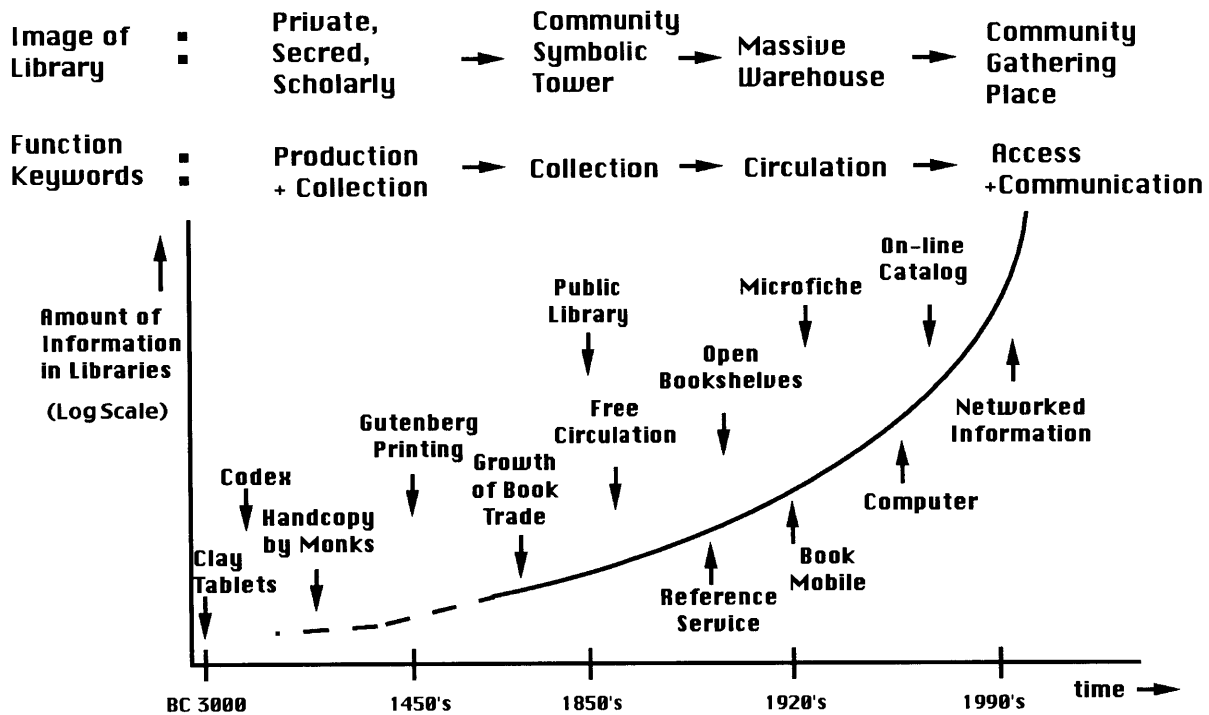


Fig. 14 Growing Amount of Information and Transitional Function of Libraries

In medieval libraries in monasteries, as handwritten books and early printed books were rare and valuable, they were chained to cupboards and could be used only at attached desks. (Fig. 15) The written information located in the sacred spaces could only be accessed in those locations.

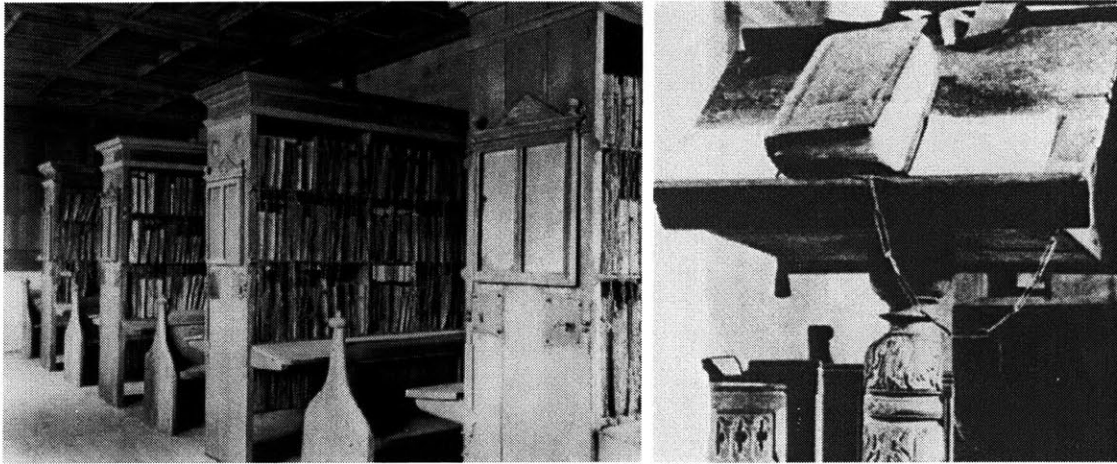


Fig. 15 Chained Library^{1,2}

The shift from reproduction by handcopying to printing in the fifteenth century had a major impact on libraries. Books started being unchained from desks and placed spines outward on shelves. Also, as libraries could afford and house a larger quantity of information, catalogues started being organized alphabetically and bibliographies were compiled. That provided a basis to increase the universality of accessing books.

Then, a number of libraries became accessible to the literate public, but it was almost always only for reference purposes until the eighteenth century, when the notion of circulation at libraries became popular. The circulation system prevailed with the rapid development of public libraries in the nineteenth century. It was possible to take information out of library buildings with this book circulation system.

Opening book stacks to readers in the last quarter of the nineteenth century allowed people to browse the contents of different books on the same topic at the

¹ Photo, left: Thomas and Edith Kelly, "Books for the People: An Illustrate History of the British Public Library," 1977, p.8.

² Photo, right: Thomas and Edith Kelly, "Books for the People: An Illustrate History of the British Public Library," 1977, p.32.

shelves before they selected the one that best suited their interests. This increased the direct access of information by people. It further required the books to be accessible on lower shelves and arranged according to a simple system.

Meanwhile, various technological trials were made to overcome the locality of information (books). Fig. 16 shows the pneumatic tube system used to carry books between the Main Library and the Annex of the Library of Congress.

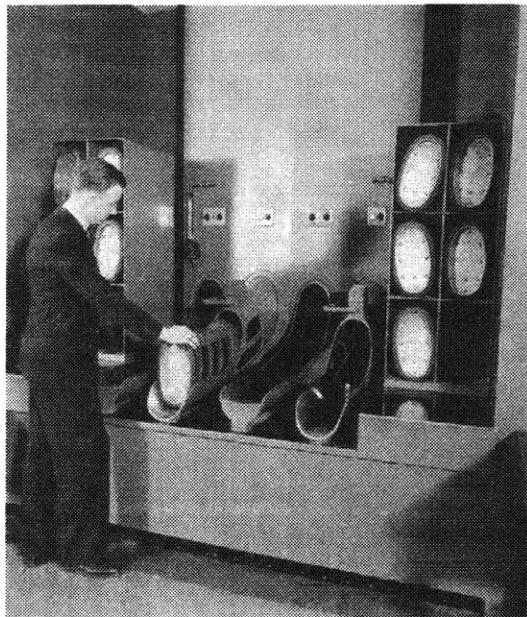


Fig. 16 Book Delivery Machine in the 1930's.¹

Digitalization of information, such as CD-ROMs, which succeeded microfilm, made it possible for the library to repose much more information in its building. Yet, accessibility to information was limited by the collection within the library building with a few exceptions of interlibrary loans.

¹ Image: Paul Dickson, "The Library in America - A Celebration in Words and Pictures," 1986, p.122.

However, another significant characteristic of the communication abilities of computers augmented the utility and the accessibility to information. Following the introduction of on-line catalogs, the improvements in information technology involving advances in computer storage, telecommunications, software for computer sharing, and automated techniques of text indexing and searching¹ have recently enabled information content to be available on-line. Traditional books and other materials are "increasingly supplanted by the use of these electronic databases containing everything from library catalogs and subject area indexes and abstracts to journal articles and entire book-length texts."² This greatly increases the accessibility to information by users because it eliminates the intermediate step characteristic of earlier systems in which users first performed a search and then obtained the articles in print or on microfilm.

Herein, the recent innovation of networked information represented by the Internet is making global resources accessible immediately and directly from a local public library. With media prior to networked information, having locally stored copies was a prerequisite condition for access. Now, with networked information, local storage may be convenient but no longer necessary. Public libraries are transforming their image from "a finite space with finite resources to a finite space with infinite resources."³(Fig.17)

¹ "Information Processing and Information Systems: Elements of Information Processing: Inventory of Recorded Information: Databases." Britannica Online.

<http://www.eb.com:180/cgi-bin/g?DocF=macro/5003/15/9.html> (last accessed on Jan. 2, 1999).

² "Libraries: The History of Libraries: Later Developments" Britannica Online.

<http://www.eb.com:180/cgi-bin/g?DocF=macro/5003/74/15.html> (last accessed Dec. 29).

³ Susan Goldberg Kent, "American Public Libraries: A Long Transformative Moment," *Daedalus*, Vol. 125, No. 4, "Books, Bricks, and Bytes," Fall 1996, p.211.



Fig. 17 New York Public Library with Free Access to More Than 100 Databases and the Internet.¹

Meanwhile, as information is becoming free from location and space constraints, that allows individuals using home computers to have access to an enormous network of information, and this technology may threaten the physical existence of public libraries if they are mainly constituted by collections of books. However, the innovation of the technology allows libraries to shift emphasis from their collections and circulation to their community functions. The technology is unveiling the functions of the physical existence of public libraries as "socialization facilities, communication facilities, and protected public spaces - even icons of the community."²

¹ Photo taken by Fred R. Conrad:

Julie V. Iovine, "New York Public Library: Open for Travel In Realms of Gold," New York Times, Nov. 5, 1998.

² Comment by Ken Dowlin, City Librarian of San Francisco, David Pescovitz, "The Future of Libraries," Wired, Dec. 1995.

1.4 Public Libraries at the Crossroads

1.4.1 Struggling Public Libraries

Meanwhile, public libraries have been struggling to seek new roles in their communities for themselves. These independent efforts brought about various kinds of experiments in the public library's attempt to assume the identity of a people's institution. However, many of these seem to be ways to seek transient popularity, and lack a strategic standpoint in the scheme of city governments. According to Flagg and Havard-Williams, the mission of public libraries is changing. "While a century earlier, the principal aim had been to educate, inform, and entertain, that priority order had been reversed – now the aim was said to be to entertain, inform, and educate."¹

One orientation was to undervalue the library's function of providing access to information. Patrick Williams describes "strange" trials in the late seventies. Similar activities are seen even today.

*A library in Minnesota played video tapes of the Viking's games twice on Wednesday for football fans who had missed the games on the weekends. A library in Phoenix sold garbage bags at the request of city officials. A library in depressed neighborhood distributed rat poison. Around the country, libraries provided programs or demonstration of many kinds: sky diving, beer can collecting, coupon or comic book swapping, mountain climbing, belly dancing, skateboarding, lock picking, hair styling, safe cracking, and bicycle repair.... Libraries lent jewelry, sculpture, plants, smoke alarms, art prints, cameras, and tools. ... One expected that librarians would soon be shining shoes and washing cars.*²

Another orientation has been to overvalue the public library's function of book circulation. The following description is about the minilibraries started in Baltimore. The theory behind the minilibraries was that as "The public pays for the library, so the public should get what it wants."³ The Baltimore County

¹ Gordon Flagg, P. Havard Williams, "Book of the Year (1995): Libraries" Britannica Online, <http://www.eb.com:180/cgi-bin/g?DocF=boy/95/I01990.html> (last accessed Dec.10 1998).

² Patrick Williams, "The American Public Library and the Problem of Purpose," 1988, p.118.

³ Patrick Williams, "The American Public Library and the Problem of Purpose," 1988, p.118.

Public Library recorded the highest per capita circulation in the country after the trial.

*... The library was placing branches, called minilibraries, in shopping malls. The minilibraries were like retail outlets for popular books except that minilibraries passed out books free of charge. " Filled with bright, illuminated fixtures, dumps heavy with the latest romances, shelves stacked with best sellers and paperbacks, this library has no card catalogue, reference section or study areas - nothing to hint that it is anything other than a typical bookstore in a desirable, high traffic location."*¹

The idea that "Public Libraries are in the storage and sharing business,"² still remains strong even in this network information society. Some local governments are allocating the library budgets based on circulation volume. For example, at the Lake Shore Library System, in Wisconsin, the 1998 County Funding report sets the funding goal of the libraries to be to "receive funding from counties in proportion to library use." That is, "pay each library for each circulation at a uniform rate, regardless of the varied local cost rates."³ The City of Cambridge, Massachusetts uses a "performance measure" to support the budget request of the main and branch libraries. For example, it was \$2.48 per transaction in the 1997 fiscal year. However, as 75.8% of the transactions are from circulation, and figures on library usage such as the number of visitors are not counted, the circulation volume is the actual determining factor for library budgeting in the City of Cambridge. The "Goal 1" of Fiscal Year 98 for the branch libraries is to "Increase circulation ... by 5%."⁴

Under these circumstances, it is imaginable that each library's internal behavior will naturally follow market forces regardless of its mission or purpose. That is to make the return (circulation) on investment (the cost of a book) higher. It seems that the answer to this problem is popular paperbacks. The Donnell Library Center of the New York Public Library purchased 24 copies of the

¹ Patrick Williams, "The American Public Library and the Problem of Purpose," 1988, p.118.

² Nancy Pearl, "Gave'em What They Wanted," *Library Journal*, Sep. 1, 1996, p.138.
Interview with Charlie Robinson, Director of the Baltimore County Public Library.

³ Lakeshores Library System, "Library System Report : 1998 County Funding April 1997," July 17, 1997, <http://ftp.wi.net/~thennen/County98AFunds.html>. (last accessed Sep. 10, 1998).

⁴ City of Cambridge Annual Budget Report, 1997-98.

popular paperback titled "The Ranch" in the fall of 1997. Fifty four copies were bought by the Mid Manhattan Library. A librarian I interviewed at the Donnell Library Center confessed the reason for the purchase was for "Statistics for Circulation." To create higher circulation statistics, libraries need to purchase a large number of inexpensive and popular books even though they will be discarded or sent to library sales after only a few months when the boom in interest is over.¹ Here, market forces seem mightier than the mission.

A derivative of the circulation function of libraries is the recent trial of the "Ride • Read • Return" system in which the subway customers take and read donated books to the library, and hopefully return (Fig. 18). This free book service of the Cambridge Public Library in Massachusetts in cooperation with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) started at a new subway station but ended soon as the books were not returned and the rack was almost always empty. Though it was designed only for books and periodicals, only free papers were found on the shelves in the last days. It provides a good example of the gap between ideals and reality that public library trials face.

¹ Interview with a librarian at Donnell Library in New York City on Oct. 19, 1997.

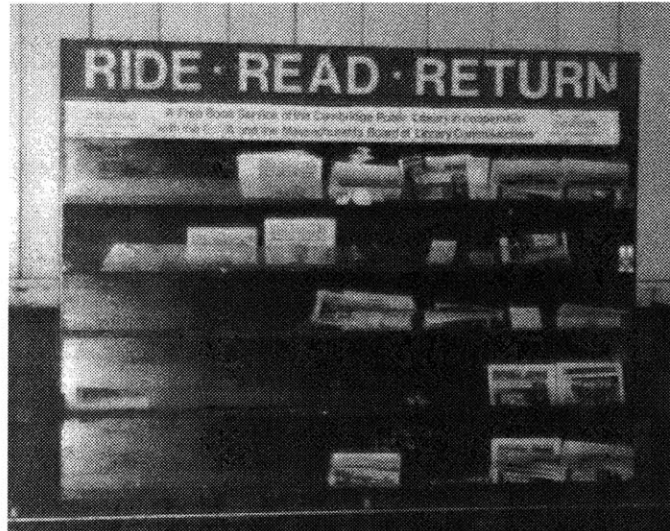


Fig. 18 Last Days of A Trial “Ride • Read • Return”
with Only Free Papers.¹

As public libraries are mainly supported by local taxes, the significance of these approaches seeking transient popularity is questionable. I think a public library should put its priority on reconfirming its position in the scheme of city management by stating that “The central purpose of libraries is to provide a service: access to information”² along with their role as community places.

¹ Photo taken at Porter Square Station in Cambridge, Massachusetts in Nov., 1997
This rack was removed sometime between Nov. 1997 and May, 1998.

² Michael Buckland, “Redesigning Library Services: A Manifesto,” 1992, p.1.

1.4.2 Entry and Fusion of Other Markets

Meanwhile, there is a growing entry into and fusion of public library market by other sectors, such as super bookstores, content businesses, Internet cafes, and museums.

Super Bookstores

Unlike conventional bookstores, super bookstores are "consciously seeking to recreate the library ambiance by encouraging customers to linger."¹ This is creating a new perception of them by people as places that compare with public libraries. Super bookstores entered the public library market although they are for profit and not supported by taxes. The recent emergence of super-bookstores threatens the market of public libraries by their number, by their size, and by their popularity.

In 1996, the top four super bookstore chains² opened about 190 stores, resulting in more than 800 superstores in operation across the United States. Most of these 800 super bookstores opened since 1990. Industry observers predict the current expansion will lead to a total of 1,500 super-bookstores in near future.³ As there are a total of about 15,000 central and branch public libraries in the United States,⁴ that will be about 10% of the number of public libraries. Besides the large number of stores, their sizes are large enough to compete with public libraries. The average superstore stocks between 150,000 and 200,000 titles or more, allowing for great selection. The typical Barnes & Noble houses more books than 85% of all public library systems in the United States.⁵

¹ Steve Coffman, "What If You Ran Your Library Like a Bookstore," *American Libraries*, March 1998, p.40.

² Top four chains: Barnes & Noble, Borders, Crown, Books-a-Million.
Stephen Horvath, "The Size of the Book Chain Superstore," *Logos*, Vol.7, No. 1, 1996, p.40.

³ John Mutter, "One Size Doesn't Fit All," *The Bowker Annual: Library and Book Trade Almanac*, 1997, p.22.

⁴ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, "Public Libraries in the United States: 1993," NCES Publication, Washington, 1995.

⁵ Steve Coffman, "What If You Ran Your Library Like a Bookstore," *American Libraries*, March 1998, p.40.

More importantly, the super bookstores provide some of the upgraded public library services and are popular. Barnes & Noble aims to make its stores "reminiscent of an old-world library, with wood fixtures, antique-style chairs and public tables, and ample public space and restrooms."¹ The stores provide comfortable spaces with more spacious desks and chairs than in public libraries as well as cafe areas for people to read books without purchasing. With a community relations coordinator in each store, they offer various events open to communities such as author programs, discussion groups, and story times. Super bookstores are open an average of 98 hours per week including busy Saturdays and Sundays when many public libraries open only for short hours or are totally closed, and libraries of comparable size are open only an average of 63 hours per week.² Besides, according to Steve Coffman, the staff at the super-bookstores is more friendly when answering basic questions about authors, titles, and series even though they are paid much less.³ Furthermore, the fact that the price of books is decreasing due to mass-production and technology improvements makes it so the "libraries' traditional middle and upper income users find it easier to purchase books at these stores than borrow them from the local public library."⁴

The Benton Foundation reports in "Buildings, Books, and Bytes" that many of the super bookstores are increasingly emerging as community meeting centers.⁵ John Mutter writing in the Bowker Annual in 1997, says that super bookstores are even creating a new audience for books: "They are the ones who used to meet in bars, and now they are in Barnes & Noble coffee shops."⁶ The market success of super bookstores seems to reside in the careful combination of two antipodal

¹ The Barnes & Noble Annual Report, April 1994.

Cited by Steve Coffman, "What If You Ran Your Library Like a Bookstore," American Libraries, Mar. 1998, p.40.

² Steve Coffman, "What If You Ran Your Library Like a Bookstore," American Libraries, Mar. 1998, p.44.

³ Steve Coffman, "What If You Ran Your Library Like a Bookstore," American Libraries, Mar. 1998, p.42.

⁴ "Buildings, Books, and Bytes: Libraries and Communities in the Digital Age," Benton Foundation, Nov, 1996, p.13.

⁵ "Buildings, Books, and Bytes: Libraries and Communities in the Digital Age," Benton Foundation, Nov, 1996, p.13.

⁶ John Mutter, "One Size Doesn't Fit All," The Bowker Annual: Library and Book Trade Almanac, 1997, p.20.

approaches; an efficient operation backed up by recent database technology,¹ and caring onsite user experiences that fulfill the human five senses, with face -to - face communication in store programs (hearing and sight), comfortable furniture (touch), background music (hearing), and they are completed by a flavor of coffee (smell and taste).

It seems that the emergence of the super bookstores have made people more critical of their public libraries which depend on tax revenue. Sally Tisdale, in her critique of current library trends, concluded that "Barnes & Noble is a lot closer to her ideal library than a real world library ever could be."² When I had interviews with residents in Union City, New Jersey about their public libraries, some of them mentioned that if they had super bookstores, they would need public libraries. According to the Benton Foundation report, some library leaders have begun to worry that the public may even be starting to confuse these bookstores with their public library. An interviewee in the report talked about an experience at a super bookstore where someone came in with her arms full of library books and asked where to return them.³

However, it should not be forgotten that super bookstores are operating for profit. They face local communities through their businesses. Unlike the goals of local public libraries, the selection of the information or books and space usage are less relevant to the long-term interests of local communities.

¹ • Superstores handle most of the selection and purchasing through a small group of expert buyers who operate out a centralized location and use data about what sells in each community to customize the collection for each store. For example, Barnes & Noble has only 35 staff members handling purchasing books for its entire 450 stores.

• Average staff operating cost per open hour at the super bookstore is \$120.41 while the same size library costs \$269.23.

Steve Coffman, "What If You Ran Your Library Like a Bookstore," American Libraries, Mar. 1998, p.41.

² Sally Tisdale, Harper's Magazine, April, 1997.

Cited by Steve Coffman, "What If You Ran Your Library Like a Bookstore," American Libraries, Mar. 1998, p.40.

³ "Buildings, Books, and Bytes: Libraries and Communities in the Digital Age," Benton Foundation, Nov, 1996, p.14.

A symbolic example of their business orientation was observed in the Borders Bookstore in Downtown Boston. Soon after its cafe became popular among people, with its spacious atmosphere and nice sofas, the store altered the cafe by packing it densely with uniform smaller tables and chairs like a fast food restaurant. This tripled its capacity, and they started to place bargain books in the cafe.¹ Also, superstores tend to use their computer database to weed out slow-selling titles despite their long-term potential, in order to make their balance sheets look better.² The following description unveils the hidden profit-driven nature of super bookstores. Surprisingly, at these stores, even a book for children's story hours is selected based on the publishers' payment, not because of the story's excellence for children in the community.

Monthly endcap positions cost publishers \$15,000 in Books-A-Million stores... To be featured in the new and notable books sections, publishers must pay \$750 for trade titles and \$500 for mass market books. Children's publishers who want to have a book selected for BAM's children's storyteller hours must pay \$450. Further, BAM "breakout books" - books that the store's employees must read and that are promoted in a variety of ways in-store - cost \$7,500. The supreme category of "handselling" at BAM is Clyde's ³ Picks... galley's of the favored books are given to all store managers; the titles are featured in BAM's edition of BookPage; the authors do signings; the titles appear in BAM's print advertising. The cost to be "picked" by Clyde: \$12,000. ⁴

Local governments should understand that public libraries should be different and in conflict with super bookstores. The different dynamic of long-term benefit for the community should be at work in a public library. Local governments should look at the altered potential of public libraries, though they may expect their public libraries to learn some of the super bookstores' operating tactics.

¹ Observed in the summer of 1997.

² John Mutter, "One Size Doesn't Fit All," The Bowker Annual: Library and Book Trade Almanac, 1997, p.24.

³ President of Books -A- Million.

⁴ John Mutter, "One Size Doesn't Fit All," The Bowker Annual: Library and Book Trade Almanac, 1997, p.25.

Digital Content Businesses

As the recent information technology society values information more highly, digital content businesses are developing. These encompass publishers, software developers, on-line information services, and other businesses that package and sell information products for a profit.

While they offer the public libraries convenient access to information, they also offer people alternatives to public libraries. People with networked computers can go directly to an on-line service to locate and get information without leaving home. Those businesses are for profit, but for a person who can afford a networked computer, this provides quicker and more tailored access to information. The Benton Foundation report "Buildings, Books, and Bytes" views individual access to digital information from computers as a big threat to the emergence of super bookstores for public libraries. It cites a comment by a library leader that "If people can get all the information they need all by themselves at home on their computer without any intervention from the library, we have a problem."¹

However, there are two factors to note. First this emergence of content businesses is creating a new gap between information "haves" and "have-nots." As the market for information service develops, the significance of being "info-rich" just by "connecting the Internet" is declining gradually. The recent trend is that even people connected to the Internet have to purchase valued contents. In succession to the public library's role to secure access to books since the time when books were much more expensive, a public library in each community would keep playing a role in securing a community's right to access information.

Second, as viewed from the market success of super bookstores, people still like on-site experiences, such as reading clubs, story telling, face-to-face reference

¹ "Buildings, Books, and Bytes: Libraries and Communities in the Digital Age," Benton Foundation, Nov., 1996, p.13.

service and a comfortable atmosphere. Public libraries in the IT society may care more about their roles as community places.

Cafes

In Britain, coffeehouses played an important role in the dissemination of news and information when newspapers and periodicals were multiplying in the eighteenth century.¹ A coffeehouse was ranked with the Public Library at Kelso in the Statistical Account of Scotland for its contribution. The report describes that "A public library,² ... together with a coffee house supplied with the London, Edinburgh and Kelso newspapers have contributed to render them not less intelligent than agreeable."³ Later, coffeehouses became one of the major prototypes of the early public library in Britain. In the 1830's, there were about 2,000 coffeehouses in London. Among them, about 500 coffeehouses had libraries and some of those had two thousands books in their collections.⁴ Customers enjoyed reading over coffee. The use of coffeehouses was encouraged because it played a role in keeping working class people away from drinking at pubs which, together with alcohol, offered an escape from their miserable housing conditions by providing comfortable space with easy chairs and fire places.⁵ In 1849, the Select Committee on Public Libraries in the House of Commons reported that the public was making their own efforts towards the establishment of public libraries, by providing evidence of libraries in coffee houses as well as mechanics' libraries.⁶ In France, cafes were at their zenith as gathering places for intellectuals and artists and continue to be an important social institution.⁷ Historically, cafes have much in common with the cultivating culture of public libraries.

¹ Thomas and Edith Kelly, "Books for the People: An Illustrated History of the British Public Library," Andre Deutsch Limited, London, Great Britain, 1977, p.47.

² Note: The Public Library at Kelso was actually a subscription library.

³ Thomas and Edith Kelly, "Books for the People: An Illustrated History of the British Public Library," Andre Deutsch Limited, London, Great Britain, 1977, p.50.

⁴ Koichi Mori, "Kindai Toshokan No Ayumi," Shiseido, 1992,p.92.

⁵ Thomas Kelly, "Books for the People," 1977, p.74.

⁶ Koichi Mori, "Kindai Toshokan No Ayumi," Shiseido, 1992,p.92.

⁷ "Cafe" Britannica Online, <http://www.eb.com:180/cgi-bin/g?DocF=micro/97/13.html> (last accessed on Jan.13, 1999).

The recent phenomena surrounding cafes in the United States in the 1990's are interesting in three ways. First, the cafe boom started in Seattle, where Microsoft is located and also a place where community people's exposure to information technology is highly advanced. Starbucks, which originated in Seattle and demonstrates unusual care for space quality as a large chain shop, seems to prevail all over the United States following the advance of the computer culture. Since laptop computers became more affordable and batteries began lasting longer, people with laptop computers are frequently observed at urban cafes. This renaissance of cafes seems to indicate people's basic desire to belong to physical communities. This reasoning is also supported by the phenomenon at the chain copy shop, Kinko's, which has its largest store in Tukwila, outside Seattle. Work-at-home people stop by the shop to "find something else the home office does not have: other people." Laurie Flynn explains, "Kinko's appears to be doing what many people envisioned cybercafes would do - offer an escape from the isolation that this abundance of modern technology seems to have created. For social mixing, there is nothing quite like trying to bring a PC to heel in a public place."¹

Second, the transition of Internet cafes is also interesting. Internet cafes arose in 1996 following the social phenomenon of the World Wide Web on the Internet. At the beginning, they leaned on the latest computers and large network capacity. Now that fever is over, they face the problem of surviving. Connecting to the Internet has become much more commonplace, and not a special event for many users. Paying \$7 to \$14 an hour to use a computer,² which is much more than the minimum wage, has become unreasonable. As computers became more affordable, more people bought their own computers and speedy home connections. In addition, public places such as public libraries, community centers and educational facilities have started to offer free access.

¹ Laurie J. Flynn, "At Kinko's, the Copy Shop Is Meeting the Digital Age," *The New York Times*, July 6, 1998.

² Michel Marriott, "The Ballad of the Cybercafe," *The New York Times*, Apr. 16, 1998.

There are now two directions for the Internet cafe to take. One is to beef up revenues by shifting their focus to even more expensive computer games, like an arcade, such as Cybersmith in the Boston area. The other direction, which seems more mainstream is to emphasize a high quality cafe with a low-tech and woody atmosphere (Fig. 19) where the computers are just an additional feature. An owner of such a cafe describes its concept, "This is the kind of place that we hope people would enjoy even if there were not any computers here...Once the dazzle wears off, once the hype wears off, then the reality is sitting there." That is, "It is a computer sitting in the corner and you have a cafe."¹ It seems that the Internet cafes are fusing into the larger movement of cafes in the United States.



Fig. 19 An Internet Cafe in Seattle

The third way the cafe movement is interesting is from the attachment of cafes to bookstores and public libraries. Historically, as coffeehouses in London had libraries, this seems to be a natural combination. The combination has existed at so-called bookstore cafes, where books were decorative, almost ancillary since 1970,² but super bookstores increased the popularity of this combination. Interestingly, cafes were attached as a part of the super bookstores' scheme to

¹ Michel Marriott, "The Ballad of the Cybercafe," *The New York Times*, Apr. 16, 1998.

² Stephen Horvath, "The Size of the Book Chain Superstore," *Logos*, Vol.7, No. 1, 1996, p.43.

"recreate the library ambiance by encouraging customers to linger."¹ This idea was successful and the cafes have become amenities representative of super bookstores. Then, the super bookstores' success has attracted the interest of the public libraries. The American Library Association is not keeping numbers, but notices the phenomenon of cafes in libraries is growing.² The Newington Public Library in Connecticut is one of them. Maxine A. Bleiweis, Library Director, saw people were using super bookstores as if they were libraries. Hoping to draw people to her library, she "decided to take a page from the bookstores and opened a cafe in the library." She added that having a cafe is "a way of saying we are still a comfortable place... It says something else about our library: that this is an up-to-date place."³ Gail W. Sweet, Assistant Director of the Burlington County Library in New Jersey, observed that a cafe changed the atmosphere of the library. People came to stay longer at the library and "it makes it more of a community center."⁴

Bleiweis fears that "some library users are put off by technological changes, while others think the library is old-fashioned."⁵ Then, to meet both sides of the problems brought by the technology, she opened the library cafe. The attachment of cafes to public libraries also seems to be a by-product of information technology.

These three phenomena surrounding cafes in the United States in the 1990's are not only lessons for public libraries, but also an interesting indication of the future of the IT society. It seems that the recent phenomena embody people's desire for physical community, even in the IT society. A considerable portion of

¹ Steve Coffman, "What If You Ran Your Library Like a Bookstore," *American Libraries*, Mar. 1998, p.40.

² Carole Burns, "Libraries Invite Users to Check Out Their New Cafes," *The New York Times*, Sep. 2, 1997.

³ Carole Burns, "Libraries Invite Users to Check Out Their New Cafes," *The New York Times*, Sep. 2, 1997.

⁴ Carole Burns, "Libraries Invite Users to Check Out Their New Cafes," *The New York Times*, Sep. 2, 1997.

⁵ Carole Burns, "Libraries Invite Users to Check Out Their New Cafes," *The New York Times*, Sep. 2, 1997.

the market for cafes is further potential for the growth of the public library's function as a community place.

Museums

With the exception of larger cities, most communities have only one small or no museum for their residents to visit. Still, the markets for museums to be viewed in public libraries in the IT society are significant.

In the ancient world, the Library of Alexandria was part of the Alexandrian Museum. For a modern example, the British Library since 1973 originates in the British Museum Library. On the other hand, Museum of Fine Arts in Boston was founded in 1870 with the art holdings of the Boston Athenaeum library as the nucleus of its collection. Historically, libraries and museums have much in common as institutions storing collections that manifest the extent of human knowledge.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, the museum differs markedly from the library as the items housed in a museum are mainly unique and constitute the raw material of study and research.¹ Still, this definition results in two overlaps between the markets for futuristic multimedia information and historic archives. This can be viewed as both an opportunity and a threat.

Due to the innovation of multimedia and network technology, digital information now handles text, graphics, still images, animation, motion video and sound. One of the overlaps was created both on-site and on-line by multimedia information from which it is more difficult to define uniqueness if it is raw material. First, on-site general interest, science, art, and history museums are increasingly dealing with digital multimedia items. Even though these multimedia items are sometimes used to support their unique and raw material exhibitions, it obviously creates a considerable overlap with the digital

¹ "Museums," Britannica Online, <http://www.eb.com:180/cgi-bin/g?DocF=macro/5009/35.html> (last accessed on Jan 11, 1999).

information libraries deal with. This brings up the question of whether a virtual museum is a part of the digital information with which a library deals.

Interestingly, one of the first virtual museums was an on-line guide to artifacts from the Vatican Library that was on display at the Library of Congress.¹ Corbis, a virtual museum with photo images, was sometimes called a digital library. The Kick-Start Initiative report by Benton Foundation mentions the new opportunities of multimedia for people in communities without physical access to museums "to enjoy and learn from the vast collection of art, art technology and other artifacts of Society housed in the Nation's museums."² Setting aside the question of whether the displays on a computer screen are a substitute for real exhibitions, this new opportunity for the local community may be provided by public libraries.

Whether it is on-site or on-line, this overlapping can be regarded as an opportunity for the library, which has mainly dealt with text information, to enter a new information market by extending the types of information it provides.

The other overlap in the perceptions of libraries and museums is a threat to the library. The items in a library become old, and are museum archives rather than information. In "Buildings, Books, and Bytes," when asked to ponder the role of libraries in the future, interviewees placed libraries "firmly in the past" as "a kind of museum where people can go and looked up stuff from way back when" and with "cobwebs growing everywhere."^{3,4} According to Susan Bales, Benton Foundation Researcher, this could be the "most damaging perception" the public has about libraries. She is concerned that "the danger is in the public thinking the library is where all the old books are kept, instead of understanding the

¹ "virtual museum," Britannica Online, <http://www.eb.com:180/cgi-bin/g?DocF=micro/732/33.html> (last accessed on Jan 11, 1999).

² "Kick Start Initiative: Connecting America's Communities to the Information Superhighway", <http://www.benton.org/Library/KickStart/kick.showcasing2.html#museums> (last accessed on Jan. 10, 1999).

³ "Buildings, Books, and Bytes: Libraries and Communities in the Digital Age," Benton Foundation, Nov, 1996, p.30.

⁴ This image of museums is also a nuisance for museums, which are still popular.

centrality of the public library as the source of information in print, electronic, or what ever format."¹ This overlapping with museums is created by the library's operation, but not by outside forces. It seems the key to removing this fear is for the library to provide up-to-date materials.

In addition to the two major discussions above for the overlapping, some current public library practices should be noted in connection with museums. One example is community galleries in public libraries, mainly with local artists' works, that enhance the public library's space as a community place. Some libraries, such as the San Francisco Public Library, have separate rooms and some smaller libraries just use wall spaces as exhibit space. Another interesting case is demonstrated by some public libraries which have museum tickets paid for by "Friend of the Library," organizations. One of those, the Franklin Public Library² in the Town of Franklin, Massachusetts, with a population of 22,095.³ has a sufficient number of new computers and an on-site staff to help people use them. While this alone allows community residents to access virtual museums and digital archives, the library made an arrangement with various museums in Boston so that its library users can receive admission discounts, which encourages people to attend on-site exhibitions.⁴

Overall View

There seems to be two main forces working in the aforementioned; one emphasizes information accessibility and the other emphasizes communicating place. (Fig. 20) As more people get their own computer and speedy home connections, and digital content is developed, Bernard Vavrek thinks that "there

¹ Evan St. Lifer and Michael Rogers, "Benton Study: Libraries Need to Work on Message to Public," *Library Journal*, Sep. 1, 1996.

² The Franklin Public Library claims that it was the first public library in the United States. When Benjamin Franklin was asked to donate a bell to the town in 1785, he responded with the donation of books for the town's residents, acknowledging that "'Sense" being preferable to 'Sound'". The 116 volumes of the book collection formed were lent for free of charge for the residents, which formed the prototype of the Franklin Public Library.

John A. Peters and Nina C. Santoro, "A History of America's First Public Library at Franklin, Massachusetts 1790 -1990: 'Sense Being Preferable to Sound,' The Franklin Public Library, 1990.

³ Census of Population, 1990.

⁴ Site visit on July 7, 1998.

may be a less obvious set of on-site user experiences left unfulfilled by our fervent rush to the internet--a gap filled by the laid back ambiance of super bookstores and Internet cafes."¹ These entries and overlaps with other markets question the reason for the existence of public libraries. Public libraries should not simply imitate the elements of the market success of super bookstores and cafes, or digital content businesses, but should consider differentiation to survive.

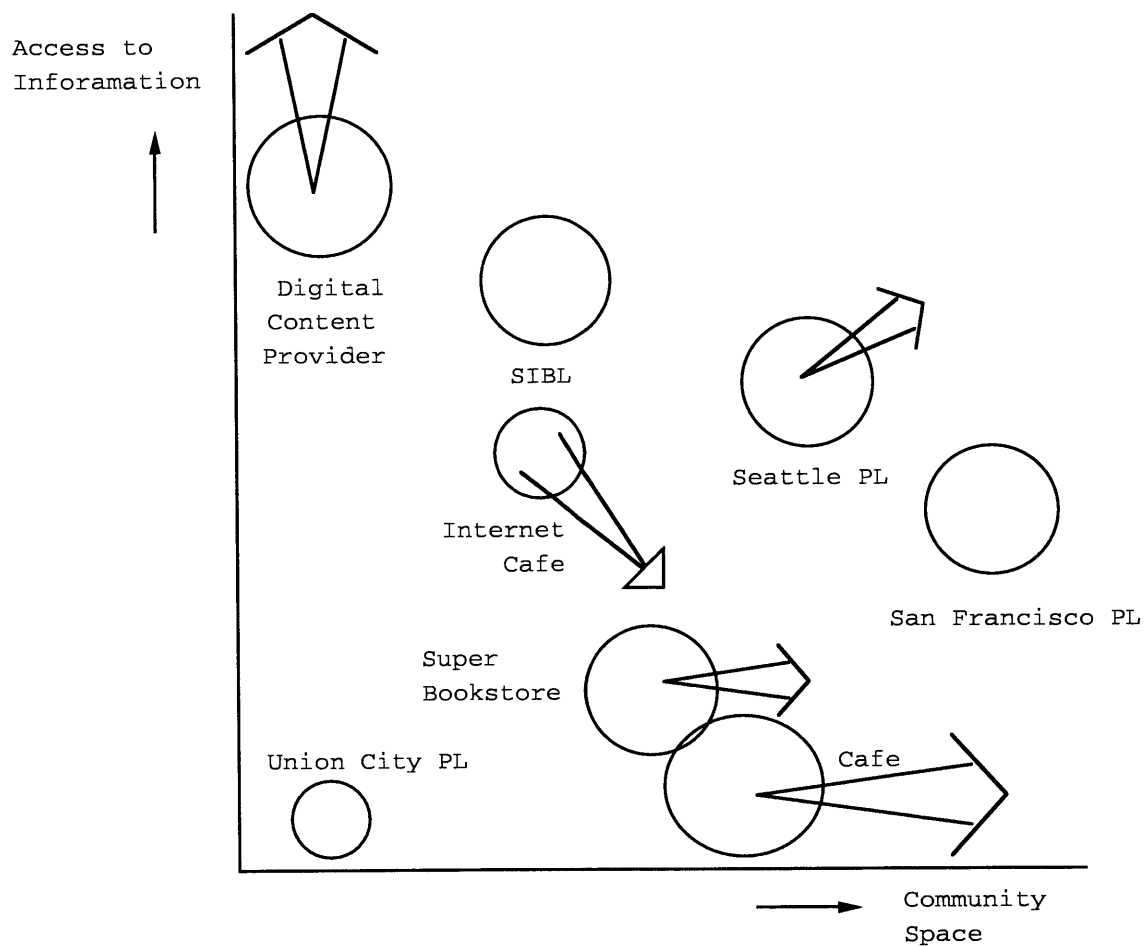


Fig. 20 Self Image of Market Map

* Seattle Public Library, Science, Industry, and Business Library, San Francisco Public Library, and Union City Public Library are discussed later.

¹ Bernard Vavrek, "What Are Public Library Users Really Buying?: Some Transactions Have Nothing to Do with Books or Information," *American Libraries*, March 1998, p.42.

1.4.3 Public Library = Electronic Library –Gutenberg Affection?

In "The Myth of the Electronic Library," Birdsall emphasizes public libraries' function of the "Library as Place." There, he focuses on "as a place" from the aspects of community identity and as a space for individuals. (He did not include community activities.) He rejects the electronic library as threatening "the library as a place." However, I think the real problem is that lowering the value of "the library as a place" today resides in placing too much importance on the physical existence of books, and in particular on the unbalanced emphasis on circulation volume as a measure of the performance of a library. This is represented by the words of Charlie Robinson, former Director of the Baltimore County Public Library, "Public libraries are in the storage and sharing business."¹ This consensus has for many years gradually built up the conception that the public library is replaceable by the electronic library. Robinson says that the computer will have a huge impact on reading material services when people can get a screen that looks like a book, and they can load books onto a disk which can be updated through phone lines. "If it is cheap enough, it will sound the death knell for libraries."² Then, if public libraries are just in the storage and sharing business, as Robinson describes, it would seem that the only point of resistance to its replacement would be "Gutenberg Affection," or doting on books, etc. (Fig. 21)

¹ Nancy Pearl, "Gave'em What They Want," *Library Journal*, Sep. 1, 1996, p.138.

² Nancy Pearl, "Gave'em What They Want," *Library Journal*, Sep. 1, 1996, p.138.

- Value Equation-

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{Digital Resource} = \text{Printed Resource (Books etc.)} - \text{Gutenberg Affection} \text{ --- ①} \\ \text{if } & \text{Electronic Library} = \sum (\text{Digital Resource}) \text{ --- ②} \\ \text{and } & \text{Public Library} = \sum (\text{Printed Resource}) \text{ --- ③} \\ & \text{Electronic Library} = \text{Public Library} - \text{Gutenberg Affection} \text{ --- ④} \\ \\ \text{if } & \text{Gutenberg Affection} \gg 0 \text{ --- ⑤} \\ & \text{Electronic Library} \ll \text{Public Library} \text{ --- ⑥} \\ \text{if } & \text{Gutenberg Affection} = 0 \text{ --- ⑦} \\ & \text{Electronic Library} = \text{Public Library} \text{ --- ⑧} \end{aligned}$$

Fig. 21 Value Equation for Public Library and Electronic Library

Most people whom I interviewed, including the librarian who opposes the electronic library, mention that what is missed in Digital Resource is something like their love for the shape of books as the major reason why the value of Digital Resource cannot be equal to books (Printed Resource).

-> $\text{Digital Resource} = \text{Printed Resource (Books etc.)} - \text{Gutenberg Affection} \text{ --- ①}$

So far, Electronic Library basically consists of the set of Digital Resources.

-> if $\text{Electronic Library} = \sum (\text{Digital Resource}) \text{ --- ②}$

Therefore, since Public Library is regarded as sets of Printed Resource,

-> and $\text{Public Library} = \sum (\text{Printed Resource}) \text{ --- ③}$

This leads to the conclusion that Electronic Library equals Public Library minus Gutenberg Affection.

-> $\text{Electronic Library} = \text{Public Library} - \text{Gutenberg Affection} \text{ --- ④}$

If Gutenberg Affection has a large value, Public Library cannot be replaced by Electronic Library.

- > if Gutenberg Affection >> 0 --- ⑤
- > Electronic Library << Public Library --- ⑥

However, if Gutenberg Affection is trivial or neglected, Public Library can be replaced by Electronic Library.

- > if Gutenberg Affection = 0 --- ⑦
- > Electronic Library = Public Library --- ⑧

Here, the arguments which judge the value of Public Library versus Electronic Library often end up being taken into consideration in evaluating the importance of Gutenberg Affection. These explain the typical reactions I came across from library professionals and users.

However, the real problems lie in ③ . I think that what Birdsall should have opposed is not the recent Electronic Library, but the accumulated image of library as books (③). Overemphasizing “books” naturally lets public libraries shift into Electronic Library if technology allows it, as Robinson described. If people’s image of the public library is that of a unit in city management, and not just of a collection of books,¹ the argument that the electronic library is replacing the public library as a place should not be made. Therefore, what should be questioned is not the emergence of Electronic Library, but the long-time accumulated “myth of book circulation.” I propose that the electronic library is not an opponent of public libraries. They can co-exist and cooperate while shaping their own strengths. I think that in the future, public libraries should involve electronic libraries to enhance public library access to information, while keeping their eyes open and strengthening the resources that cannot be replaced.

¹ By providing, for example, Access to Information + Space + Human Help, instead of ③.

1.5 Nascent Ideas

The following are elements that show positive potential as aid in the planning of future public libraries. The three large public libraries examined here take distinctive approaches to serving their communities. These elements, along with the lessons learned from an actual experimental project at the Uphams Corner Library in Boston, might be extracted for smaller libraries' use.

1.5.1 Three Cases of Public Libraries in Large Cities

The character of public libraries varies from city to city, and depends on specific local situations. It is cultivated by the local communities over generations. In 1939, the public libraries in large cities were described by William Munthe, a European librarian who visited the United States on a research trip:

The public library of Boston, 'the first free city library in the world supported by taxation,' sticks to its old cultural traditions, even to the extent of still training its own personnel. The Chicago Public Library, on the other hand, has always remained a popular library (in the better sense of the word) ... Baltimore's new library, built on the department store plan, is a natural expression of an enterprising publicity policy. Seattle's old-fashioned Carnegie building is swollen to bursting by the library's work of fulfilling its civic responsibility toward immigrants from two continents. Los Angeles with its pleasing and artistic reading rooms has hit upon the happy idea of focusing them about a rotunda where the activity rivals that of a southern European market place. ... the New York Public Library, whose main building on Fifth Avenue is the center of the world's largest library, and in itself a departmentalized British Museum..¹

It is interesting that his personal impressions of each library, written sixty years ago, still hold true today. The recent influence of information technology does not come into a vacuum. It is likely to be blended into or built on top of the previously existing library culture. The following are three cases from large public libraries that illustrate distinctive approaches in serving their communities in the IT society. Elements of these cases may be borrowed when planning and organizing public libraries for smaller cities.

¹ William Munthe, "American Librarianship from a European Angle," 1939.
Cited by Paul Dickson, "The Library in America - A Celebration in Words and Pictures," 1986, p.124.

Seattle Public Library - Connecting the Community to Digital/Networked Information

William Munthe wrote in 1939, "Seattle's old fashioned Carnegie building is swollen to bursting by the library's work fulfilling its civic responsibility toward immigrants...."¹ Inheriting a priority of reaching underserved community residents, the Seattle Public Library today shows its people-oriented approach by serving as a link to digital/networked information in its worn, 38-year-old central library building (which replaced the Carnegie Building in 1960²), where "the ceilings leak onto book collections and escalators sometimes stand motionless."³

The Seattle Public Library started providing public access to the Internet in July 1993. The public response was overwhelming. Within a few months, the library recorded 60,000 user connections per month.⁴ It was specifically planned to target user groups that might otherwise not have access to or make use of the available content. These target groups include senior citizens, downtown homeless people, job seekers, arts and social service organization, students and teachers.⁵ The library has a relatively large number of computers and is open for long library hours which allows better accessibility.⁶ It also houses a few computers for on-site Geographic Information Systems (GIS) views of the city's demographic information. While the library offers access to the computers, it also provides several types of computer classes at various times so that people with different schedules can attend. The classes have been oriented to provide practical information since the beginning, including classes such as "Consumer Information in Cyberspace", "Employment Resources on the Internet," "Using

¹ Paul Dickson, "The Library in America - A Celebration in Words and Pictures," 1986, p.124.

² The current library building replaced the 1906 Carnegie library building in 1960.

³ Susan Byrnes, "Replacing Downtown Library is big part of Proposition 1," The Seattle Times, Oct. 27, 1998.

⁴ "Profiles in Connectivity: The Center for Technology at the Seattle Public Library," Benton Foundation, <http://www.benton.org/Library/Libraries/seattle.html> (last accessed in Oct. 1997).

⁵ "Kick Start Initiative: Connecting America's Communities to the Information Superhighway," Benton Foundation, <http://www.benton.org/Library/KickStart/kick.showcasing2.html#libraries> (last accessed on Jan. 10, 1999).

⁶ Several visits between Aug. 23 and Aug. 30, 1996.

your Seattle Community Network E-mail Account," "Wired for the Democracy,"¹ "Internet for Artists,"¹ "Environmental Resources on the Internet," "International Business and the Internet," "Patent and Trademark on the Internet," and "Business Information." These tailored classes build upon what is covered in basic classes such as "Basic Computer Classes for Beginners" in English and in Spanish, the two levels of "Internet Classes for Beginners," and "Searching the World Wide Web" for seniors. These classes bring up people's view on computers and the Internet from an object of curiosity to a practical tool for everyday life. The classes were fully booked and attended during my visits.

This Seattle Public Library's achievement of connecting the community to the digital/network information world is not just the result of being blessed with sufficient budgets to afford computers, networking, and staff. There are two particular key points which are profoundly supportive to the Seattle Public Library's success in connecting the community to networked information. They are the open atmosphere and the flexible spirit of collaboration.

First, unlike many other public libraries, the Seattle Public Library does not have an authoritarian or intimidating atmosphere. It seemed that the library sections were well connected to each other and the information flow was good.

Throughout my visits, I found that the library staff members were informative, and that whenever it was necessary in order to answer my questions, I usually was referred to the right source of information, to other librarians or to other sections. While maintaining a professional attitude toward their work, the library staff members were friendly and progressive. The program chief of computer classes dressed in a black, short skirt suit on the day of my interview. She said she did not want to look like a traditional librarian. Interestingly, this attitude which is not to do with the technology seems to encourage people's visits to the library and the use of computers.

¹ Learning to use the Internet for campaign and political research.



Fig. 22 Homeless "Internetters" at Seattle Public Library²

This welcome and open atmosphere, instead of authoritarianism and intimidation, was made evident by the homeless people's intensive use of computers when Internet access was introduced. Around thirty homeless people in their 20s and 30s, calling themselves "Internetters," often occupied the computers for Internet use during the entire library open hours. (Fig. 22) The library welcomed the "Internetters" as proof that they had achieved what they set out to do -- provide Internet access to people who could not get it any other way.³ However, some library users complained that the homeless were monopolizing the computers, which are also used for library catalogs. To solve this, the library officials called a meeting and the homeless "Internetters" actually attended. This meeting led to a peaceful agreement to limit their computer time so that others could use the computers. At the same time, the cooperation between the library and the homeless Internetters started. The homeless Internetters were eager to help people with computers and they became

¹ A class for the serious artist which covers techniques, history, and where to show and sell one's work.

² Photo by Dave Weaver,

James L. Eng, "Seattle's Homeless Find Shelter on the Internet," *The Tacoma News Tribune*, Aug. 1, 1994.

³ Kurt Kleiner, "Seattle's Homeless Surf the Internet," *New Scientist*, Aug. 13, 1994.

considered the in-house Internet experts. The librarians went to them when they needed advice, because they were indeed experts, as they spent all day exploring the Internet, even though none of them had formal computer training. Some of them were later hired in the computer and new media industries. Craig Buthod, the deputy librarian at the time, expressed how helpful their cooperation was to the librarians. "Not many of our librarians have spent many nights on the street. Not many of the core group of users have been to graduate school. But after the initial culture shock we have gotten used to one another."¹ Today, many more US public libraries offer network access than in 1994, but this extensive use of the Internet access, as with Seattle's homeless people, does not happen anywhere else. The homeless people's use of the library's computers seems to be a good barometer of the library's openness to the community; enabled by the fact that they didn't have to face a wall-of-authority-like atmosphere.

Secondly, unlike many of the public libraries that are waiting for brand new computers and new, well-trained computer staff, the Seattle Public Library has collaborated with other institutions, volunteers² and corporations to create new opportunities. One example of the cooperation with other institutions is demonstrated by the 10 computers donated to the library by a large corporation, and located in the computer lab of West Seattle High School. Aside from reserved time for high school students' use, the computer room is open to the public from 2:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. every Thursday. In addition, the high school's computer club provides volunteer technical service and support. Willem Scholten, director of the Center for Technology in the Public Library, explained that Seattle's new computer lab "shows another form of cooperation between public schools and the Seattle's Public Library. Through the lab, they have piloted a new way of sharing important resources among two institutions for the benefit of not only the high school, but also the community at large."³ Another

¹ Kurt Kleiner, "Seattle's Homeless Surf the Internet," *New Scientist*, Aug. 13, 1994.

² At many public libraries, the library staffs' first concern is that volunteers threaten their job security. Cheryl Ann McCarthy, "Volunteers and Technology: The New Reality," *American Libraries*, June/July, 1996.

³ "Past Year at the Lab," TRIPL, <http://www.tripl.org/westseattlelearns/histoty.html> (last accessed in Oct. 1997).

example is the Seattle Public Library's collaboration with the Seattle Community Network (SCN) for their mutual benefits. SCN uses the library's Internet connection and the library refers its users to SCN for e-mail accounts. "Both organization have plenty of respect for each other and visibly promote one another's services."¹

In November 1998, the \$196.4 million bond proposal for the Seattle Public Library was approved to build a new central library in addition to creating three new neighborhood libraries. Support diminished outside the urban core, but it was still high. The measure needed 60 % of the vote to pass and got more than 70%². (Fig. 23) The approved proposal also includes replacement or renovation of other facilities. The central library building and facilities will be brand new in several years, but it should be noted that the above two keys are working for connecting the community to digital/networked information.

¹ Karen G. Schneider, "Community Networks: New Frontier, Old Values," *American Libraries*, Jan. 1996

² Tom Brown, "Maps Illustrate How Votes Were Cast," *The Seattle Times*, Nov. 10, 1998

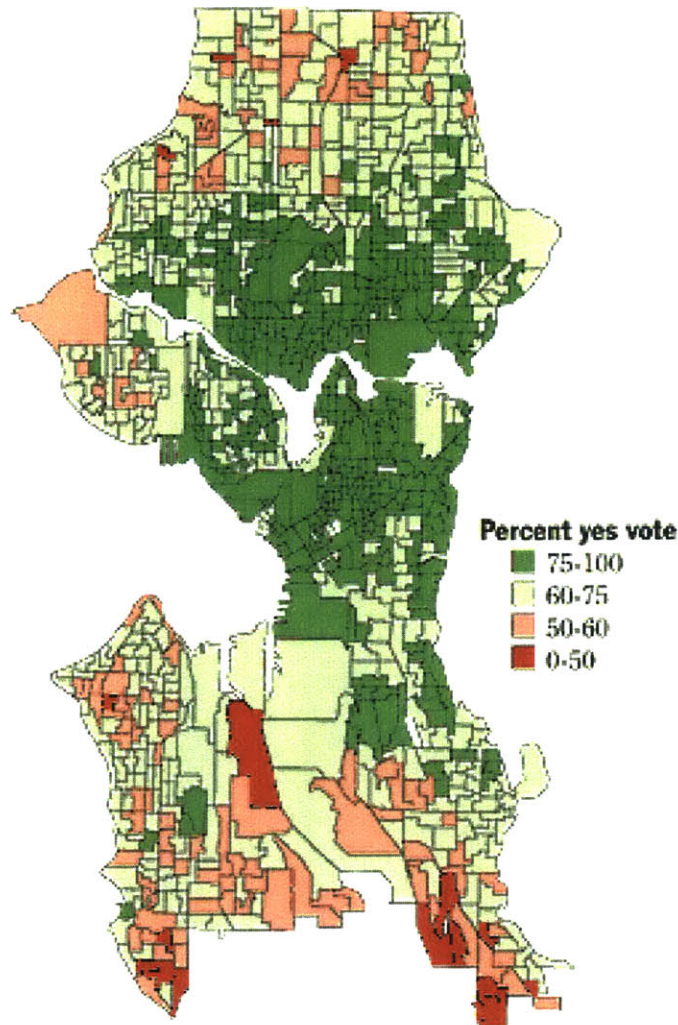


Fig. 23 Support for the Library Bond in Seattle¹

Science, Industry and Business Library - Supporting the Local Economy

In 1996, Science, Industry and Business Library (SIBL) (Fig.24) was opened as a specialized library of the New York Public Library, which Munthe described as "departmentalized" and as the "world's largest library system."² The concept behind the SIBL was to create an information center to serve as "the most powerful new engine in the city's economy" and "a vital element in New York's

¹ Map: Tom Brown, "Maps Illustrate How Votes Were Cast," The Seattle Times, Nov. 10, 1998.

² William Munthe, "American Librarianship from a European Angle," 1939.

Cited by Paul Dickson, "The Library in America - A Celebration in Words and Pictures," 1986, p.124.

leadership in a global economy."¹ The importance of the function of the SIBL in New York City is demonstrated by the large budget of \$100 million just for construction alone, in contrast to the San Francisco's new "central" library which was budgeted at \$109.5 million, which also included branch improvements.²



Fig. 24 Science, Industry, and Business Library of the New York Public Library³

The SIBL places particular emphasis on providing help to people who want to start or expand small businesses. New York's economy is increasingly dominated by small businesses created by entrepreneurs who do not have access to vast corporate libraries. SIBL Senior Vice President Bill Walker says "They have got plenty of ideas, but they are information poor. We can fill in the gaps for them."⁴

¹ "New \$100 Million Science, Industry and Business Library Opens Its Doors to The Public With Electronic Access to Catalogs, Databases, and The Internet," Press Release, The New York Public Library, May 16, 1996,

<http://www.nypl.org/admin/pro/press/sibloopening.html> (last accessed on Jan. 23, 1998).

² Evan St. Lifer, "One Big City, Three Great Libraries," *Library Journal*, June 1, 1996, p.51.

³ Photo: "Science, Industry and Business Library McGraw Information Services Center," The New York Public Library,

<http://nypl.org/research/sibl/infoserv.html> (last accessed on January 14, 1999).

⁴ Gersh Kuntsman, "Books? Who Needs Books?" *New York Post*, Apr. 24, 1996.

As mentioned a previous section on the digital content business market, the information market is shifting to expensive on-line databases and other information products. The SIBL supports small businesses by offering printed and digital business information, including more than 100 on-line databases in basic financing resources, start-up guides, market research information, U.S. company information, and government information. It also provides various free public classes on topics such as searching electronic databases, starting one's own business, and programs in cooperation with support agencies such as the U.S. Small Business Administration, Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE),¹ and Small Business Development Centers.

This function of supporting the local economy is an important aspect for public libraries, which are supported by the city's tax base. This approach inherits the public library's strategic position in city government from its early days as a tool to compete with other cities for "business supremacy," as discussed earlier. In today's information society, where quick access to information is more critical than ever before for conducting business, supporting the local economy seems to be a natural function for the public library, a local institution dealing with information in order to better serve the local communities.

During my visits,² the SIBL seemed well used by both people in business suits and in casual wear. However, it has an atmosphere of exclusiveness created by the technology. Journalist David Berreby has referred to the SIBL as "Cold Storage." His observation was that the people in the library "divided quickly into a minority who strode purposefully around, and a majority wandering uncertainly about."³ For instance, SIBL offers free computer resource classes. However the classes are geared to computer literate people. In his article, Berreby quoted an instructor as saying, "This class will tell you about resources. It is not a class on how to use a computer. That, you do on your own."⁴

¹ A volunteer, non-profit association providing business counseling in association with the Small Business Association. The counselors offer free, personalized business counseling.

² Between Jan. 2 and 8, 1997.

³ David Berreby, "Cold Storage," The New Republic, June 3, 1996.

⁴ David Berreby, "Cold Storage," The New Republic, June 3, 1996.

Information on using the library is also offered by a kiosk computer with touch screen guides. People who approached the information desk were often referred back to a machine.¹ Also, this specialized library does not seem to have been intended to serve as a public space. The library seems to be physically designed only to allow people to face computers during their visits.

These two points should be considered for other public libraries in learning the element of library function of supporting the local economy from SIBL. They should take it into careful consideration whether to seek a more general community-oriented approach, or focus its users and function as a special library.

San Francisco Public Library - Serving as a Community Place

Munthe described the Los Angeles Public Library as a positive community place "with its pleasing and artistic reading rooms." He said that it "has hit upon the happy idea of focusing them about a rotunda where the activity rivals that of a southern European market place."² Today this idea of the public library as a community place is demonstrated by the new central building of the San Francisco Public Library (SFPL) (Fig. 25), which was opened next to Market Street in the Civic Center in April, 1996.

The library plan was developed under the former library director, Kenneth Dowlin, who is famous, ironically, for his book, "The Electronic Library." He thinks that the public now views libraries as communication centers, in contrast to the past, when libraries were viewed as repositories.³ The SFPL central library was planned to serve as a communication center. The concept was serving as a communications center, a "global village library," but one providing "ambience

¹ David Berreby, "Cold Storage," *The New Republic*, June 3, 1996.

² William Munthe, "American Librarianship from a European Angle," 1939. Cited by Paul Dickson, "The Library in America - A Celebration in Words and Pictures," 1986, p.124.

³ John Berry, "A 'World-Class' Library: LJ Interviews SF City Librarian Ken Dowlin," *Library Journal*, Apr. 15, 1996, p.34.

and sense of the community with instantaneous connections."¹ The SFPL's emphasis is on serving as a community place located at the "cultural nexus of the city."² The SFPL central library enhances the users' experience in the library as a community place through various elements. Its has reading spaces with natural light, library cafe, galleries, and study rooms, in addition to its atrium, rotunda, and grand staircase.

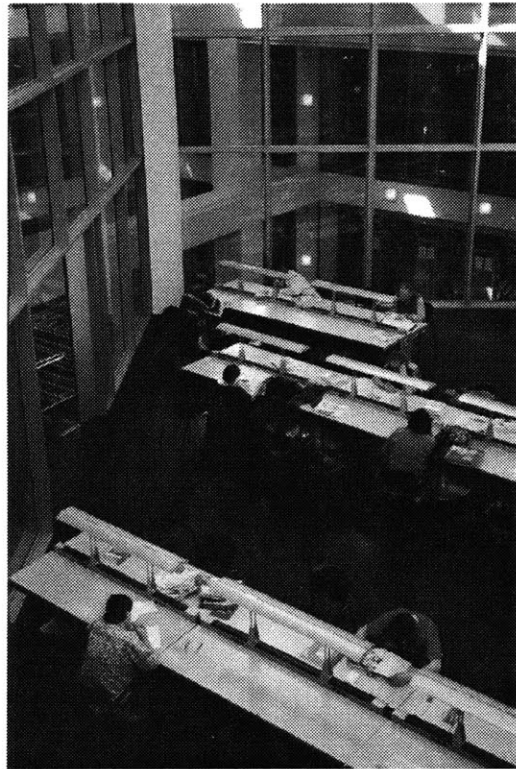


Fig. 25 The Central Library of the San Francisco Public Library³

In spite of the controversy surrounding the former director's mismanagement over a shortage of book storage space and the personnel budget that led to his resignation, this library is one of the most lively and crowded libraries I've ever

¹ William F. Birdsall, "The Myth of the Electronic Library: Librarianship and Social Change in America," 1994, p.149.

² William F. Birdsall, "The Myth of the Electronic Library: Librarianship and Social Change in America," Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 1994, p.149.

³ Photo taken on Feb. 28, 1998.

visited with various groups of people from the local community.¹ This popularity of the new central library as a community place is also supported by the statistics on library use. Average weekly visits to the old central library in fiscal year 1995-96 numbered 18,637. With the opening of the new library, average weekly visits more than tripled, rising to 60,555.² The circulation also nearly doubled, markedly less than the increase in visits.³ When I interviewed people to ask their reasons for visiting the library, many replied that they came for the comfortable space. One office worker described dropping by the library to relax after work before going home. The library's intent to become a community place seems very successful.

However, there are also drawbacks to the library's success as a community place. The library's emphasis on being a public space is not free from the conventional territorial disputes over physical space that take place in society. The library does not have a generous grand reading room. Instead, it is segmented into many spaces of special interests, which reflect the result of the fund raising from groups such as the African American Center, Filipino American Center, Chinese Center, and James C. Hormel Gay & Lesbian Center. Those ethnic minority groups that could not raise sufficient funds got only a bookshelf instead of a room.⁴ These centers, such as the Gay & Lesbian Center with a golden dome, create a sense of space segregation from the rest of the library's modern design.

The space with the best view on the top floor is tenanted by the Library Foundation, which raises funds for the library. The library's small computer room with word processing software is run by Kinko's, a chain copy shop, which charges six dollars an hour for use of the computers. It seems that with this arrangement, Kinko's is trying to prevent the library from providing free access to computers with word processing in the future. It appeared that people liked the space of the library cafe very much, but it is actually run by a for-profit coffee

¹ Visits between Feb.27 and Mar. 5, 1998.

² "Mayor's Proposed Budget: Fiscal Year 1997-98," City and County of San Francisco

³ 33,669 visitors / 18,656 visitors = 3.25.

"Mayor's Proposed Budget: Fiscal Year 1997-98," City and County of San Francisco.

⁴ Interviews with librarians on Mar.2 and 5, 1998.

shop. Some people complained that the shop enjoys a monopoly business and charges more than market prices.

I also had an impression that people got confused as to which part of the library to go to, because there is no generous main reading room and the library is segmented into many small spaces. Also, the walking distance from one place to another within the library appears to be much longer than other libraries as the spaces are segmented and almost isolated from each other. These are not an ideal situation for a public library, a place which is historically generous with community space.

Another issue to consider is that unlike its general image as a high tech library, access to networked information from outside sources receives less emphasis at the SFPL. For instance, though it was opened almost at the same time as the SIBL, it does not provide online databases for local businesses. Even Internet use is not especially encouraged, given the limitation of available computers and a time limit of thirty minutes.

These two points – avoiding territorial issues and improving access to networked information – should be remembered in learning the element of library function of serving as a community space from the SFPL.

1.5.2 The Uphams Corner Library of the Boston Public Library

This project, which grew out of an Internet class, was planned and conducted by Christina Galli and myself at the beginning of 1996, as a first step towards seeking the future possibilities for the public libraries.¹ It was around the time that the gap between information haves and have-nots became widely known as the World Wide Web (WWW) empowered the Internet and the amount of information available through the Internet was drastically increasing. While there were discussions on the public libraries' own survival because of the threat of the virtual library, the possibilities of public libraries in filling this information gap were also discussed and started widely to be put into action.

Some public libraries such as the Seattle Public Library were already providing access to the Internet along with computer classes. However, City of Boston had only one branch library, which provided an Internet class in West Roxbury. The branch library had only three computers, and the Internet class was offered only once a month with a limit of twelve people. The main library of the Boston Public Library did not have any computers with Internet connections available to the public. In this situation, our experimental class, the second class in City of Boston, was planned for community residents to provide a first opportunity to use the Internet at a branch library in Boston.

Recently, merely connecting to the Internet without commercial databases has become more popular and less expensive than it was at the beginning of 1996. The significance of presenting this project in this thesis is that at any point with ever-changing information technology, it seems there always are people left behind, and I think there's something that public libraries can do.

The Uphams Corner Library (Fig. 26) is a branch library of the Boston Public Library. It is located in Dorchester in the City of Boston, which is a Spanish speaking minority community with a lower income level.

¹ This project originally started as a student independent project for the course "Advanced Technology for Low Income Communities," and the project was continued after the course.



Fig. 26 The Complex Building the Uphams Corner Library Belongs to



Fig. 27 The Basement of the Library Where the Classes Were Held
(Now it has three computers.)

The Uphams Corner Library was contacted through a librarian at the branch who is familiar with computer networks, and who is a member of CLICKIT, an organization that promotes the Internet to schools. At that time, this branch library had only one computer with Internet access and only one computer with word-processing software open to the public. (Fig. 27)

In meetings with the librarian, it was first decided that the class would be free of charge, targeted at absolute beginners of all ages, and with a class limit of 15 people. Then, the WWW was decided as a focus of the class. As the WWW is relatively easy to use and has attractive images, it was expected that familiarizing beginners with the WWW would encourage them to further explore other digital information and uses of the computer. The emphasis of the class was discussed and planned to 1) remove peoples' fear of computers, 2) provide them with computer basics (i.e. using a mouse), 3) give them a taste of the Internet without overwhelming them, 4) demonstrate web sites that apply to their everyday lives, 5) have them search for the web sites that interest them, and 6) indicate that there are a vast number of other web sites to visit.

After framing the preliminary goals and intentions of the class, we then devised its structure. The biggest bottleneck was the fact that the library had only one computer connected to the Internet and available to the class. Therefore, the class was planned to break into four groups, which would rotate among four different tables, spending one half hour at each table. The four tables consisted of 1) a hands-on exploration of the Internet at the computer, 2) listening to a talk given by the librarian, 3) watching an Internet video, and 4) reading handouts, and asking questions.

After the class had been designed, it was announced in the Dorchester community. Fliers were made and sent to 50 Dorchester community organizations. (Fig. 28) The librarian also wrote an article announcing the class for the community paper. The Internet video was selected and the handouts are prepared. The web sites were selected so that they would fit different interests and different age groups in hopes of addressing all the people in the class.

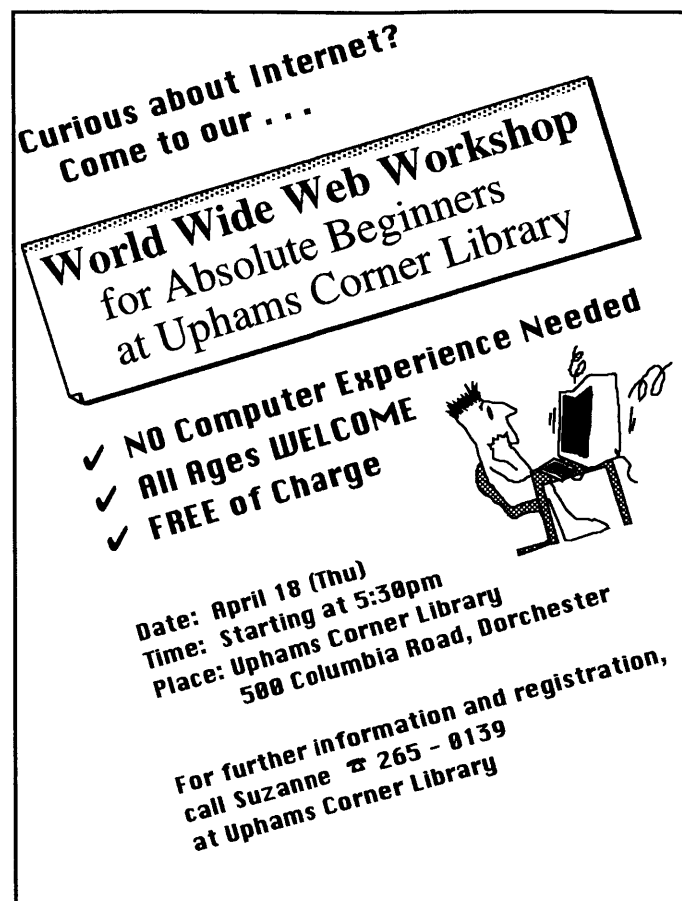


Fig. 28 The Flyer for the Internet Class in Dorchester, Boston¹

The positive aspects of the project will be presented first. As soon as the class was announced, it immediately filled up and had a waiting list large enough to fill the next planned class. It was encouraging that many real beginners, some of whom had never even touched a mouse before, enrolled from the neighborhood. Almost all of the participants were members of minority groups. It appeared that they were not frequent library visitors. They were newly marketed users to the library by this project.

Overcoming the fear of the technology was the first step. One participant in particular was afraid of the mouse and refused to touch it. She said, "I just want

¹ Created by the author.

to see and learn.” The rest of the group encouraged her, and after a while she easily began to use the mouse. After everyone else left, she stayed and explored the Internet on her own. Finally, she started searching for her favorite magazine “National Geographic” and was happy when she found it. Similar to her case, during the class, participants thoroughly enjoyed exploring the Internet. The key to helping them overcome their computer fear was to start with sites they felt familiar with, i.e. Boston Red Sox, People Magazine, or Boston Marathon. Then, after a while, they moved on to their own specific interests.

Another participant was interested in finding information about welding since this was his job. When a search engine brought him access to thousands of web sites related to his job, which is perhaps not a major area of traditional information flow, he found himself absorbed in the web. He also expressed interest in learning how to program computer software, and wanted to know how the Internet could help in his life. He didn’t want to leave the computer and said that it was “addictive.”

Another participant was a freelance video editor with a hearing problem. She participated in the class hoping that information from the Internet could give her ideas for updating her video editing equipment. Though she had not expected much information on that narrow topic, she found a lot without having much difficulty in communication.

Various forms of interaction with the Internet occurred among the participants. One participant searched for information about the small country from where he recently signed papers to adopt a child. He was very excited when he saw pictures of the places he just had visited. Another participant was actively involved in the Catholic community and was very excited when she found thousands of web pages regarding work within her community. Another worked with media and wanted to know what information was out there regarding her professional life. She was an avid participant who wanted to incorporate this new media into her work. Another participant was involved in community outreach. He decided that his organization should connect to the

Internet to take advantage of the vast amount of information available on different organizations' web pages. Each participant soon found a way in which information from the Internet would be helpful in both his or her professional and personal lives.

There are two points in particular to note. One is that almost all participants came because of the announcement in the community newspaper, though we also distributed fliers through 50 community organizations and schools in Dorchester. We found that the need to learn about the computer is greatest from those who are outside an organization. The Internet workshop was a rare opportunity for community residents not connected to an organization. The other point to note was that they seemed to not be traditional library visitors. We prepared several articles about the Internet. However, they did not show any interest in written materials. Instead, they just wanted hands-on experience with the Internet. Perhaps they do not read books often and usually do not visit libraries. As the problem of the gap between information haves and have-nots seems more serious among those people who are outside of any organization and perhaps among those who are likely not traditional library visitors, this project suggests the possible future clientele for a public library.

Now, the less successful points of the class shall be addressed. First, one computer for ten to twelve attendants was far from fulfilling. Each attendant could only have hands-on experience for only about 10 minutes. Some of the attendants had to be taught to type, to use a mouse, and be connected to the Internet for the first time within 10 minutes.

Second, the librarian in her Internet talk used difficult terminology (FTP, URL, ROM) instead of basic explanation such as "This is a mouse. You have to roll it on the desk. Do not lift it." or "This is a key board. You enter alphabet characters and numbers to a computer from the key board." Although she attempted to explain each meaning, such as "FTP means File Transfer Protocol," the terminology was overwhelming to those who didn't even know what a mouse or a disk drive was. They either fell asleep or got looked nowhere as they

got bored. After the first class, we pointed this out and the librarian agreed not to use difficult terminology, but the talk was not going to be changed. To use the WWW is not very difficult, and that allows users to access popular information. It seems the librarian had a kind of unconscious but strong fear that computer classes may lower the status of the public library, and that this drove her unconsciously to use terminology above the attendants' capacity. However, this is like teaching printing technology to people who come to the library for literacy education. Surely, to learn about printing technology is another issue from learning how to read.

Third, the participants did not open Internet magazines or read the provided handouts, except the printouts of actual web sites; people just want the hands-on experience of the web. It was even more disconcerting that many left directly after their session at the computer finished. Those participants seemed not to often read books and not regular library users. Having people who are not traditional library visitors in the class reaffirmed future possibilities for the transition of library roles. Therefore, this unsuccessful point is also referred as a good point since the project attracted non-traditional library users to the library.

Fourth, the librarian worked in the children's section. She said she had an interest in the Internet course because she believed the majority of participants would be children lacking access to computers. This contrasted with my presupposition of larger needs among the older generation. The result was that all of the participants, except a high school dropout, seemed to be above forty years of age. Ironically, while the class was preparing, school children passed by, and showed off their knowledge of the computer to the participants and the project staff. The fact that the participants were adults was good in terms of possibilities for the public library; however, the teaching of adults went beyond the job description of the children's librarian. Since it was difficult to justify the existence of a computer class taught by the children's section librarian that was attended exclusively by adults, it became difficult to continue the class. Another lesson to be learned here is that a computer class should involve a whole library branch or the whole library system in order to be viable.

Practical tips for further improvement were noted as follows: 1) make explanations even more simple to fit the participants' level of computer knowledge, 2) remove the librarian's fear that the Internet will lower the value of libraries, 3) offer web sites that interest different people as a gateway to stimulate further exploration, 4) devise classes to fit the needs of different types of people, and 5) make more computers available.

Overall, this experimental project suggested positive future possibilities for the library. The great need for such a class was proved by its immediate filling of all places, along with a long waiting list. Although the participants seemed to be non-traditional library users, the public library was the place that those people who do not belong to organizations came to learn about the Internet. Each participant soon found ways in which information through this new channel would be helpful to both their professional and personal lives. This result suits the central purpose of libraries of providing the service of access to information. The public library seems to be able to help people become a part of the IT society so that they can receive full benefits from the advancements of information technology.

1.6. Proposition

The Public Library and the IT Society

Recently, the progress of information technology is tearing apart public libraries. While some public libraries dramatically transform themselves into players on a new stage, this creates many “dropout” libraries, which are left behind, particularly in smaller municipalities or in rural areas. An ironical example according to critics is that even NetDay, a federally supported project to wire schools and libraries all over United States, widened the gap. Although many volunteers took part in installing cable in classrooms and libraries, rural facilities distant from the high tech volunteers in Silicon Valley did not participate.¹

Does this bring a loss for community development in this information society? Or should public libraries not care about it? Robinson believes that the public library is more tangential to the problems of society. “Public libraries are in the storage and sharing business...Some of the problems facing the library today are the result of problems in society. They’re life issues, rather than quality - of- life issues - jobs, housing, and education. Libraries can’t do anything about any of those.”²

Should the local governments agree with this? From an urban planning viewpoint, I think that public libraries can do something about jobs, housing, and education. Information is becoming more and more critical in this accelerating IT society. The public library, whose central purpose is to provide access to information, should no longer be on the fringes of societal problems in the information age.

The original purposes of the public library in the second half of the nineteenth century were to be involved with the problems of society, such as educating “the

¹ Steve Cisler, “Conversations about Community and Computing,” <http://www.education.unesco.org/unesco/educprog/lwf/doc/portfolio/opinion2.htm> (last accessed on Aug. 20, 1998).

² Nancy Pearl, “Gave’em What They Wanted,” *Library Journal*, Sep. 1, 1996, p.138. Interview with Charlie Robinson, Director, and Jean - Barry Molz, Deputy Director of the Baltimore County Public Library.

flood of ignorant and rough immigrants"¹ to stabilize the society, keeping incoming young laborers from rural areas away from drinking,² and to “educate the town population in the race for business supremacy.”^{3,4} The public library was deeply incorporated in town strategic management.

In the information age when even library schools change their names to “School of Information Management” for example, sticking to conventional roles is no longer satisfying. From the viewpoint of city management, it seems that it is time for cities and towns to judge their public libraries by something other than conventional circulation volume or transient popularity by free entertainment.

Information technology brings an opportunity for the Renaissance of library purposes. After the countrywide initiative of creating an Information Highway, it is time for promoting locally tailored "Information Main Streets," reflecting community priorities that encompass the local economy, education, social issues, technology prevalence and other community issues. The public library, which historically navigates information and is a global institution with a local orientation, should play an important role on "Main Street" in a community. Besides, the IT society is interestingly clarifying people's demand for a physical community space, as seen in the emerging markets for super bookstores and cafes. In addition to the public library's functions of providing information and education, information technology is ironically enhancing the library's function as a community space. These are the whole community issues. The local governments should be involved in public library planning as they once were.

¹ Michael Harris, “The Purpose of the American Public Library : A Revisionist Interpretation of History,” *Library Journal*, Sep. 15, 1973, p.2510.

² Theodore Jones, “Carnegie Libraries Across America”, p.19, 1997.

³ Sidney H. Ditzion, “Arsenals of a Democratic Culture: A Social History of the American Public Library Movement in New England and the Middle States from 1850 to 1900,” 1947, p.70.

⁴ Whether or not those purposes were adequate in the modern society is another discussion. The point here is the importance the public library once held in the eyes of local governments.

Chapter 2

A Suggestion for Smaller Cities: Union City Public Library

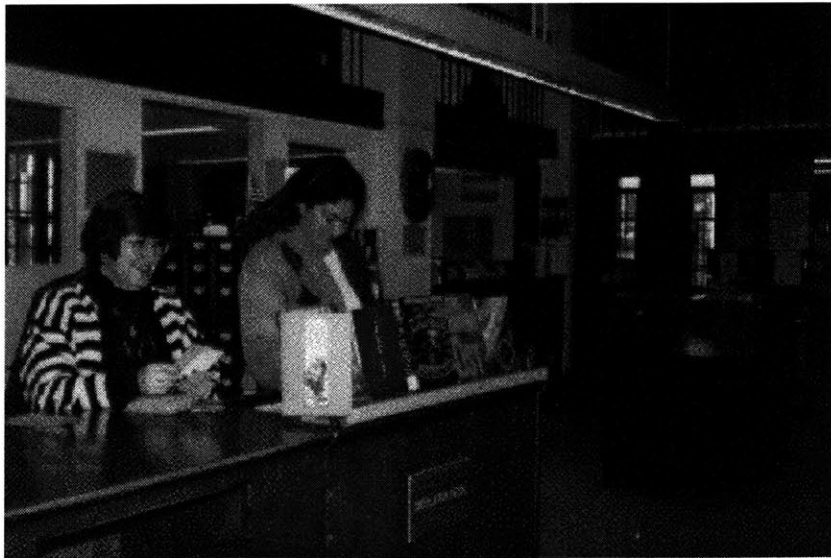


Fig. 29 A Typical Small City Public Library
(At the Union City 43rd Library)

In this chapter, Union City, New Jersey is chosen as a case study. The historical background, current conditions, and the potential needs of the city in the context of public libraries and information technology are analyzed. Based on some of the public library experiences in larger cities, my experimental project, and recent trends of the information society as demonstrated in Chapter 1, possibilities are sought for public libraries to play a positive role in cooperation with local governments in communities with smaller populations.

Recent developments in information technology have brought about new directions at the larger libraries, as I discussed earlier. In smaller public libraries, local governments need to devise a framework for integrating the various impacts and uses of information technology in order to maximize benefits of the IT society for their communities. Due to the difference in priorities in the management of local governments, the priorities in planning public libraries varies from community to community. In addition, the realization of plans for public libraries by smaller local governments tends to be more strongly affected by the community's specific circumstances, such as local politics, the varying quality of personnel involved in projects, and particular sources of funds. Here, I am going to take the example of Union City in New Jersey to present possible strategies and recommendations for new public library functions for smaller local governments. This example is tailored to the current conditions of Union City. However, I think the case can help other local governments review the position of public libraries in their communities and in their city management priorities.

Section 2.1 presents the history and socio-economic conditions of Union City, as well as recent developments in the school system. Section 2.2 shifts the focus to discuss the background and the recent challenges faced by the public library system of Union City (Fig. 29). To develop solutions to these challenges, the current conditions and existing problems of the public library

system are examined and analyzed in Section 2.3. Section 2.4 explores possible future functions of the library to response to community needs.

2.1 Background of Union City

Union City is located in Hudson County in northern New Jersey, and situated directly across the Hudson River from Manhattan. (Fig. 30) It is about 2.6 miles long and half a mile wide, with a total area of 1.3 square miles.¹

According to the 1990 census, the city's population is 58, 012. City officials estimate the population in 1997 to be upwards of 65,000 people. The city is one of the most densely inhabited in the United States with a population density of 44,624.6 per square mile.² This high density is due mainly to the city's proximity to New York City and its history of being a destination for immigrants to the United States. Fig. 31 shows the population distribution by age and sex. For both females and males, the 25 to 29 age group makes up the largest distribution of population.



Fig. 30 Location of Union City

¹ It is widely believed by the city departments that Union City is one mile long and quarter a mile wide, but this contradicts the census data of the area of 1.3 square miles, and the scale of the regional map.

² Census of Population, 1990.

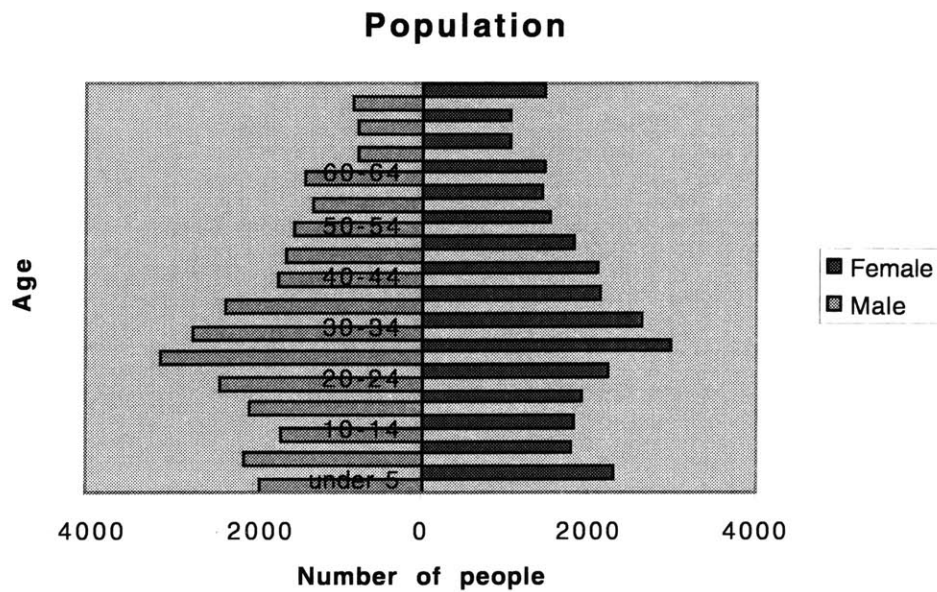


Fig. 31 Number of People by Age and Sex in Union City¹

2.1.1 Brief History of the City

Union City, formerly the towns of Union Hill and West Hoboken, developed rapidly during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The history of the city has always been associated with communities of immigrants. (Fig. 32)

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, both Union and West Hoboken attracted large numbers of immigrants from Germany. They were mainly veterans and refugees of the German revolutionary unrest of 1848. The history of the community virtually began with this group, as they started conducting town meetings and opened schools. Also, an early prototype of a library for public use was started in 1851 by a society organized for the purpose of holding debates and conducting cultural projects. Some of the active enterprises of the late nineteenth century included silk businesses, a pencil factory, cigar plants, and a brewery.

¹ Data from Census of Population, 1990.



Fig. 32 Union City in Days Gone By¹

Around 1900, Italian and Irish immigrants began pouring in. Italians were the dominant population until the late 1960's. Judging by the nativity data of the Union City population (58, 633 people) in 1930, about 31.6% (18,538 people) were born in foreign countries, and 42.6% (24,959 people) had foreign-born parents.² In 1925, Union City was formed as a consolidation of the towns of Union Hill and West Hoboken. In 1929, the population reached its peak of 60,725 people.

Around 1930, Union City was the commercial and retail trading center of the area, comprising the communities of North Bergen, West New York, Weehawken, and Guttenberg, with a total population of about 158,000.¹ Moreover, Union City had for years been one of the embroidery centers of the United States. While there were no large industries in the city, there were a considerable number of small manufacturers who were mainly producing

¹ Probably, it is on Bergenline Avenue or Summit Avenue. The date of the photo is unknown.
"Union City On-line," Union City,
<http://www.union-city.k12.nj.us/frame.html> (last accessed in April, 1998).

² "Municipal Credit Survey", Dun & Bradstreet, New York, Mar. 22, 1935.

broadloom silk, embroidery, and various other clothing products, though these manufacturing lines were essentially seasonal. The majority of the residents were in the working class, including clerical workers in minor positions, factory workers, and members of various trades. The average tax-paying capacity was generally low.²

In the 1940's, the first group of Cuban immigrants came to Union City to work at the embroidery factories. After 1959, the Communist revolution sent thousands of Cubans to the United States, and Union City became an attractive port-of-entry for them. The local economy was very active, supported by a hard working immigrant labor force.

Then, in the 1970's the embroidery companies started moving their businesses to the Southern United States and overseas. Many workers lost their jobs and the city suffered from a stagnant economy with a high unemployment rate. The city also experienced a population decline caused by factors such as the lack of available land inventory, undesirable mixed land usage, traffic congestion, lack of employment opportunities, and the availability of better housing in suburban areas away from the congested and unattractive old dwellings.

By the 1980's, many of the Cubans who had successfully entered the middle class moved out to the suburbs. According to a study prepared for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Union City together with Hoboken and West New York in Hudson County³ were listed among 84 "troubled suburbs." These cities were named "disaster areas" on the basis of various socio-economic indicators, including an average of only 8.9 years of

¹ "Municipal Credit Survey", made by Dun & Bradstreet, New York, Mar. 22, 1935.

² "Municipal Credit Survey", made by Dun & Bradstreet, New York, Mar. 22, 1935.

³ They were considered "suburb" in this study.

schooling for adults 25 years of age and older.¹ The stagnation was also shown by data that indicated that the median “year structure built” was 1940.²

With dozens of garment and lace manufacturers located throughout the Union City, textile manufacturing continues to be the major industry. The city's Department of Revenue and Finance is trying to take advantage of its ethnic diversity by inviting businesses to relocate there in order to improve the stagnant local economy.

2.1.2 Socio-Economic Characteristics

Union City today is a community of ethnic and cultural diversity with a predominantly Latino immigrant population. In recent years, while it continues to have the largest concentration of Cuban Americans outside of Miami, the city's population has diversified with Latino immigrants from the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Peru and Puerto Rico. About 55.1% of the total population (31,959 people) is foreign-born. Among those who were born in foreign countries and whose birth areas were reported (30,236 people), 90.0% (27,217 people) were born in Latin American countries. This includes 39.2% (11,858 people) from Cuba, and 12.1% (3,657 people) from the Dominican Republic.³ Many arrived with limited formal education. Among the 37,800 people who are 25 years and older in Union City, 49.5% (18,697 people) did not complete high school. Among persons five years of age and over, 48.9% (26,279 people) “do not speak English very well.” This figure is 28.6% (2,787 people) for those between five as 17 years of age and 53.3% (23,492 people) for adults 18 years of age and older.⁴

¹ Ronald Leir, "Rand report raps Union City, WNY," The Journey Journal, Aug. 11, 1982, p.1.

² Census of Population, 1990.

³ Census of Population, 1990.

⁴ Census of Population, 1990.

The majority of residents have low or moderate incomes. About 18.2% of the population (10,513 people) live below the poverty line. Per capita income in 1989 was \$11,089 while that of New Jersey as a whole was \$18,714. The unemployment rate was 10.9% among people 16 years of age and over in the civilian labor force.¹ This is much higher than the unemployment rate of 5.7% in the State of New Jersey.² The Brookings Institute classified Union City as one of the 92 most impoverished communities in the United States. The city is a typical example of communities among the lowest social and economic levels in the United States.

2.1.3 Recent Improvement in the School System

Despite the overall poverty of the community, the school system of Union City has emerged during the last eight years as a model of the future of education. It has attracted nationwide attention as a model for the successful integration of high technology and education, making use of interactive television, a new curriculum, and classrooms featuring computers connected to the Internet.³ It is worth noting that as their schools improved, the Union City Board of Education (UCBOE) realized the importance of including the education of parents in creating a better learning environment for the students. The UCBOE started to reach out educationally to the whole community. Currently, the UCBOE has a unique collaboration for community education with the Union City Public Library.

Background of Student Population

In Union City, the UCBOE serves 9,017 students in eleven schools, which include three elementary, five K-8, one middle, and two high schools. About 92% of the students in Union City are Latino, and 75% of them do not speak English at home. Around 14% of the students have been in the United States

¹ Census of Population, 1990.

² Census of Population, 1990.

³ Robin Frost, "The Model," Wall Street Journal, Nov. 17, 1997.

for less than three years. Around 23.4% of the children between five and 17 years old are living below the poverty line.¹ Among persons under 18 years of age, 41.4% live in single parent households.² Approximately, 80% of the students receive free or reduced price lunches, which is more than twice the national average of 36.4%.³

Innovation of the School System

Like many other inner city school districts, the Union City district, which serves a low income and a densely populated urban community mainly made up of Latin-American-immigrants, had faced a series of educational challenges before. In 1989, it was identified as one of 30 special needs districts for education in New Jersey based on poor test scores, poor attendance, high turn over rates and a host of other troubles. When the State of New Jersey investigated the Union City school district, the schools failed in 40 out of the 52 areas studied. Because of this poor performance, the state threatened to take over the district.

Facing that threat, the UCBOE decided to try an innovative curriculum. It was a new interdisciplinary curriculum for grades K-8 that emphasized the development of thinking, reasoning and collaboration skills. As an example of this new method, when students study the American Revolution, the teacher now has them conduct research on the subject. Later, the students share their results with the class.⁴ In this approach, the teacher is like a coach or a guide for the students' own exploration. At the same time, certain reforms were taking place in the district, and the UCBOE was looking to businesses and industry in New Jersey to invest resources in the schools. The call for investment was answered by Bell Atlantic, which was interested in

¹ Census of Population, 1990.

² Census of Population, 1990.

³ National Center for Education Statistics, 1995.

⁴ Telecomputing for teaching and learning, 1994,

<http://inct.ed.gov/technology/Telecomp/ersex.html> (Last accessed on Apr. 5, 1998).

testing communication systems in a minority inner city school district with a dense population.

The new approaches to teaching with the interdisciplinary curriculum were successful, and made it possible “to allow the computer network to be an integral part of education at the school”, according to company officials at Bell Atlantic,¹ before the district received funds from New Jersey’s Quality Education Act. Fortunately for the district, it was classified as an impoverished district by the State of New Jersey and it made the UCBOE eligible for extra funds for the school system to bring its schools in line with others in the State of New Jersey. The UCBOE installed 775 computers in the district with the collaboration of the Bell Atlantic Corporation and the Education Development Center’s Center for Children and Technology in 1993.

Integration of Information Technology and Education

The Interactive Multimedia Education Trial at Christopher Columbus Middle School was a huge success. Following that success, the rest of the district experienced the advantages that networking and multimedia could bring to their curriculums. According to teachers and administrators, the technology fits in well with their emphasis on students’ research, critical thinking, and cooperative learning.² In 1994, the project was strengthened through connection of their computers to the Internet. Fred Carrigg, Director of Academic Programs of the UCBOE, describes Internet access as crucial because it serves as “the world library” with various resources available. “The student can fulfill his or her role of being responsible for selection of source material.”³

¹ Robin Frost, "The Model," Wall Street Journal, Nov. 17, 1997.

² Telecomputing for Teaching and Learning, 1994.

³ Robin Frost, "The Model," Wall Street Journal, Nov. 17, 1997.

Results

Those trials attracted students' interests and increased their motivation for studying. As a result, it brought successful results such as significant rises in standardized test scores and attendance, and a decrease in dropout rates.

Officials say test scores are now about twice those of New Jersey State's other inner city districts, and the district is very close to the average passing score for the state.¹ The project worked so well that in February of 1996, the Union City school system was used as the backdrop for the President of United States to announce the \$2 billion Technology Literacy Challenge program, a national program to put computers in all of the country's classrooms and link them to networked information. The President cited Union City's unique blending of comprehensive school reform, technological innovation, and corporate sponsorship as a model for educational excellence and national inspiration.

Schools to Communities

In the context of a community with an overall low education level, children generally depend on greater self-effort to learn. At a meeting to discuss a plan for new educational facilities with the state funding in Union City, some high school students even commented that they expect their parents to get an education so that they will be able to provide educational and career advice to their children. On the other hand, some of the parents at the meeting showed unease at feeling left behind their children.² It seems the gap between the parents' and children's generations is growing along with the dramatic improvements in the school system. The school system's success has allowed the community's education problems to bubble up and be addressed. At the meeting, some written comments by the participants indicated the educational needs for the whole community, for example: "We

¹ Robin Frost, "The Model," Wall Street Journal, Nov. 17, 1997.

² Attended at the meeting on Oct. 25, 1997.

Also, documented by

Union City Board of Education, "Attendance and Comments at Meeting with M.I.T.," Oct., 1997.

need a library that would serve the students and the community."¹ Even at the meeting to plan mainly educational facilities for children, it seems that people cannot help but including community educational issues.

A trial was conducted to wire Christopher Columbus Middle School's students' and teachers' homes with a computer network during the Interactive Multimedia Educational Trial. The district's supervisor of technology wrote that parents who could not speak English as recently as two years earlier became actively involved in their children's use of computers at home, and frequently sent messages to teachers and the school principal.²

From that experience, he says, "Parents have to have access...Our approach is not just the schools - it's the community."³ The recognition of the importance of involving students' parents in the educational system allowed the UCBOE to extend education to the whole community of Union City. However, when the district talks about the community, the main target still remains the students' parents.

¹ Union City Board of Education, "Attendance and Comments at Meeting with M.I.T.," Oct., 1997.

² "Kick Start Initiative," Benson Foundation, 1996,
http://www.benton.org/library/KickStart/Kick_showcasing.html/turning.

³ Robin Frost, "The Model," Wall Street Journal, Nov. 17, 1997.

2.2 Background of the Union City Public Library

The location and history of the libraries, and the recent collaboration with the UCBOE, are presented in this section. The challenges faced by the libraries are thereafter identified and discussed.

2.2.1 Location and History

The Union City Public Library consists of two public libraries. One is the “43rd Street Library” on 43rd Street and New York Avenue in the Uptown area, with a floor size of about 15,000 square feet. (Fig. 33) The other is the “15th Street Library” located between Bergenline Avenue and New York Avenue in the Downtown area, with a floor size of about 10,000 square feet. (Fig. 34) (Fig. 35)

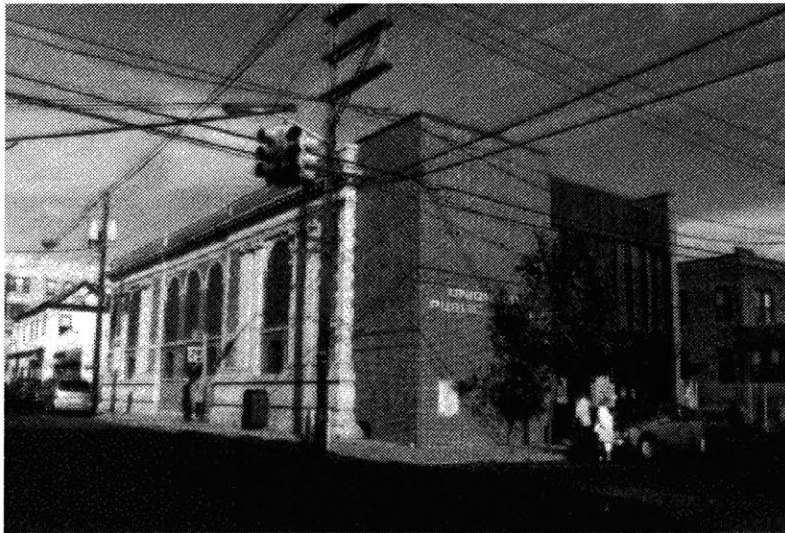


Fig. 33 The 43rd Street Library in Uptown Area

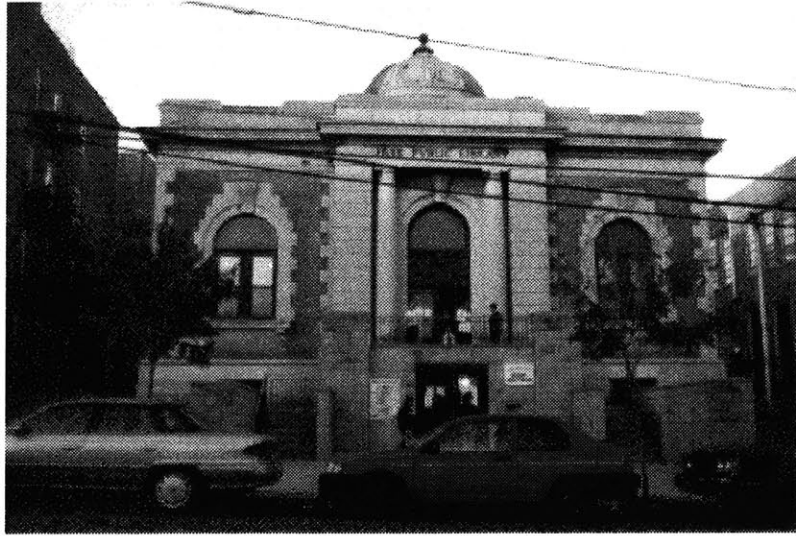


Fig. 34 The 15th Street Library in Downtown Area

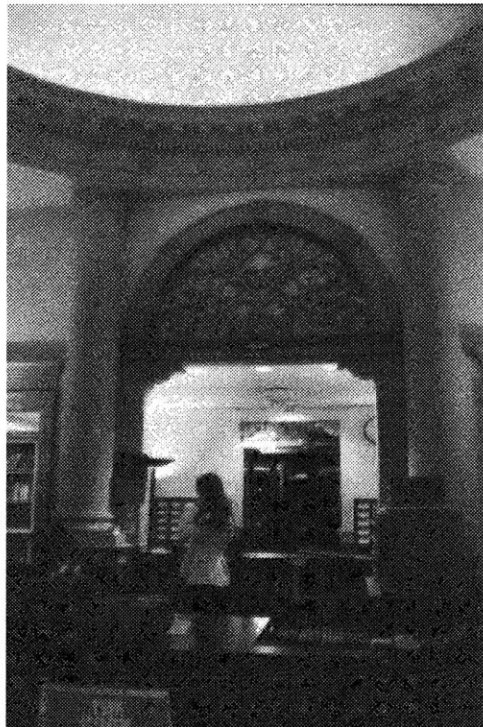


Fig. 35 Interior of a Carnegie Library
(at the 15th Street Library)

The libraries are among two of the 36 Carnegie libraries built around the turn of the century in New Jersey.¹ At that time, before a free public library was to be established in any town or city, it had to be subject to a vote of the people of the municipality according to an act passed by the state legislature.² The two libraries of the Union City Public Library, as well as other public libraries, were established by the active support of the members of the community through this voting procedure.

In 1887, a free reading room and library, the prototype of the current 43rd Street Library, was established in the public school building in the town of Union in the present Uptown area of Union City, by a civic organization called the "Library Association." Although it was small and unofficial, the reading room at the time was considered to be the best in the state. It had various resources such as books, magazines, newspapers, and paid subscriptions. In 1891, this prototype was transformed into the first official free public library in the same location on 39th Street and New York Avenue, close to Bergenline Avenue. It then moved into a private building on "248 Bergenline Avenue" in the old address system, and later into the Town Hall, as the number of users was constantly increasing.³ In 1906, the present 43rd Street Library was built on Main Street (presently 43rd Street) and New York Avenue through the donation of \$25,000 from Andrew Carnegie.⁴ The building was renovated in the 1990s, and the front was radically redesigned in order to allow handicap access.

¹ Theodore Jones, "Carnegie Libraries Across America", 1997, p.153.

² Harry J. Thourot, "The Historical Panorama of Union City," 1946, p.4.

³ Harry J. Thourot, The Historical Panorama of Union City, 1946, p.7.

⁴ Theodore Jones, "Carnegie Libraries Across America", 1997, p.153.

The earliest step towards establishing a public library in West Hoboken, in the present Downtown area, was taken by several literacy societies including the West Hoboken Literary Society in 1851, and the Lyceum and Literacy Association in 1852.¹ These organizations were formed for the purpose of holding debates and conducting cultural projects² at a time when reading was the major source of information and entertainment. These literacy societies were not funded by the government. Their collections were available only to their members who paid roughly a two-dollar annual fee for maintenance.³ In 1897, a proposition for the establishment of a free public library was accepted by popular vote in West Hoboken, with 776 in favor and 318 in opposition. Based on this community's decision, the Free Public Library in West Hoboken began its operation at Clinton Avenue (presently New York Avenue) and Charles Street (presently 16th Street) in 1898. The library opened to the public with one librarian and 1,500 volumes of books on every Tuesday and Thursday evening.⁴ The library's evening hours reflected the public libraries' orientation to serve working people in its early stage. In 1904, it moved to the current 15th Street Library through Carnegie's donation of \$25,000. It was the second grant given by Andrew Carnegie in the State of New Jersey.⁵ Since then, a rear addition has been added to the original structure. The entrance steps were also reconfigured to allow a basement door to be opened directly below the original entrance.⁶

Each of the two libraries is located in either the center of Uptown or Downtown Union City. (Fig. 36) Also, both of them are close to Bergenline Avenue, which has been historically the main street in Union City. Probably,

¹ Conrad and Egan, "Hudson County: Then and Now, Carnegie Donation Helped Build Library," Hudson Dispatch, May 18, 1990.

² Harry J. Thourot, "The Historical Panorama of Union City," 1946, p.1.

³ Conrad and Egan, "Hudson County: Then and Now, Carnegie Donation Helped Build Library," Hudson Dispatch, May 18, 1990.

⁴ Harry J. Thourot, "The Historical Panorama of Union City," 1946, p.4.

⁵ Theodore Jones, "Carnegie Libraries Across America", p.153.

⁶ Conrad and Egan, "Hudson County: Then and Now, Carnegie Donation Helped Build Library," Hudson Dispatch, May 18, 1990.

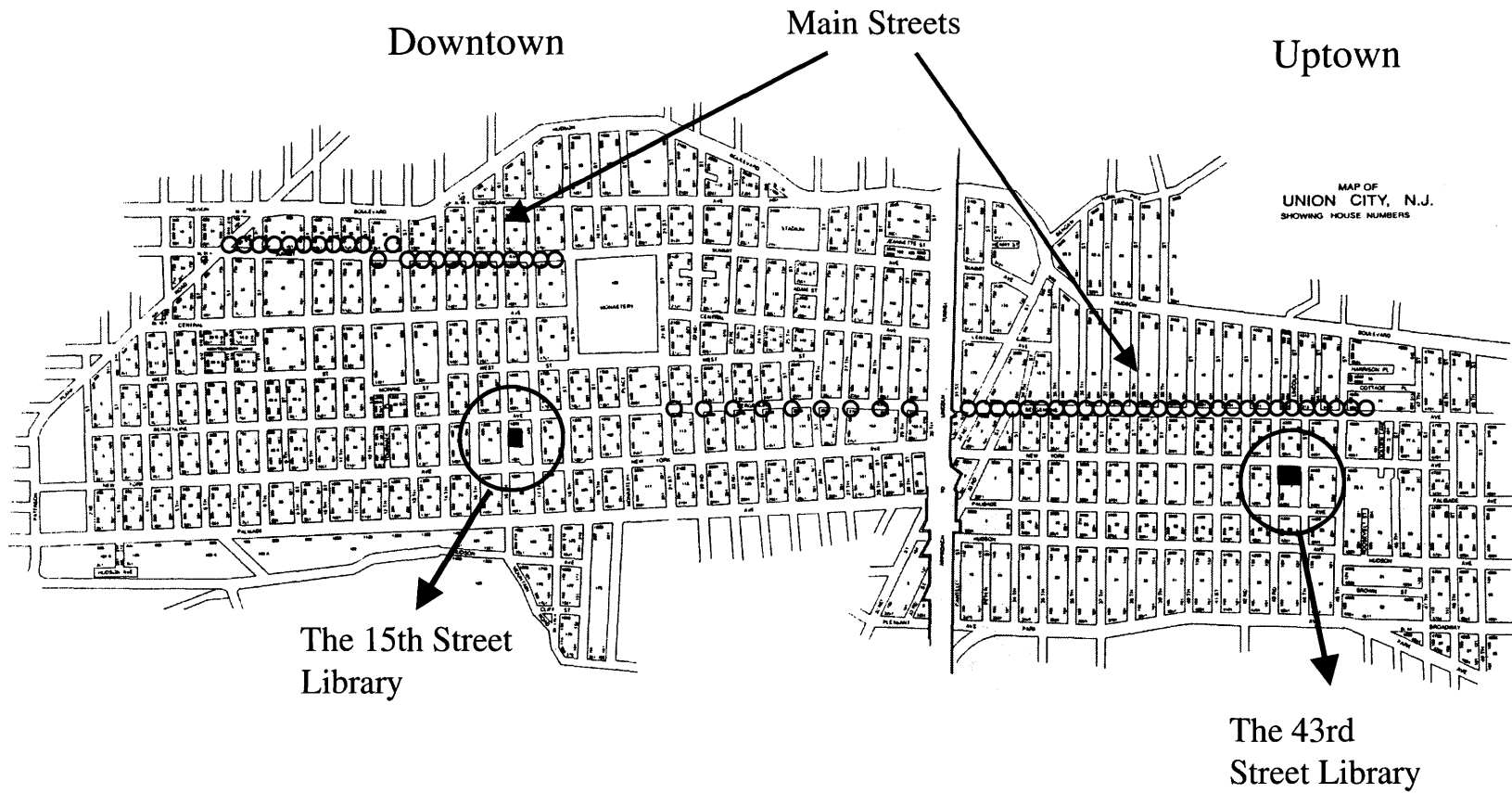


Fig. 36 Location of the Two Libraries of the Union City Public Library

when these libraries were built with the donations from Carnegie, the locations were carefully chosen so as to offer maximum accessibility to everyone in each part of the city.

2.2.2 Collaboration with the UCBOE

Currently, the Union City Public Library is operated under a unique collaboration with the UCBOE, mainly because of the library's chronic budget shortages and the UCBOE's extension of services to the community, initially targeted to the students' parents. Conventional public library services are offered by the city's public library system. However, services such as computer classes, access to computers, and general reference to public resources are offered and managed in the two public libraries by the UCBOE, though these are usually offered as public library services in other cities.

This unique collaboration was started because of the UCBOE's recognition of the needs for education and providing access to information technology to the students' parents. In order to provide access to network computers for people without home access, the UCBOE's agreement with Union City outlined that the UCBOE would install computers with Internet access and hold computer classes, under its own budgets. In return, the library agreed to stay open late once a week so that people in the community, including students and parents who did not have access to computers at home, could have access in the evening at the public libraries.

2.2.3 Challenges

Crisis to Be Solved

In 1997, the UCBOE became eligible for \$32 million in state dollars for new educational facilities. The main part of the project is the construction of a new K-8 school to solve current overcrowding. This project turned out to be a big threat to the Union City Public Library. The remodeling of educational

facilities in the city and the opening of a new school library in a new school, which will likely be located somewhere in the Downtown of the city, depending on space availability, also brought the possibility of the closure of the existing 15th Street public library into view. This would reduce the city's expenditure on the public library system.

On the other hand, part of the state funds can be spent on new library facilities, along with the expansion of existing public library functions, if the city and the UCBOE can agree on the significance of the library to the city.

Literally speaking, the public library system in Union City is at a critical point and is facing two opposing future directions, that is, closure of one of the public libraries, or investing part of the federal funds on expansion and new facilities.

Research Approach

Since this low-income community has a tight budget, the public libraries cannot justify their existence solely by offering the pure pleasure of reading to the public. When leisure reading was emphasized for factory laborers in the early years of the libraries, their justification came with extended library hours in the evenings and on Sundays so that workers could visit libraries. It is difficult to place leisure reading as a high priority and to use that traditional standard, when the budget is too tight to have long library hours.

I will, therefore, focus my research on the problem-solving roles of the Union City Public Library. In other words, the library should abandon its current passive approach to social needs. It should take an active role supporting the local community, instead of placing emphasis on providing mere entertainment and institutional interests to preserve itself.

I will explore some future possibilities for the Union City Public Library, mainly in terms of “problem solving approaches” for the community. This approach is based on the premise that the public library should be involved in community issues. Based on the examination of existing public library systems, as well as on observations of the educational system and the local economy, there seem to be two major concerns for the city. From these findings, I will suggest a “strategic plan” to be adopted. Although historically public libraries are independent from local educational systems, I will pay more attention than usual to this connection, as the project for new educational facilities will be developed using the state funding to the UCBOE. I will also focus on the local economy, as it is one of the highest priorities for this community, and also because the tax revenue from a good local economy can support a sustainable public library budget.

Also, I tried to make the plan sustainable because this state one time funding of \$32 million has a future risk of imposing enormous costs to maintain the new facilities unless it is carefully avoided. For example, the recent problem of escalating maintenance costs seems to be growing for schools equipped with computers. A recent news article reveals that schools are finding that it is far more expensive to maintain computer technology than had been predicted. Harvey Barnett is concerned, "One of the ways districts are being stuck now is, they all did NetDay, and everybody got hot about wiring schools, but nobody considered the long-term (costs)."¹ He puts annual cost at about 20 to 30 percent of acquisition costs. Paying the costs causes unexpected sacrifices in other important school expenses.² This situation really must be avoided, particularly in this low-income community.

¹ Larry Slonaker, "Schools Find Hidden Costs of High Tech," San Jose Mercury News, Dec. 21, 1998, <http://www.mercurycenter.com/local/education/docs/teched122298.htm> (last accessed on Jan.20, 1999).

² Larry Slonaker, "Schools Find Hidden Costs of High Tech," San Jose Mercury News, Dec. 21, 1998, <http://www.mercurycenter.com/local/education/docs/teched122298.html> (last accessed on Jan.20, 1999).

2.3 Analysis of the Current Conditions of the Union City Public Library

The Union City Public Library is examined from the viewpoint of its current usage, level of funding, and the various problems that it is experiencing. Possible future scenarios of the library are discussed based on two approaches that the city may take.

2.3.1 Usage of the Union City Public Library

The two libraries of the Union City Public Library have a total of 2,000 visitors per month. Library cards, which must be renewed every two years for adults and every year for children, are obtained by about 30% of Union City residents.¹ The libraries are not keeping other statistics of usage. For a public library in the United States, it is unusual that Union City does not keep track of circulation volume. The reason seems not due to any emancipation from "judging a public library by circulation volume," but simply a lack of motivation for measuring its output performance.

2.3.2 Level of Funding

Similar to many other local public libraries, the Union City Public Library has suffered from a serious lack of funding. According to the library director, the budget was cut from \$850,000 in fiscal year 1993 (July 1992 - June 1993) to \$750,000 in fiscal year 1994, and remained static at \$650,000 in fiscal years 1995 and 1996. It further dropped to a level of \$406,000 in 1997, which is less than half the figure for 1993. The budget increased a little to \$600,000 in fiscal year 1998, a figure which is still below the 1994 level.² The average per capita funding of public libraries in the Mid-Atlantic states of New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania in fiscal year 1996 was \$24.68.³ The per capita

¹ Interview with Sharon Iacone, Union City Public Library Director.

² Interview with Sharon Iacone, Union City Public Library Director.

³ Evan St. Lifer, Julie C. Boehning, and Adam Mazmanian, "Public Libraries Face Fiscal Challenges," *Library Journal*, Jan 1996, p.42.

funding of the Union City Public Library in the 1996 fiscal year was about \$11.20.¹ That was only 45.4% of the average of the Mid-Atlantic states. Furthermore, per capita library funding dropped to \$7.00² in fiscal year 1997 and \$10.30³ in fiscal year 1998. That is approximately half the mean per capita funding of \$20.14 for public libraries serving populations between 50,000 and 99,999 persons across the United States.⁴ In fiscal year 1998, the budget for the library was only about 0.94% of total city expenditures in Union City.⁵

It is hard to compare data with other cities, but an estimated comparison can be done using performance measures for the public library in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with a population of 95,802. Per capita funding for the Cambridge Public Library in 1998 was \$38.70,⁶ which is almost 3.8 times⁷ as high as that of the Union City Public Library. The City of Cambridge allocated 1.47% of the city budget for its public library in 1998. Public library expenditure in the 1998 Union City budget is 0.94%, which is less than two-thirds of the percentage of the City of Cambridge's.⁸

2.3.3 Vicious Circles

This lack of funding negatively impacts the level of library services. These impacts include a limitation on the available number of books, and out-of-date materials. In addition, evening hours are restricted to 8:30 p.m. only once a week at the 15th Street Library and twice a week at the 43rd Street Library. Only the card catalogs are available for searching books, while an on-

¹ Funding per capita = \$650,000 / 58,012 persons, Census data is used for population.

² \$406,000 / 58,012 people.

³ \$600,000 / 58,012 people.

⁴ Mean funding per capita = \$1,465,816 / 72,749 people.
statistical report 1997, Public Library Association, p.38.

⁵ \$600,000 / \$64,000,000. Expenditure data by Artie Jacob, Office of Public Relations.

⁶ \$3,706,440 / 95,802 people.

Budget from City of Cambridge annual budget report, 1997-98, Census data was used for population.

⁷ \$38.70 / \$10.30.

⁸ \$3,706,440 / \$252,353,360 = 1.47%, City of Cambridge annual budget report, 1997-98
0.94 % / 1.47% = 63.9%.

line catalog is available at all other public libraries in the area (Fig. 37). In addition, no computer is available for librarians or reference service work, though the computer rooms operated by the UCBOE are available to general library users. This marks the sharp contrast between the Union City libraries and the highly computerized school system.



Fig. 37 Traditional Card Catalog



Fig. 38 Signs Trying to Prevent Thefts are Not Powerful Enough
"WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO EXAMINE ALL BOOKS
TO SEE IF PROPERLY CHECKED OUT."
"<u>Attention!</u> No Bookbags or Backpacks of Any Kind Are
ALLOWED UPSTAIRS!!! "

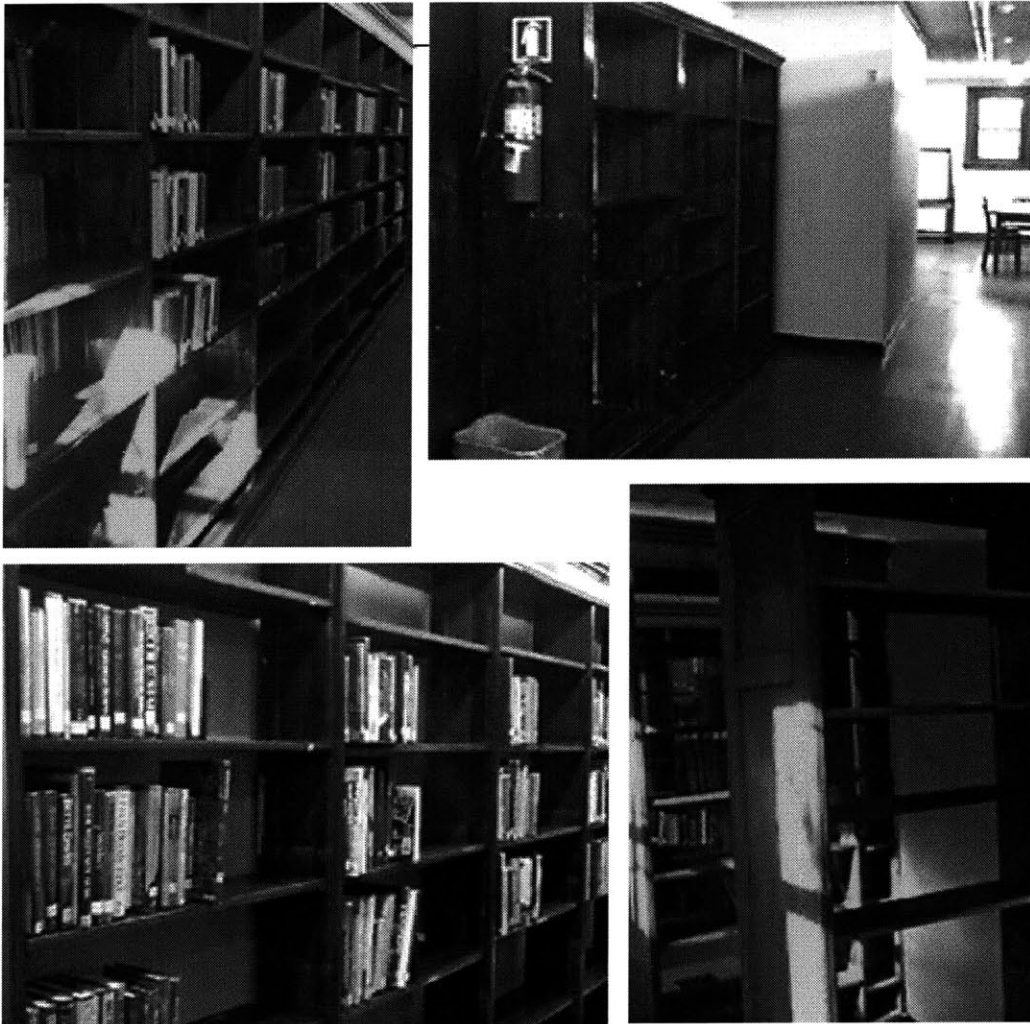


Fig. 39 Where Are the Books?

The insufficient library budget also causes facility problems such as the inability to remodel the interior of the 15th Street Library for handicapped accessibility, the inability to install detectors, and to repair roof leaks. The shortage of books is not only caused by an insufficient budget to purchase them, but also due to a significant amount of book theft resulting from the absence of detectors. (Fig. 38) Currently, less than half of the shelves are filled with books. That is not because of a replacement of books by digital media, but simply because of the lack of materials. (Fig. 39)

Similarly, other problems create a series of chain reactions and vicious circles. The most critical one concerns the budget and the libraries' popularity. (Fig. 40)

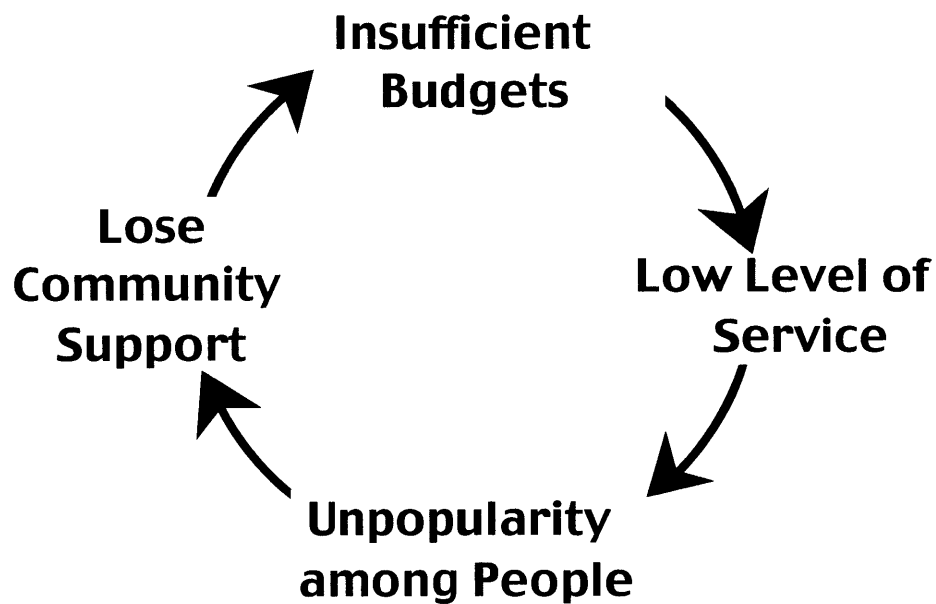


Fig. 40 A Vicious Circle for a Public Library

Insufficient library funding leads to negative impacts on the service level, such as fewer books available, shorter library hours etc. This discourages individuals in the community from using the library, and causes individual disappointment among library users which in turn causes them to undervalue the library. The disappointment among the people of Union City, in turn translates into a gradual loss of support for the library system. Interviews with Union City residents revealed that their impression of the public library was as a symbol of an outdated institution. At the discussion meeting for new educational facilities, one participant submitted the comment, "We need a library that would serve the students and the

community."¹ It is interesting that she seems to have "forgotten" that, in theory, these libraries already exist. Those losses of community support affect the prioritization of the library in the next round of library budgeting.

Based on my observations from several visits to the Union City Public Library, the libraries are used by a wide range of people but are apparently underutilized. According to a survey the library conducted several years ago, the two libraries have totaled 2,000 visitors per month.² That is only about 40 visitors per day at each library.³ That means that the city paid \$2.50 per visit per person to the libraries in the 1998 fiscal year. Compared to the costs to purchase a paperback book at a bookstore or the service at an Internet cafe, the \$2.50 per visit cannot be considered inexpensive.

Even though the per capita library budget is only 45.4% of that of the Mid-Atlantic states,⁴ it is a costly public facility judging from its relatively low popularity. Particularly for a low-income community, it is understandable that the city cannot help doubting the cost effectiveness of its public library, and would conclude that closing a branch seemed prudent.

2.3.4 Decision on the Two Possible Approaches

At this point, there are two approaches for Union City to take. The first is to regard the public library as a chronically old fashioned institution which precludes cost effectiveness, or community assessment. The city preserves it as a historical institution for the sake of the library's own existence, like a mummy, with a minimum budget, and allows it to fade away by the aforementioned vicious circles or pre-exempt this flow by closing a branch.

¹ Union City Board of Education, "Attendance and Comments at Meeting with M.I.T.," Oct., 1997.

² Interview with Sharon Iacone, Union City Public Library Director.

³ 2,000 visitors / 2 libraries / About 25 days per month (except Sundays and holidays).

⁴ Data in 1996 fiscal year.

The second approach is to simply regard the current systems of the public library as falling short of what they should be. The city would take an active role in changing the way the public library functions to reflect community preferences, and treat it as a public institution supported by limited local tax revenues. Taking this approach facilitates the discontinuation of the vicious cycles, but requires actions that challenge the status quo.

Which approach should Union City take? The first approach basically follows the current trends of the Union City Public Library. It does not require any particular new actions, but allows the community to gradually build consensus towards the closure of the libraries. In the short term, this preservation of the *status quo* would be more comfortable to the concerned parties in the city, including the librarians, since no action means no friction. In the long run, even though a mercy killing should be finally executed as a result of the vicious circles, no one will really protest against it, because the libraries' existence may have become so trivial that the closure would mean merely cutting extra expenditures for the city. For the people in the community it would be someone else's story. For the librarians, closure would mean a loss of jobs, but no tears shed for the library's closure. Politically, this second approach is less risky. Therefore, the approach which requires no particular action will likely continue.

However, from the community's point of view, the first approach, in the long run, will have an opportunity cost in that it continues to fund a stagnant local institution from which it could otherwise benefit. Particularly, in this IT society, there should be enough incentive to restructure public libraries to better serve the community. The second approach requires actions and will bring more friction than do the conventions that are currently shaping the libraries, but by reflecting community needs the libraries will achieve their original goals of serving the public.

Therefore, I am going to examine what I call “seeds” of community needs for the public libraries. These seeds represent hidden needs of which the community is unaware due to the libraries’ current conventional practices.

2.4 Seeds of Community Needs -- Findings

Based on observations from interviews, my visits to Union City, and from information obtained from the city government, I categorized three major seeds of needs for the Union City Public Library. These are:

- Connecting the community to digital/networked information
- Supporting the local economy
- Serving as a community place and point of identity, leading to becoming a centripetal force in the community.

The three seeds match respectively with each of the characteristics of the public libraries mentioned in the three larger library cases in Chapter 1; the Seattle Public Library connecting the community to digital /networked information, the SIBL in New York supporting the local economy, and the San Francisco Public Library serving as a community place.

2.4.1 Seed 1 - Connecting the Community to Digital / Networked Information

As mentioned in 2.2.2, new computer related services at the Union City Public Library are offered by the UCBOE library program. The UCBOE opened computer rooms with ten computers at both the 15th Street and 43rd Street public libraries in 1997(Fig. 41). Their purpose is to serve the Union City community by providing informational, educational, and training facilities to its adult population. Also, the UCBOE intends to provide continuous access to new technologies for its students after they leave the school system. The UCBOE library program operates the two computer rooms and provides computer-related classes at the public libraries. The computer rooms are open during library hours to the general public without appointment or time limit, when there are no classes.



Fig. 41 Computer Room at the 15th Street Public Library

Classes Held at the Computer Rooms

The computer rooms at the Union City Public Library are used for ESL classes as well as computer classes. In a community where more than half of the adults do not speak English well,¹ the UCBOE library program also emphasizes the improvement of residents' language skills because "meeting the current educational needs of the adult population of Union City is to a great extent meeting literacy needs."² Class participants also have the opportunity to practice English in the computer classes. Literacy education and the study of English as a second language have traditionally been considered to be within the realm of public libraries in the United States. By the 1920's, public libraries were heavily involved in the adult education movement, promoting adult literacy and lifelong learning, especially to America's immigrant population. Recently, their range of support of adult education has included providing collections of basic literacy materials, computer-assisted instruction, and the training of volunteer tutors. The UCBOE library programs are unique in that they integrate literacy education with computer skill training. Courses offered by UCBOE library programs

¹ Census of Population, 1990.

² Library Program - Parent University, UCBOE library programs, 1997.

include English as a Second Language (ESL), Internet basics, career planning / job searching on the Internet, using technology to “look-it-up” (how to find information using new technologies such as the World Wide Web, on-line references, e-mail, and newsgroups), colleges & scholarships on the Internet, introduction to computers, computers for seniors (Fig. 42), introduction to word processing, and introduction to spreadsheets.

In larger cities such as Seattle, ESL and Internet related courses are often offered by public libraries. Compared with the classes at the Seattle Public Library, which emphasize access to various types of information such as “Internet and the Arts” and “Environmental Resources on the Internet,” UCBOE library program classes are more oriented to skill training.

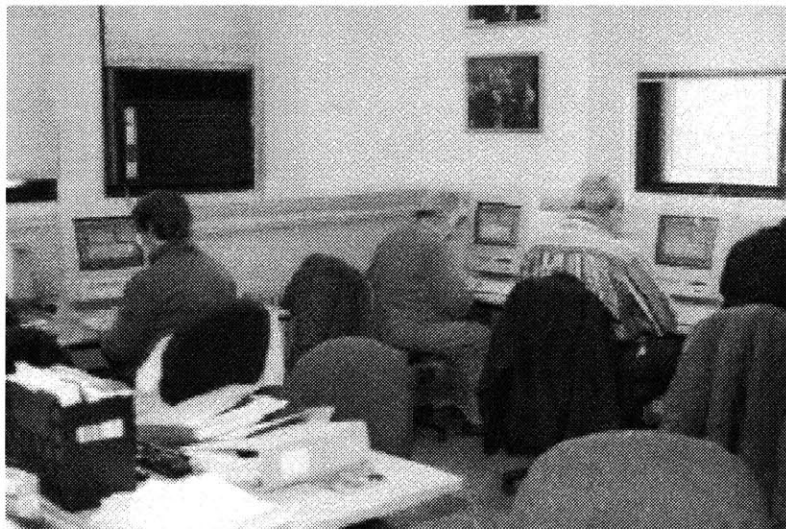


Fig. 42 “Computer for Seniors” Class at the 15th Street Library¹

In contrast to the unpopularity of its traditional public library services, the UCBOE’s library program is in such high demand that about 800 people are on its waiting lists. The shortage of instructors and the restriction of class times to the libraries’ evening hours act as the “bottle necks” to the programs. The

¹ Photo source: Union City Board of Education "1998 Welcome to Union City - The City of Union City Calendar".

need for computer classes for the whole community was expressed by an attendee at a planning meeting for new educational facilities: "We need computer training for all residents of our city."¹

At the time of this writing, the UCBOE library programs were conducting a survey of all their applicants. So far, 700 out of 1,270 submitted responses (55%) have been tallied. To the question, "How do you plan to use computers?", the highest percentage (44%) of respondents (281 persons) said they were seeking help in finding a new job. About 128 persons (20%) responded that they wanted to learn for their personal use, followed by 83 persons (13%) who sought to help their children, 77 persons (12%) who wished to improve their current jobs, 41 persons (6%) who were supplementing their college studies, and 36 persons (5%) whose interest was business related.²

Although only 5 percent chose "for businesses," the instructors found from personal contacts with the students during the classes that "personal use at home" usually meant a "business related activity" to the participants. Many of the female program participants mentioned to the instructors that they attended classes to help their businesses at home or to help their husbands with their businesses. Based on these observations, the UCBOE library program estimates that about three-fourths of the respondents who chose "for personal use at home" (15%) actually meant business use for personal or home offices. Recalibrated, this means that close to 20% of respondents sought out these classes for "business" purposes³ and only 5% for "personal use at home." With 800 people already on the waiting lists, the UCBOE library program has not publicized the programs to the business community in Union City. The program director believes that the number of people on

¹ Union City Board of Education, "Attendance and Comments at Meeting with M.I.T.," Oct., 1997.

² Information from Carmen Alarco, UCBOE Library Program Director.

³ Original respondents of 5% + 15%.

the waiting lists would be even higher if they advertised the classes to small business owners in the community.¹

The UCBOE library program thinks that the highest response rate being for job search motives reflects the high rate of unemployment in Union City, which is 10.9%, compared to 5.9% for all of New Jersey.² The number of people who applied to the program (1,270 persons) is high for the size of the adult population (44,047 persons 18 years and over³) in the city. It shows the high demand for information technology instruction as well as for ESL classes among the adult population. The survey results also show that the class attendees' motivations to take classes are more for problem-solving purposes such as to look for a job, to help children, and to enhance business, and not simply for leisure. This may be a result of the problem-solving orientation of most of the current classes that the library program is providing, but it is likely that it is also a result of the social and economic characteristics of the city, which has a high unemployment rate and a relatively low level of education among the adult population. Class attendees also include homeless single mothers that come to the classes from shelters. They are taking the classes to obtain job skills that will help them in finding a job.

There are two major advantages to offering computer classes at public libraries. First, a public library is a place for informal education for everyone, of any age, from any background. For over a century, it has been a welcoming environment for people just out of school, as mentioned earlier, although it had at one time also earned a legacy for racial segregation.⁴ The people served included immigrants, the unemployed, and the illiterate. In the nineteenth century, people such as George Ticknor promoted the idea of

¹ Information from Carmen Alarco, UCBOE library program director.

² Census of Population, 1990.

³ Census of Population, 1990.

⁴ Paul Dickson, "The Library in America, A Celebration in Words and Pictures," Facts on File Publications, 1986.

establishing public libraries to help Americanize the influx of new immigrants. The immigrants were mainly Irish in the 1840's, and Russian and Italian in the 1890's, and Ticknor felt that the public library could help them adapt to the social system in the United States. During the Great Depression, public libraries like the New York Public Library were a haven for the unemployed. The public library is also a place where literacy education is traditionally offered. Even though class applicants were not regular users, it is understandable that they would feel more at ease in applying for classes held at public libraries than those held in formal educational facilities. This is also exemplified by the variety of attendants at the Internet classes that we organized at the Uphams Corner branch library in Boston, and in the case of the Seattle Public Library.

The second advantage to offering computer classes in public libraries is that class attendees may return to the same place to practice and utilize what they learned at the classes. This is an important advantage because after learning about computers at educational facilities, class participants often cannot get to places to practice or even access computers once the courses are over. At public libraries, computers are open to the public during library hours, which are relatively longer than those of other community facilities. Quick assistance is generally available from the library staff.

General Use of Computer Rooms by the Public

For a public library, offering access to information is traditionally a more basic and more continuous service than holding classes. In IT society, a public library should be the base for encouraging equal access to digital / networked information, including to essential social resources and to various opportunities for the community. In Union City, the computer rooms are open to the public when they do not have scheduled classes. They have various types of users such as the middle aged, children, and homeless people, though not as far reaching and keen as the Seattle Public Library. One

of the most frequent users of the computer room at the 15th Street library is a homeless person. He has been suffering from arthritis for many years and it is one of his biggest concerns. He was very glad when he found out that he could access various kinds of information about arthritis through the World Wide Web and newsgroups.¹

In addition to providing digital/networked information access to “information have-nots,” some of the Union City Public Library’s particular characteristics should also be noted. The computer rooms expose the public to the latest ways to access information without major barriers, as the staff is watching the latest computer technology and market trends. As information technology is continuously evolving, this exposure is an effective way for people to keep up, including those who are not exposed to information technology at their workplaces or elsewhere. Due to the educational system emphasizing computer use in Union City, residents with children tend to be indirectly exposed to information technology, but this is less true for people without children. Access to the computers at the public libraries can function as a way to reduce the discrepancy between them.

The computer access at the public libraries also functions to support regular school education in Union City. In spite of the high ratio of computers available in the schools, students do not have access to them after school.² For example, the students at the Emerson High School have to leave school at 2:30 p.m. The public libraries can provide them with access to the computers after school. Also, though the schools in Union City emphasize the use of computers, the number of students per computer varies from 2.22 at the Columbus School to 10.05 at the Hudson School.³ The accessibility of public

¹ Observation at the 15th Street Library Oct. 18, 1997 and interview with Carmen Alarco, UCBOE Library Program Director.

² Except students at the experimental school.

³ Technology Survey submitted to New Jersey State Department, the UCBOE, Feb. 1997.

library computers also has equalizing effects among students from different schools, since the whole student community is served.

However, because of the organizational system at the Union City Public Library, the computer rooms have operating problems. There is not enough integration and cooperation between the Union City Public Library and the UCBOE library program. Currently, the staff of the Union City Public Library neither support computer room users' questions nor supervise the rooms due to territorial issues. The computer rooms have to be closed when the staff in charge of the UCBOE library program is away to teach at the other locations, even when the public libraries are open. The irregular open hours and frequent unannounced closings cause frustration and confusion among users, which result in the loss of users' motivation to visit.

Also, some of the reference questions at public libraries are more easily answered using information from the Internet than from the books they have on the stacks, such as official information from various governments. Due to the financial problem at the Union City Public Library, fewer reference books are available and many of them are outdated. However, the information available at the library computer rooms is not integrated into the city's library reference service.

Compared to the demand for and achievement of the classes, the computer room's operation is not as successful. For a public library, offering access to information is a more basic and continuous service than holding classes. The community would benefit more from a unified reference service, and by the integration of printed and digital information. By overcoming territorial issues, the service integration between the Union City Public Library and the UCBOE library program should be strongly encouraged in the near future.

Seeds of Community Needs

From these observations, one of the “seeds” of needs for the Union City Public Library can be defined as connecting the community to networked/digitized resources and services. The major criteria for promoting computer access at a local institution can be listed as such as providing computer classes, providing physical access to computers, and have on-site help available. They can be satisfied within one organizational system of the public library.

There is room to argue about the extent to which access and classes should be offered at public libraries. The extent of comprehensiveness of information technology to offer to the public could vary from using computers for library catalog purposes only, or to offering CD-ROM information, access to the Internet and on-line databases, to word processing and to other software.¹ Usually, everything up to and including “access to on-line” databases are offered and taught in public libraries. In the Union City case, perhaps because the UCBOE is actively involved, the classes are expanded to include a more formal education side. Literacy education, however, which is traditionally offered at public libraries, may soon include how to write with a word processor. A survey about library users by the British Library and Information Commission also reports that training centers for information and communication skills are new opportunities for public libraries: “Basic computer skills training was particularly appealing, though it seemed more appropriate for adults than for younger groups, who are already taught such skills at school.” The report also refers to the idea of an introductory session to the Internet as “creating strong interest in all groups.”²

¹ Online catalog, CD-ROM information, and on-line databases are not available at the Union City Public Library.

² New Library; People’s Network, the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport, UK, Oct., 1997

The next and more vital step for public libraries will be to convert class attendees into regular computer users by trying to enhance people's interests and motivations. For a public library, offering access to information is historically a more basic and consistent service. This service should be promoted more. Though the UCBOE's computer classes are successfully operated, only when the class attendees come back to utilize what they learned at the classes will the benefit of the classes be maximized. At the library, class graduates can continue to use computers for practical purposes, such as to research job and educational use without moving to another local institution in the community. This falls in line with what Vale writes that "... to promote computer access in low income areas must be accompanied by parallel efforts in education and job training to ensure that obtaining access will be meaningful."¹ If the various barriers, such as the territorial issues and the users' psychological barriers, which are perhaps induced by the "authoritarian" atmosphere of the current library, are removed, the Union City Public Library may experience oversaturated demand, a situation similar to the one that occurred with the Seattle Public Library, where the public library and the communities are closer than in other places.

¹ Lawrence J. Vale, "The Imaging of the City," *Communication Research*, Vol. 22 No. 6, Dec. 1995, p.657.

2.4.2 Seeds 2 - Supporting the Local Economy

As has been mentioned already, Union City is one of the communities with the lowest social and economic levels in the United States. The city suffers from a stagnant local economy with a high unemployment rate. The improvement of economic conditions is among the highest priorities in the community.

In this section, the possibilities for the public libraries to support the local economy will be discussed in terms of providing both general business information and local information, with an analysis of the city's potential assets. Examples from other municipalities will be discussed and compared with the particular situation of Union City.

Current Local Economy Conditions

Since the city lost its position as a major embroidery center, it has been seeking an alternative core industry for the local economy. Recently, the city is trying to promote the local economy by taking advantage of its ethnically diverse culture, and the heritage of each of its immigrant groups, which include Germans, Cubans, and the more recent arrived Dominicans. For example, city promotional documents claim that people come from various places to Union City to test and buy merchandise because they are attracted by the variety of things that its cultural diversity offers. "On walks through our shopping districts, one's senses are titillated by the sights, sound, and smells of a rich variety of culture."¹

¹ City document from Artie Jacob, Office of Public Relations.

Two Current Major Approaches for Local Economy Development

- Improving Existing Retail Activities -

Union City has two main commercial districts. One is along Bergenline Avenue from 32nd to 49th Street. The other is along Summit Avenue from 15th to 8th Street. These streets are filled with a variety of retail establishments, restaurants, and services and have the active atmosphere of a traditional downtown. These areas comprise the city's primary business districts and provide the goods, services, and jobs necessary for the residents and the property tax revenue for the city. However, these areas have experienced a significant decline in both "quantity and quality" of commercial activities in recent years.¹ In 1996, areas mainly comprised of such declining commercial districts were made eligible for Urban Enterprise Zone (UEZ) status for rehabilitation by the New Jersey Department of Commerce and Economic Development. The program allows retail establishments to charge a reduced 3% sales tax instead of the usual 6% New Jersey tax, and also to receive a variety of benefits. In addition, the sales tax collected in the UEZ is returned to the city by the state for use in making improvements in the zone. The city tries to make the most of the program as well as of its unique, rich diversity of culture to encourage commercial activities. However, it is hard to have the whole local economy dependant on retail. The local area has reached a saturation point. In fact, at the same time that Bergenline Avenue was being revitalized, some shopping centers away from it were forced to close. The city seemed to need an alternative core industry to replace embroidery.

¹ "Urban Enterprise Zone," Union City Department of Revenue and Finance, http://www.union-city.k12.nj.us/community/city_gov/mayor_office/uez.html (last accessed on Dec. 15, 1997).

- Inviting New Businesses -

At the same time as it tries to revitalize its commercial districts, Union City is trying to invite new businesses. The mayor's office and the Union City Community Development Agency claim that they assist businesses to relocate into the city.¹

Assets of Union City for New and Existing Businesses

The major assets of Union City for new and existing small businesses and entrepreneurs are as follows. First, the prime location of the city is potentially good for small businesses. The city is just across the Hudson River from Manhattan. Frequent buses make the 10 minute run to the Port Authority Bus Terminal in New York City. The Lincoln Tunnel runs through the center of the city and it is less than three miles away from the New Jersey Turnpike. Thus, it is very convenient for businesses to access New York City and various sites in New Jersey. Second, there is plenty of business space available in the city. Especially, there is an availability of low-cost loft spaces on the upper floors of commercial buildings on Bergenline Avenue and Summit Avenue, which would be suitable for the small businesses and entrepreneurs including "Silicon Alley" companies now located in crowded Manhattan, seeking for less expensive and more spacious offices. Third, due to the nature of the city's high population density, plenty of manpower is available. Though the general education level for adults is not high, the recent efforts to improve Union City's education system, especially in computer use, is gradually building a good work force supply. Fourth, the unique atmosphere in Union City with its rich diversity of culture is the type of place that often attracts young creative entrepreneurs in the information technology industry. These assets together indicate that the city has a good potential to become another "Silicon Alley" or high-tech oriented SOHO (small offices, home offices) area. However, so far, the city is still struggling.

¹ City document from Artie Jacob, Office of Public Relations.

The Strengthening of Business Assets for Business by Public Libraries

Union City's public libraries have the chance to create additional value to strengthen these assets. Generally, the local government's support for businesses takes the form of tax incentives, zoning adjustments and so on. In addition to them, in a society where information is becoming more critical than ever for businesses, the public libraries can add vital values to these traditional approaches to promoting the local economy by providing timely, accurate, and relevant information which is essential to businesses.

This information consists of two types. (Fig. 43) One is information from outside of local government in printed and digital form. The nature of the information can be printed materials, information from various levels of government, and commercial and governmental databases and so on. The other type of information is local, such as data created by the local government, municipal contact information, and community information, culture and history. Even if a public library is small, it should work as the primary source of this kind of information. The public library is responsible for organizing this information as well as providing it. As James H. Billington says, the public library can be organized as "nodal points of local information."¹

¹ James H. Billington, *American Libraries*, June / July, 1996, p.39.

	Information about Local Community	General Information
Source	Mainly from inside community	Outside of community
Role of Local Public Library	Major primary organizer & provider	Secondary provider
Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local and associated governmental information • Non- Commercial • Commercial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other non-local governmental • Commercial
Format	Printed / Digital	Printed / Digital
Availability in Other Local Public Libraries	Minimal	Similar
Targeted Users	Local: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community people • Local businesses Non-Local: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public • Outside businesses thinking of relocation, marketing, etc. 	Local: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community people • Local businesses

Fig. 43 Two Types of Information Which Local Public Libraries Provide:
Local Information & General Information

In Union City, the public libraries can support the mayor's office and the Community Development Agency in providing and organizing information relevant to local economic activities. This involvement of libraries in local economic development can rationalize larger funding for the public libraries in the city's budget. Therefore, in this sense, the cooperation benefits both

sides, the city departments in charge of promoting the local economy and the Union City public libraries.

Learning from the Business Support Functions of Other Public Libraries

- Providing General Business Information -

As previously mentioned in the context, New York City opened the Science, Industry, and Business Library (SIBL) with particular emphasis on providing assistance to people who want to start or expand businesses.

There is also a plan for public libraries to support the local businesses in the United Kingdom, where around 73% of companies employ fewer than ten people and around three million are self-employed.¹ They do not have capacity to employ information specialists or to acquire expensive collections of data to inform their marketing and development activities. The government announced a plan for UK Public Library Network in order to contribute to the transformation of the United Kingdom into an information society. The plan includes large amount of information to be available even to the smallest and most remote local libraries through access to on-line databases on trade and commerce, as it sees "The successful business already exploits information as an organizational resource." The content to be delivered will include databases of company information, personnel and locations, databases of products and services, resources for market research, trade information on important import / export regulations and opportunities, data on countries and their markets, and information on intellectual property such as patents and design.²

¹ "New Library; The People's Network, Library and Information Commission," Department for Culture, Media and Sport, The United Kingdom.

² "New Library; The People's Network, Library and Information Commission," Department for Culture, Media and Sport, The United Kingdom, 1997.

Union City should be aware of the general recent needs for business information by small businesses, although a small city like Union City cannot afford to provide it at an intensive level. It should also be brought to the attention in the city government that small businesses in Union City are competing with those in info-rich environments across the region. Furthermore, Union City itself is competing with other cities that have sophisticated levels of business support systems in providing business information, like that of New York City.

Although a full range of that kind of services is impossible for a small city, a public library still can develop in that direction based on its capability. An actual example for smaller local governments is provided by the Newington Public Library in Connecticut, though it is not a direct support for local business but a support for the town. Before a meeting with company representatives from an international company that was considering several local towns in the area for locating its North American Headquarters, the town manger asked for information. The manager could speak knowledgeably with the visitors about their firm's operation based on information the public library offered, resulting in the company's choice of Newington.¹ Savana, Illinois with a population of 4,000 provides another example of the public library's involvement with local business in an even smaller city. The city's part-time library director also became the part-time executive director of the Chamber of Commerce and found the combination a natural one for her and the town.² An example of a traditional and a smaller degree of involvement of the library is seen at the Donnell Library Center in New York City. It has a small business section near the entrance with printed materials by the U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of Business Development such as "Should You Lease or Buy Equipment" and "Avoiding

¹ Maxire Bleiweis, "Helping Business - The Libraries' Role in Community Economic Development," 1997.

² Maxire Bleiweis, "Helping Business - The Libraries' Role in Community Economic Development," 1997.

Patent, Trademark and Copyright Problems,” and books such as “Small Business Barriers and Battle Fields.”¹

- Providing Local Information -

In addition to important business information from outside of the city, two types of local information is also important. The community-oriented Seattle Public Library shows the strength of public libraries in organizing existing community information, that includes business information. The web site of the Seattle Public Library shows available local digital and printed information, and also has links to organization web sites which support local businesses and to non-profit community sites.

In this respect, even small public libraries should be able to play a major role, since they should have a closer relationship with their communities. The extent of information that they deal with is also limited and when compared with the big public libraries in big cities. Their function also can be enhanced by the collaboration with larger public library systems if applicable. An example of a successful combination of outside information and local information on the web sites at small public libraries is shown by of Bellevue Regional Library in the City of Bellevue, Washington, (population 105,000). The library is part of the King County Library System. The numerous links to outside information and countywide information, including business information (Appendix 1), are organized and provided by the King County Library System. On the other hand, the links for local information are organized and provided by the Bellevue Regional Library. For example, the economic profile of the City of Bellevue can be accessed by clicking from the Bellevue Regional Library (Appendix 2), to the library’s Bellevue and East

¹ Observation on visit on Oct. 19, 1997.

Side information page (Appendix 3), to the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce page (Appendix 4), and to the Economic profile (Appendix 5).¹

- Providing Additional Incentives -

In addition to directly providing the above two types of business related information, public libraries can also indirectly contribute to companies' decisions to relocate and can promote a good environment for existing businesses. Fig. 44 is an advertisement for the Town of Southfield, Michigan which ran in national magazines. As well as its direct function to support businesses, it also highlights the public library as one of the city's excellent services that go to create a sense of community, and provides a good environment for employees, entrepreneurs and SOHO people to live in.

¹ These appendixes are included to show the development of the information distribution through the Internet at the point of 1997.

成功
 Erfolg
 Succés
 Successo
 Ycnéx
 Prosperar

In any language, Southfield, Michigan translates into Success.

The world of commerce takes anchor in Southfield, home to one hundred and forty Fortune 500 companies and 46 foreign firms—more than any community in Oakland County. It's easy to see why so many international businesses make Southfield their home. Abundant, prestigious office space at great rates, given our nearly 60 office buildings with more than 100,000 square feet. Superb freeway and highway access to all areas of metropolitan Detroit. A sense of community—with excellent city services, including ~~our~~ business-oriented library, attractive shopping and dining; and inviting neighborhoods and parks.

For more information contact Southfield Community Development at (810) 354-48483.



SOUTHFIELD. THE CENTER OF IT ALL.

Fig. 44 Advertisement of the City for Business Relocation¹

Current Availability of Local Information in Union City

- The Union City Public Library -

In Union City, it is the whole community's priority to improve the local economy. However, due to the current condition of the Union City Public Library, it is far from being able to help businesses. Their printed reference materials are neither updated nor business oriented. Many members of the library staff are not interested in learning how to access digital information. Special computer classes organized for the library staff were not well attended.

Neither an online catalog nor interlibrary borrowing is available. No computer is available for a reference service or for staff to use. Yet, even for questions which are better answered by an Internet search, users are not transferred to UCBOE staff at the computer rooms in the libraries. The low level of awareness about the importance of information is also shown by the fact that the library even lacks information about their own library. For example, through many interviews with the library staff and from personal experiences at the libraries, the staff did not seem to know and did not know where to find information about library floor sizes, the year their library was established, whether they received Carnegie funds, and so on. This information can easily be obtained from outside resources or simply be observed and measured, like floor size. They also do not try to keep any records or statistics, such as circulation volume, even though they face a crisis over their very existence. It has even been several years since they counted the number of visitors.

Fig. 45 shows snapshots of the results of the budget survey for the 1997 fiscal year by Library Journal. Union City was chosen as a snapshot for public libraries serving populations of 50,000 to 99,999. The library reported its budget for the 1996 fiscal year (instead of the 1997 data requested²), and only gave a rough estimate of the population served, and listed the other data as NC (No Change).³ It seems that questions were not seriously answered -- another indication of the library's poor attitude toward information. Furthermore, a recent book, "Carnegie Libraries across America," has a nationwide listing of the current status of the Carnegie libraries. It presents the results of a 1996 survey sent to every Carnegie library community, state historical society, and the Carnegie Corp. The current status of the two

¹ Maxire Bleiweis, "Helping Business - The Libraries' Role in Community Economic Development," 1997.

² Other libraries where 1997 data was not available, they clarify that it is from 1996.

³ Per capita funding is calculated by 650,000 / 60,000.

Carnegie libraries in Union City are listed as NA (no response to the survey).¹ Consequently, their very existence is hidden since they did not respond. This information about the historical Carnegie library origins could be used to effectively persuade the city to support their survival. The problems of the Union City Public Library are not only a lack of materials due to a low budget, but also the libraries' orientation and motivation.

Serving 50,000-99,999

Library	Pop. Served	Total Budget FY97	Per Capita Funding	Materials Change	Salary Change	Total Change
Tuscarawas Cty. PL, New Philadelphia, OH	51,500	\$1,580,289	\$30.68	+9%	+4.3%	+2.7%
Morristown-Hamblen County PL, TN	52,763	335,000	6.50	+7.4%	+3.7%	+4.5%
Ocmulgee Reg. Lib. Sys., Eastman, GA	55,627	575,000	10.35	NC	+0.8%	+0.4%
Carver County Library, Chaska, MN	57,010	660,715*	NA	+8.8%	NA	NA
Vernon Parish Library, Leesville, LA	59,000	431,612	7.31	-14.8%	-11.7%	+4.5%
Bellingham PL, WA	60,000	2,222,907	37.00	NC	-0.3%	+1%
Union City PL, NJ	60,000	650,000	10.80	NC	NC	NC
Laurens County Library, SC	61,000	546,000	8.95	+14.7%	+2.9%	+1.5%
Wilson County PL, NC	66,061	1,210,000	18.32	NC	+3.9%	+1.9%
Rosenberg Library, Galveston, TX	72,000	1,922,171	13.00	+9.5%	+6.2%	+2.5%
Fort Smith PL, AR	72,798	1,510,000	20.74	NC	+7.6%	+4.7%
Fargo PL, ND	79,500	1,188,141	14.95	+27.5%	+3.3%	+7.6%
Newton Free Library, MA	82,452	3,050,000	36.99	+14.8%	+4.8%	+4.3%
Decatur PL, IL	85,306	2,660,824	26.61	+2.8%	-1.8%	NC

*FY96

Fig. 45 Budget Report 97: Public Library Snapshots²

- City Government -

Currently, it seems that no agency in the local government of Union City is in charge of organizing and offering city information. When I contacted the city hall as well as the Union City Public Library, they could not even answer questions about the size and the length/width of the city. When I requested the current annual expenditures of the city in 1998, I received data from 1991 which was a part of a copy from a data book published by a private publisher. When I called several times to ask the public relations department or other departments about the names of major companies, or a brief history of the economy, it always happened that I was referred from one department to

¹ Theodore Jones, "Carnegie Libraries Across America," 1997, p.153.

² Evan St. Lifer, "Budget Report '97," Library Journal, Jan. 1997, p.44.

another for about thirty minutes without any success, even although this is a small city with a population of about 58,000.

Also, a comparison can be made with the available business related web pages between Union City¹ and the aforementioned City of Bellevue, which claims to rival "Silicon Valley."² Both cities are relatively small and next to big cities, with New York and Seattle across the water, respectively. Each tries to provide information to encourage businesses to relocate there. However, while the Chamber of Commerce page, which is linked from the City of Bellevue page and the Bellevue Regional Library page, offers data-based concrete information (Appendix 5), Union City's only available business related page does not include much information but simply emphasizes "We are doing our best" (Appendix 6). This situation certainly would discourage any company's decision to relocate to Union City, and must certainly hamper efforts by existing businesses in the city to obtain information. The city should develop a system to provide the basic information about itself.

Local information provided by various governmental agencies, private sectors, and community people should be organized and provided by the Union City Public Library. This material should be made available both as printed materials and digital/networked media so that potential and existing businesses can have easy access to it. Unlike outside information, which is available through other means, local information would need to be provided and organized primarily by the government of Union City or its public library.

¹ "Business," Union City Department of Revenue and Finance,
http://www.union-city.k12.nj.us/community/city_gov/mayor_office/business.html
Note: This web page was created by the k-12 students as school projects.

² "Economic Profile," Bellevue Chamber of Commerce,
<http://www.bellevuechamber.org/economy/default.cfm> (last accessed on May 10, 1998).

Seeds of Community Needs

From this discussion, the second seed of community needs for Union City can be defined as supporting the local economy by providing business resources. In this context, public libraries can be a valuable community resource to business leaders, small and home businesses, and entrepreneurs, as well as to job seekers. As a city recognizes the value of a strong business base for its residents, it is also important for a public library to contribute to the community by supporting the local economy as an institution supported by the city's tax base. This requires a drastic change for many of today's librarians who probably have lived in the focused realm of "liberal arts." However, the idea of public libraries supporting the local economy is not a new one. It was already one of the major issues of the early years of the public library movement. The Library Journal in 1906 had an article about the importance for public libraries to help local businesses. That year was also when the 43rd Street Library in Union City was built. The library in 1906 had a clear view of the relationship between the public library and the city governments through contributions to local businesses. The library defined itself as an important unit in the whole scheme of city management, in sharp contrast to today's inclination of public libraries to focus on internal interests and their indifference to community issues. The following is an excerpt from the Library Journal of 1906:

What has business to do with a public library? Is not a library's business the spread of intelligence? And if a librarian knows books, how to record, care for and circulate them, what more does he need? In the days when books for circulation were given out but once a year and reference books were chained to desks, the librarian perhaps had no need of business methods. In the present-day library, however, He should be able to carry out loyally the policy inaugurated by the board, and to cooperate with them in every way so that the library may give the tax-payers value received, and be to the city government a well organized unit in the whole scheme of city management.¹

¹ Annie Archer Pollard, "The Business End of a Library," The Library Journal, July, 1906, p.311.

Today, due to the emergence of information technology, the function of "providing help for business" is more feasible than ever, even for small public libraries. In Meriden, Connecticut, where the services provided by public libraries that were brought about by economic development are being highly promoted, the city manager, Roger L. Keep, declares that "Gone are the 'ivory tower' days for local public libraries."¹ The declaration would apply to Union City as well.

Supporting the local economy is obviously an option for the Union City Public Library, where the city suffers from a stagnant local economy with a high employment rate, and improving economic levels is among the highest priorities. Such support will also improve the school education environment, where 23.4% of the school age children are living below the poverty level. As Pollard wrote about the public libraries at the turn of twentieth century, the Union City Public Library may become a well organized unit in the whole scheme of city management and be valued by taxpayers. From the library's standpoint, the involvement of the Union City Public Library in local development strengthens the argument for sustainable funding of the libraries in the city budget. The cooperation will certainly benefit both the city government, which encourages the local economy, and the public library, resulting in better services for the Union City community.

¹ Maxire Bleiweis, "Helping Business - the libraries role in community economic development," 1997, preface 9.

2.4.3 Seed 3 - Serving as a Centripetal Force in the Community - Source of Community Identity and a Community Place -

The Impact of Technology on Physical Communities

“Community” is often defined in two ways. One is a physical place such as a neighborhood, town, or city. A group of people who live in the community is associated as they have spatial proximity, share common resources, and live in a common environment. They often also share a common cultural and historical heritage. A second type of “community” is a social group that shares common interests such as social, professional, occupational, or religious groups.¹

While the latter type of “community” is extended by “virtual communities” through the innovations of information technology, some are concerned that the former type of community, tied to a physical place, is being compromised by a flood of interconnected and fragmented information. For example, Jorge Schement is concerned about the nexus between information and the decline of community. He cites the results of polls in the State of New Jersey taken by the Eagleton Institute of Rutgers University as evidence. According to the polls, more residents in New Jersey are apt to know the names of the mayors of New York and Philadelphia than the names of their own mayors. He is concerned that the information society is evolving away from the traditional notion of community.² James Billington points out that there is a growing popularity of the notion that people can get everything they want in their own home by using technology. With this notion, the whole idea of the existence of a gathering place in a community is threatened.³

¹ Anne Beamish, “Communities On-Line: Community - Based Computer Networks,” 1995, Based on her definition.

² Jorge R Schement, “A 21st-Century Strategy for Librarians,” *Library Journal*, May 1, 1996, p.35.

³ James H Billington, “Technological Flood Requires Human Navigators,” *American Libraries*, June/July, 1996, p.39.

However, it is not likely to happen in the future that people, who exist in physical space, will be totally free from space constraints, and thus totally free from the environments in the community where they live due to media and information technologies. Vale points out, for instance, that "... the drawbacks and the dangers of many low income areas will not disappear because of greater media saturation and numerous computer link-ups."¹ The importance of physical community should not be forgotten. Even though it is neglected or deformed due to the power of information technology, the physical community still surrounds people. It is still important to create a "sound" neighborhood.

The recent renaissance of cafes in American cities seems to indicate the basic desire of humans to belong to a physical community.² It seems not a mere coincidence that the recent cafe boom started in the Seattle area, where the giant Microsoft is located and a place where people's exposure to information technology in general is highly advanced, like at the Seattle Public Library. Starbucks, which originated in Seattle and demonstrates unusual care for space quality even though it is a large chain shop, seems to prevail all over the United States following the computer culture. At the "1369 Coffee House" in Cambridge, Massachusetts, for instance, sometimes about one third of the tables are occupied by people with their own laptops who stay for long periods. It seems that they balance cyber and physical space unintentionally. They do not come to meet each other. So, what they expect there is not the second type of community, social groups. Yet, generally people there seem to enjoy chance conversations with other customers. Some of the common characteristics of recent popular cafes are that they are not too large, tables are densely located, and their space usage is somehow inviting people's

¹ Lawrence J. Vale, "The Imaging of the City: Public Housing and Communication," *Communication Research*, Vol. 22 No. 6, Dec. 1995, p.657.

² Lecture by Melvin King in Feb. 1996.

interaction. What people expect in these places seems to be an attachment to the small scale of the “physical community.”

These small-scale physical spaces at the cafes also indicate that the physical neighborhood still matters in the information age. Therefore, while information and media technology are spreading, special attention should still be paid to the components that contribute to build sound physical communities.

Public Libraries as a Historical Centripetal Force in the Local Communities

One of the historical functions of public libraries is serving as a centripetal force in the local communities. This function mainly consists of two points of view, namely “community identity” and “community place.”

The first function is community identity, which resides in each community member’s mind, and the community as a whole. Particularly, in a small city or town, a public library often represents the cultural center, civic pride, and a physical landmark as mentioned in Chapter 1.

The reason for the central location of public libraries in a city or town lies in not only its accessibility but also its function as a symbol of the city.

Billington’s description about public libraries describes their function as a community identity:

Public libraries were a unifying force in whatever community they existed. There would be six different churches, many competing enterprises and even some variety in schools, but there was always a unifying library at the heart of any growing American community. The building itself was a kind of shrine, collective communal tribute to the culture and values of the book, which have in many ways undergirded our democratic system.¹

¹ James H Billington, “Technological Flood Requires Human Navigators,” *American Libraries*, June/July, 1996, p.39.

The other historic function of public libraries is as a community place, which traditionally comes with a physical space. This is further classified into space for community members' individual use and for community activities. Billington refers to public libraries as a gathering place:

... a gathering place in a community where people of different backgrounds seeking different answers still come together in a place that acquires meaning for the community as a whole.¹

As a neutral space in the community, a public library is available to individuals of any socioeconomic group or of any age in the community. It is a place for the whole community. In fact, we rarely see a scene, for example, of middle class housewives and homeless people sitting next to each other naturally in other civic places such as a community center, a museum, a concert hall, a senior house, or a shelter. A public library does not restrict users by the purpose of visit like a concert hall or a shelter, but is still a space with a kind of "purpose," allowing people to sit next to each other. If we just have a free public space, it is difficult to have people with different backgrounds staying there. This kind of unintentional gathering in a civic place is significant in creating a sense of physical community. Besides, its attributes of free of charge policy and open relatively long hours are suited to a community place. The library, as an open and inviting public space, helps to foster a sense of community.

Although the concept of a library as a vital space is recently being threatened by the deformation of the whole idea of the existence of a gathering place in a community and by its own problem of unpopularity in many cities, public libraries, however, can potentially be a good centripetal force in the local community.

¹ James H Billington, "Technological Flood Requires Human Navigators," *American Libraries*, June/July, 1996, p.39.

Historical Aspects of the Union City Public Library as a Source of Community Identity and a Community Place

The prototypes of the two libraries in Union City were established soon after the function of the community there virtually started with the holding of town meetings and schools opening. It indicates that a library was something essential for building a community at that time. Records indicate that debates and cultural activities were held at the prototype library in West Hoboken, and Union had a popular reading room.¹ These prototypes of the libraries already functioned as community places for both individual use and for community activities.

Later, the two free public libraries were built based on the votes of the people of each town. If they voted in favor of a public library, the construction of the library building was to be supported by Andrew Carnegie, but the town would be responsible for providing land and library operation costs. For the establishment of that expensive institution, the record shows that 69.2%² of the community voted its support in West Hoboken (present Downtown area). It is a surprisingly high ratio of support compared with the current apathy or unpopularity of the Union City Public Library. It suggests that having a library was once a high priority for the community.

Like many other cities and towns, the locations of the two libraries in Union City show the importance that public libraries received at that time. Fig. 46 shows the sites selected for the libraries from the prototype stage to the current buildings. The relocation sites of the libraries have always been in the center of each town, and close to Bergenline Avenue, which is the historic main shopping street. Also, 43rd Street, where the free public library in Union Hill was located, was named Main Street at that time. Not only did

¹ Compiled by Harry J. Thourot, "The Historical Panorama of Union City," 1946, p.4.

² 716 people / (716+318) people.

Compiled by Harry J. Thourot, "The Historical Panorama of Union City," 1946, p.4.

these locations provide maximum accessibility and convenience for the people of the community, it seems likely that the city officially chose the current locations of the new Carnegie libraries so that these “splendid” library buildings created by the people’s will in the towns would exude civic pride in the center of each town. Like other towns, West Hoboken created postcards around 1910¹ showing off its public library (Fig. 45). With the picturesque awnings, it had an air of importance, yet also seemed a welcoming and sheltering presence. The library seems to have functioned as a source of significant community identity.

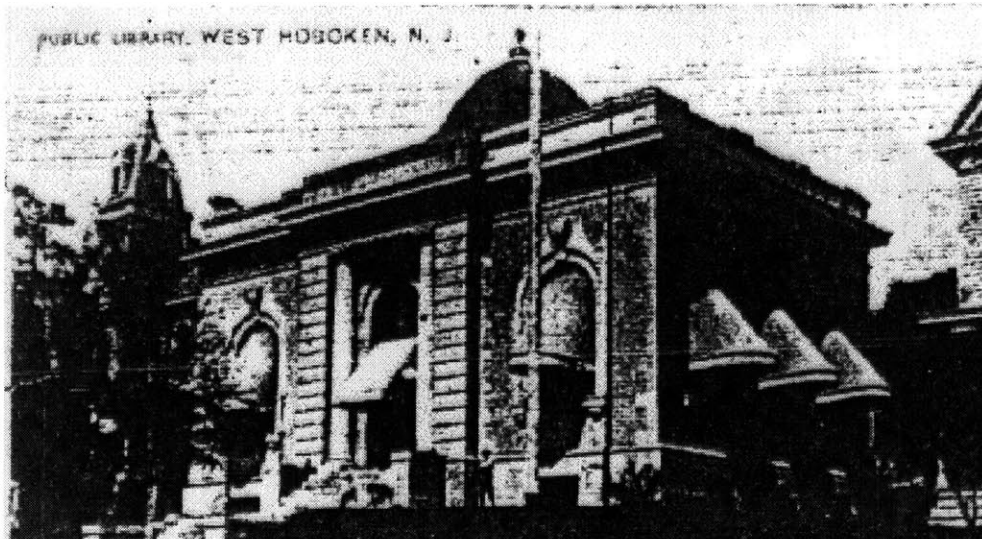


Fig. 46 Postcard Showing off Local Pride
in the Free Public Library in West Hoboken²
(present 15th Street library)

¹ Conrad and Egan, “Hudson County: Then and Now, Carnegie Donation Helped Build Library,” Hudson Dispatch, May 18,1990.

² Conrad and Egan, “Hudson County: Then and Now, Carnegie Donation Helped Build Library,” Hudson Dispatch, May 18,1990.

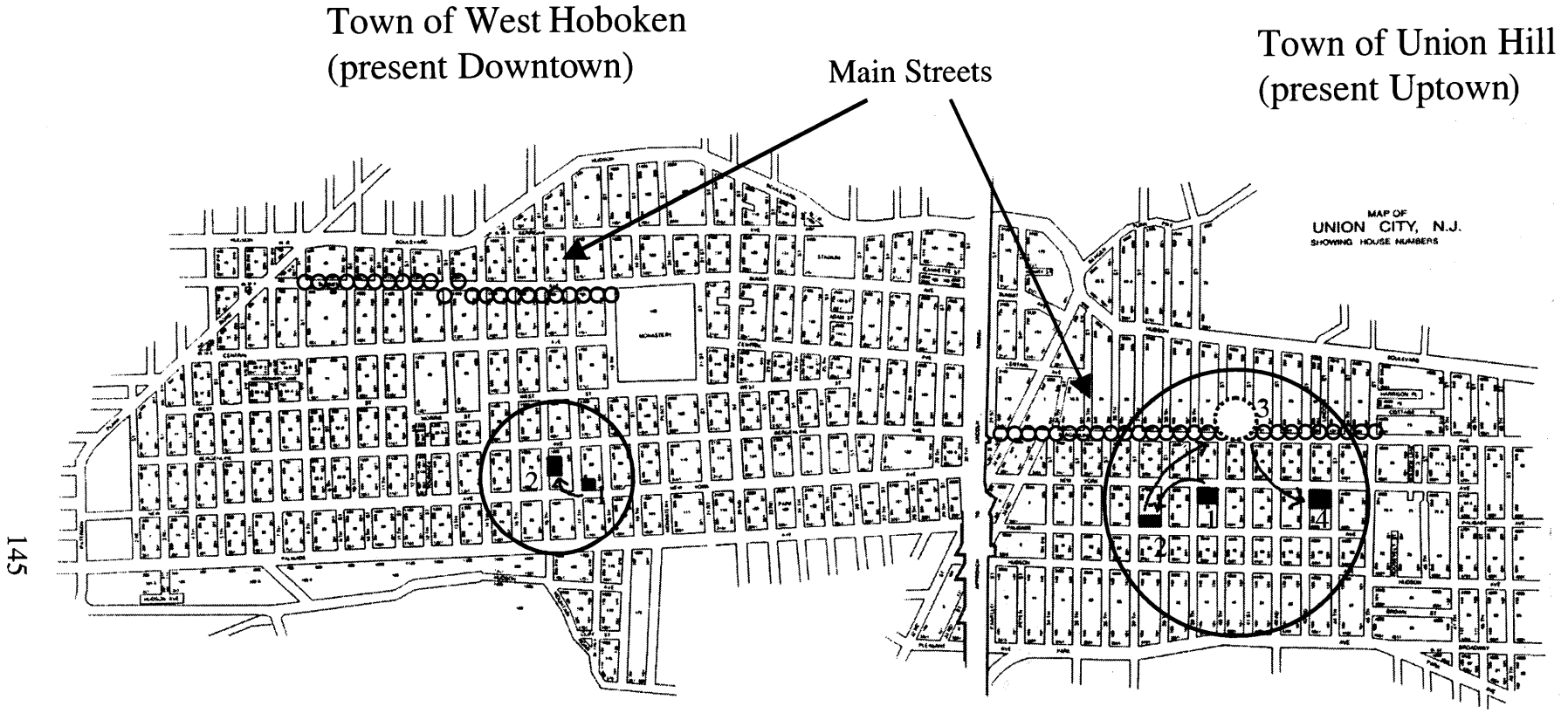


Fig. 47 The Sites Selected for Library Relocation from the Prototype Stages to the Current Library Buildings

* The city does not keep the record for the current address of the third location (248 Bergenline Avenue, 100years ago).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, one of the major purposes of public libraries was to adapt the influx of new immigrants to American society. Probably, in the two towns of immigrant communities mainly from Germany, Italy and Ireland at that time, the two libraries had a considerable mission in the town's operation. As well as the library's direct function of providing literacy education, it is imaginable that the "splendid" buildings in the center of the immigrant communities worked as symbols of American democracy in those days when people could advance themselves through reading.

Current Condition of the Union City Public Library as a Community Place and a Source of Community Identity

The Union City Public Library has a good historic background for serving as a centripetal force in the local community, since it has previously served as a source of community identity and as a community gathering place. Since those days, many conditions have not changed. Union City has continued to be a community catering to new immigrants, which creates the city's unique identity. It has kept the active atmosphere of downtown on Bergenline Avenue close to the two libraries. The majority of people in the city are still of a low social and economic level. For instance, about 40.2% of the households do not own cars,¹ which limit their mobility. Under these various circumstances, the city still has a rather strong sense of community.

However, since the time the libraries were built by community vote, they seem to have lost their position as a source of community identity and a community place. At present, the libraries are far from centripetal force. Rather, they struggle to gain recognition in the community. According to library statistics, the two libraries together have only about 80 visitors a day out of about 58,000 residents in Union City. Interviews with residents reveal

¹ Census of Housing, 1990.
8277 households / 20612 households.

that many regard the libraries as a symbol of an outdated institution, never as a symbol of community identity.

On the other hand, I find evidence of strong demands for a “community place” among various people in the community. I see seeds of needs for public libraries in these demands. Therefore, I suggest an approach that by enhancing their functions as community places, libraries may regain their positions as sources of community identity, hopefully leading them to become a centripetal force in the community. The goal of this approach is to create a link between the community and the Union City Public Library to strengthen each other in the future.

Needs for Community Spaces in Union City

Housing conditions in Union City are not desirable. It is one of the most densely populated cities in the United States, and quality is not good as indicated by the fact that 49.5% of housing units were built before 1939¹, 11.7% do not have a telephone,² and 3.0% even lack kitchen facilities.³ That causes people in Union City to have a stronger demand for comfortable public space outside of their homes. On the other hand, there are only a few common facilities in Union City. Fig. 48 shows a rough contrast with New York City with its centralization of some of civic facilities providing a “comfortable common indoor space” such as public libraries, museums, and recreation centers. In Union City, a recreation center consisting of an indoor swimming pool and a gym recently opened for community use by converting school facility after school hours. Though it is highly appreciated among community residents, it is located at the edge of the city and imposes an

¹ Census of Housing, 1990.
11173 housing units / 22592 housing units.
² Census of Housing, 1990.
8277 households / 20612 households.
³ Census of Housing, 1990.
605 housing units / 22592 housing units.

inconvenience for people to visit. Another recreational center in Union City is an outdoor swimming pool, which is used only in summer. In spite of the fact that a number of artists live in the city, it does not even have a gallery space where cultural activities in the community can be held and fostered.

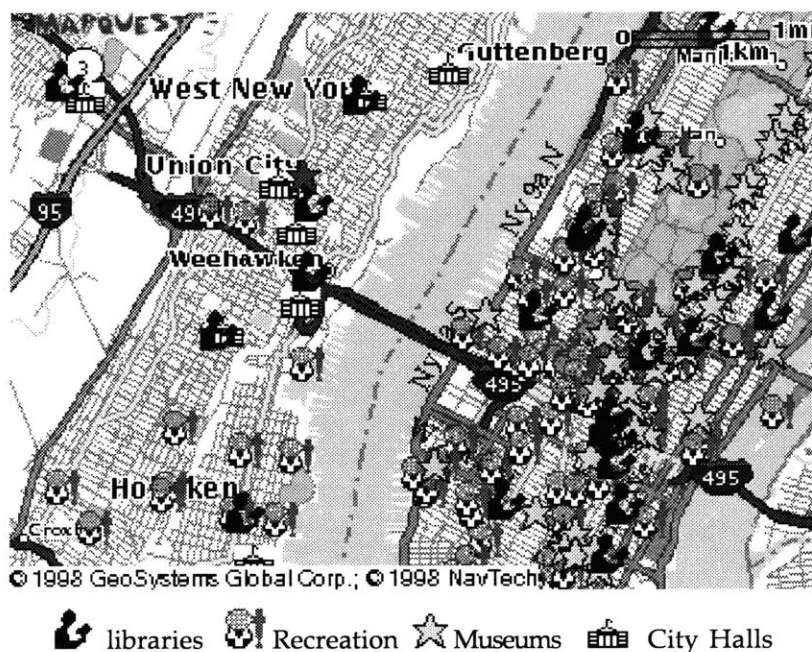


Fig. 48 Sample of Spatial Distribution of Public Spaces¹

The following written comments were provided at a discussion meeting for a plan for the new educational facilities.

"The city should build one big building for other thing beside the regular subjects. This building should contain class(rooms) to let children in grammar schools and high schools help them expand their talents, because not all people want to go into the same field when they grow up. So, this will allow students not in one school but in all of Union City so that it can benefit everyone. This will also let kids have somewhere to go after school beside the streets."

"A multi-media facility - due to our dense population and low income families average, we suggest a place where we can guide, educate and

¹ Source: Mapquest, "Mapquest Map Results," http://www.mapquest.com/cgi-bin/ia_find (last accessed on Apr. 25, 1998).

train young children to help them to find a goal. A school where parents can go and find help with their teenagers' problem."

"We need a library that would serve the students and the community."

" In such a diversely rich community, it would be wonderful to explore the potential intelligence that lie in our community. The new school should have display rooms"

" A place that looks and feels comfortable and attractive enough that students can identify as home away from home."

"Students have access to library after school hours."

"... should have space for community based programs."

"A fresh, open learning atmosphere where both parents and students can meet and learn together."

"A school that is spacious (and) bright which would be used in many different ways to suit the community's needs for time to come."¹

Even though, people in the community are expressing their requests for a new school, those requests can be satisfied by public libraries, especially in space aspects and community learning. It is interesting that one comment even requested a library (in school) to serve the students and community, even although the "public library" already exists. The seeds of needs for the Union City Public Library extracted from the above comments are a "comfortable and attractive space for community activities and community learning." That shows the people's despair in, or ignorance about, the existing Union City Public Library, and at the same time, shows hidden needs for better public library services.

¹ Union City Board of Education, "Attendance and Comments at Meeting with M.I.T.," Oct., 1997.

Possible Space Improvements for the Union City Public Library

Under these conditions, I think that improving the spatial aspects of the public libraries is important. The improvements should consist of various spatial elements in the libraries and should be accompanied by longer library hours. Some of the aspects are as follows.

- Community Meeting Rooms -

First, community meeting rooms should be created within each of the libraries for revitalizing the libraries as a community gathering places. The city hall and the public library receive frequent inquiries about meeting rooms for community activities. So far, in the city, only a few meeting rooms at city hall are available, which are almost always occupied. There is also a gym available for large community meetings, which is oversized and at the edge of the city. The two libraries had meeting rooms earlier, but they were transformed to computer rooms and no separate room is currently available for a community meeting. Generally speaking, meeting rooms are a kind of incubator of community activities and community learning such as reading clubs. It also succeeds the very original idea of the prototype library in Union City, where debates and cultural activities were held. Creating comfortable and attractive meeting rooms should be strongly encouraged.

- Children's and Student Rooms -

Second, the quality of library space for children and students should be improved. Currently, a number of parents use public libraries as a substitute for after school day care for their children. Setting aside whether this is a proper usage, the issue is that leaving children at the library seems like a negative solution under current library condition. The children's section, especially in the 15th Street library, is dark and the atmosphere is far from attractive. Many children stay in the reference section where chairs and desks are oversized for them, and the materials are not for children's use. The space

is more often used just to pass time. The library should offer comfortable and attractive space for children so that the children can become active users.

One of the successful cases in offering space to children is the Chinatown branch of the San Francisco Public Library. In an immigrant community with most of its residents from China, the branch placed importance on providing comfortable and educational space for the children with English and Chinese material for children, computer access, and bilingual children's librarian support. As a result, the parents, mostly recent immigrants, greatly trust the children rooms. And, it results in the immigrant communities' strong support for the branch, which led to the recent remodeling and enlargement. The library is even regarded as a source of community identity as it represents a symbol of a new life in the United States and a hope for the future in the center location of the immigrant community.¹

For students in Union City, the UCBOE is promoting "Safe Haven" programs after school. This involves development of places for students go after school so that they are not involved in trouble on the streets. While the importance of "Safe Haven" is realized, students usually have to leave schools, including school libraries and computer rooms, by early afternoon. The Union City Public Library should be actively involved in the program by providing comfortable and attractive space for students with young adult materials, computer access and, mentors.

- Reading Room -

Third, the atmosphere of the reading rooms should be improved to be more friendly, homelike, and comfortable to encourage individual use by community residents. For many people, the atmosphere of "authority" in the

¹ Interview with Etsuko Wilson, Librarian at San Francisco Public Library, and based on the observation on visit on Mar. 5, 1998.

library creates a psychological barrier. That is probably one of the reasons that people wrote comments requesting something else with a “library function.” Creating a friendly atmosphere in the libraries allows the city to make better use of city’s common resources. In addition, the existing computer rooms are like school classrooms, which could be intimidating to those with no prior computer experiences and those with computer phobia. Moreover, the computer rooms do not match the atmosphere of the other parts of the current libraries. Computer access should be fused into the other functions of the libraries. The psychological barrier between the rest of the libraries and the computer access should be eliminated as well as the barrier between the streets and libraries. The further collaboration of the Union City Public Library and the UCBOE should be encouraged to create more comfortable spaces at the public libraries.

- Addition: Library Community Cafe -

Fourth, to enhance their function as a community gathering place, community cafes and community galleries may be created in the libraries. Encouraged by the success of super bookstores with cafes, cafes in public libraries have recently emerged in the United States¹ as mentioned in Chapter 1. A growing number of public libraries are setting up cafes and providing coffee, muffins, and biscotti and so on. The idea is that a library cafe enhances the cultural atmosphere, invites people, and incubates community activities. Unlike commercial cafes, purchasing a drink is not required in the library cafes. This is an interesting renaissance since one of the major prototypes of early public libraries in nineteenth century Britain was the coffeehouse as mentioned in Chapter 1

¹ Though there are some long existing library cafes such as at Seattle Public Library where it functions so naturally that it no longer becomes a special topic.

The new main library of the San Francisco Public Library accommodates a library cafe that attracts various kinds of people.¹ (Fig. 49) Some come for a rest from the reading room, some come for a small meeting room, and some come just to stay at the cafe. Obviously, the cafe enhances the library as an active community place. At the Burlington County Library in New Jersey, a librarian says that the cafe has changed the library atmosphere since its opening. She says, "It makes the library more of a community center."² Some see the biggest concern of a library cafe as the danger of "spills" on the books. Librarians at the Newington Public Library in Connecticut regard circulated books as facing bigger risks, such as being read not only while eating but also while cooking, or while sitting at the beach. So far, none of the library books there have had significant problems.



Fig. 49 Library Cafe in the San Francisco Public Library³

¹ Based on the observation and the interviews with customers and librarians on Feb. 28 to Mar. 5, 1998.

² Carole Burns, "Libraries Invite Users to Check Out Their New Cafes," New York Times, Sep. 2, 1997.

³ Photo taken at the new main library of San Francisco Public Library on Saturday, Feb. 28, 1998.

A good case of meeting the concern over the operating costs of a cafe is one in a public library and community center complex in Kunitachi City, a part of Metropolitan Tokyo in Japan (population of 70,305.¹) It has had a volunteer cooperation system for 18 years and has turned out to be quite successful. (Fig. 50) Volunteers from local communities work for a few days a month in a pair with a handicapped young person. The volunteers, such as a full time computer graphic designer who faces a computer monitor all the time in her job, enjoy the interaction with customers over the cafe counter during their volunteer hours. The handicapped young people enjoy experiencing a kind of social responsibility through their work. It is also a good opportunity for those who otherwise have few opportunities to interact with others in the community. The pottery class participants at the community center provide artistic handcrafted coffee cups, as a kind of exhibition, and in return, the tuition is exempt. Users use the cafe in various ways. Some customers come directly to the cafe to enjoy small talks. Some come to read books that they have just checked out. Also, sometimes meetings in the meeting rooms are continued at the cafe. The cafe is an essential component of the public library complex and community center. Furthermore, it is successful in the sense that the cafe gives various additional values to the complex without costing extra funding from the city to operate.²

¹ Data of Nov. 1, 1998,
Kunitachi City Planning Division, "Shihou Kunitachi," Dec. 5, 1998.

² Interview with Masayo Yanaoka, Volunteer at the cafe in the complex of the Kunitachi Community Center and the Public Library, and based on the observation on visits in Jan. and Apr., 1997, and in May, 1998.



Fig. 50 Cafe Operated by Volunteers¹

In Union City, community residents such as those at the Senior Citizens Housing near the 15th Street Library may be encouraged to participate in running the cafe. Community bulletin boards and racks for flyers may be installed to enhance its function as a center of community information.

- Addition: Community Gallery -

Community galleries also enhance the spatial attractiveness of a public library as a community place. As mentioned in Chapter 1, historically libraries and museums have had much in common. Also, many library spaces such as Boston Athenaeum historically have been decorated with art. As the purpose of community galleries is to enhance the public library as a community place, exhibitions should focus on the work of artists and children from local communities. The new main library of the San Francisco

¹ Photo taken at the cafe in the complex of a public library and community center in Kunitachi City, Tokyo, Japan on Sunday, May 31, 1998.

Public Library has a separate gallery room, but for smaller public libraries, wall space inside and outside the library building will work fine. At the Donnell Library in New York, outside gallery space as well as inside space with community residents' artwork are attracting people's attention. (Fig. 50) It also seems to soften the psychological barrier caused by the atmosphere of "authority" of public libraries.

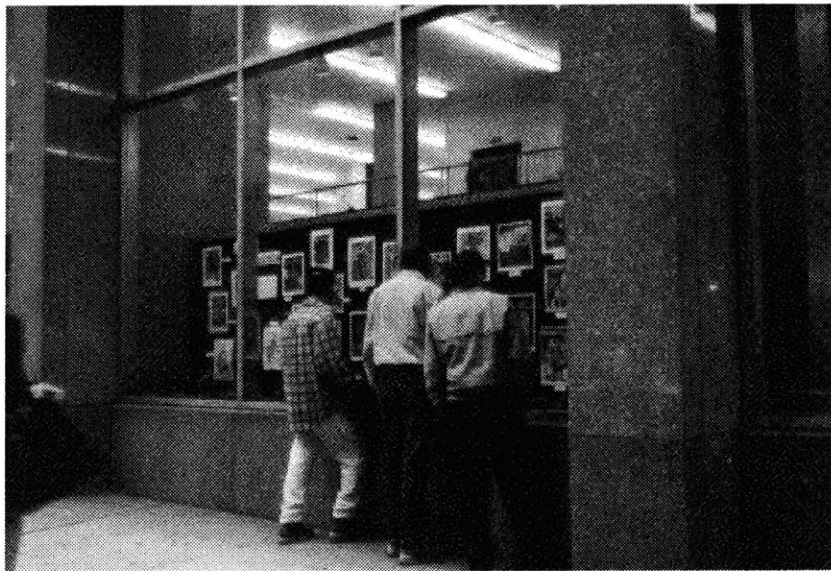


Fig. 51 Community Gallery at the Donnell Library in New York¹

As previously mentioned, though a number of artists live in Union City, it does not have an art gallery. So, a community gallery could be a place to foster cultural activities in the community. Nevertheless, as it is not a professional art gallery, the gallery should also be open to art works by local children, students, adults, and senior citizens. Wall space in the reading rooms would be a good exhibition place, but if the libraries could accommodate cafes, exhibits on the wall space in the cafes could at the same time maximize the goal of putting cafes and community galleries in the public libraries, which will enhance the role of the library as a community place.

¹ Photo taken at the Donnell Library in New York on Sunday, Oct. 19, 1997.

Seeds of Community Needs

From this discussion, the third seed of needs for the Union City Public Library can be defined as serving as a community centripetal force. The goal of the approach is to create links between the Union City community and the Union City Public Library that will strengthen each other in the future. To that goal, the public libraries primarily work as a community place for individual use and for community activities in Union City, where “comfortable” spaces are in high demand due to poor housing conditions. That continues the original idea of the prototype of the libraries in Union City at the end of the nineteenth century, when debate and cultural activities were held and a popular reading room existed. It is also heir to an approach used by the Minneapolis Public Library in 1910 which sought to directly face the city’s social issues. The library, concerned by the mean conditions of residence for the unemployed, decided to expand its reading rooms for people to come to read and relax.

(Fig. 52) Many of them were immigrants, who did not even have the “privilege of sitting in a chair” in the cheap hotels and flophouses where they stayed.¹ Still by today’s standards, these facilities represented no more than the minimum of “comfortable space,” as judged from the photo.

¹ Paul Dickson, “The Library in America - A Celebration in Words and Pictures,” p.59, 1986.



Fig. 52 Expanded Library Reading Room in 1910¹

By enhancing the Library's function as a community place, it may regain its position as a source of community identity that once it enjoyed, which can help it to become a centripetal force in the community. As a component contributing to build "sound" physical communities, the libraries will possibly help strengthen Union City's immigrant communities.

For Union City, the two public libraries are among a few public facilities with space for community use. The city should reflect community needs in the space plan at the libraries to make the best use of its resources. That will help reduce some of the problems that the city is struggling with in the dense and low-income immigrant community.

¹ Photo: Paul Dickson, "The Library in America - A Celebration in Words and Pictures," p.59, 1986.

Chapter 3

Conclusions:

Community Specific Planning

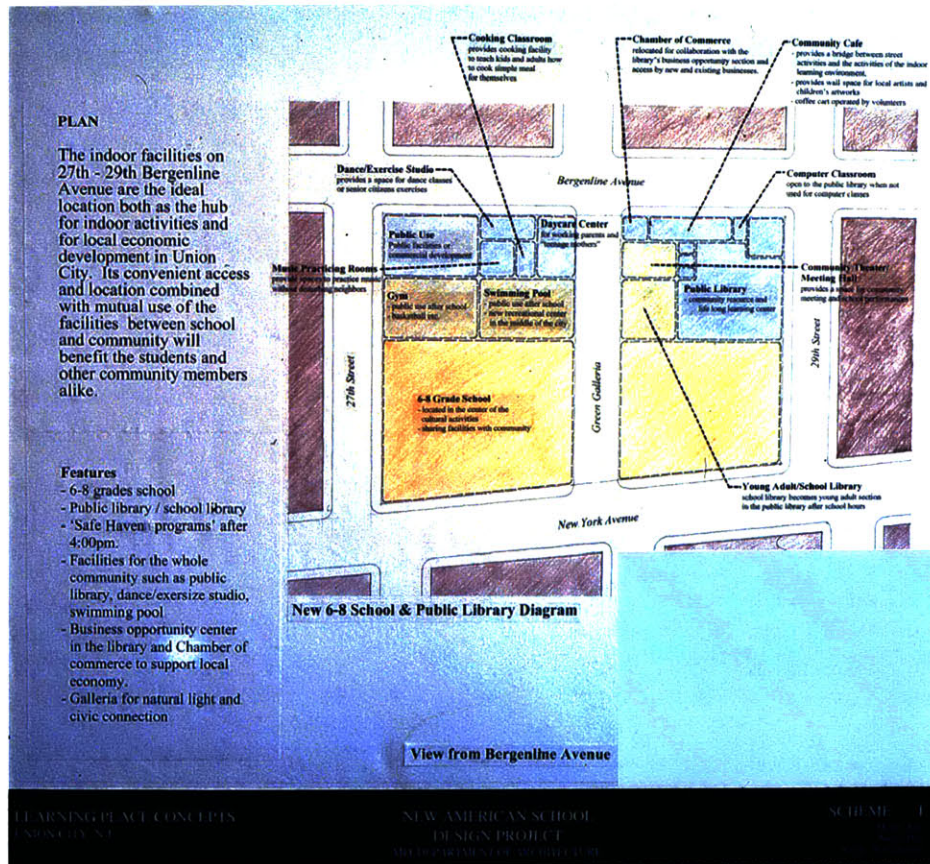


Fig. 53 A Sample Site Plan for a Public Library¹

¹ A part of a course project "New American School Design Project," taught by Roy J Strickland. This part: Plan by the author. Drawing by Singh Introchooto.

In this chapter, the future plans and strategies for Union City and the Union City Public Library are proposed as an example of community specific planning in the IT society. It concludes the thesis by extending the lessons learned from different impacts of information technology on the public library to other local institutions.

3.1 Plans

In the previous chapter, the three major seeds of community needs for the Union City Public Library were discussed: using the library to connect the community to digital / networked information, using the library to support the local economy, and reconnecting the library to serve as a community place and a source of community identity. The three categories were examined in accordance with existing conditions of Union City, current activities in the Union City Public Library, and examples from other public libraries. The findings reveal widespread despair about the existing Union City Public Library and, at the same time, the hidden needs for better library services. This leads to sufficient support for restructuring the public library services in Union City.

As discussed earlier, two approaches can be taken by Union City in charting the future of its public libraries. One is to consider the library as an old-fashioned and low-priority institution which will never be cost effective. The other is to see potential, and to regard the current library system as failing to achieve what it could. Much evidence suggests support for restructuring, thereby favoring the second approach. Furthermore, this same approach reveals opportunity costs that are lost if the city decides to keep the *status quo*.

Also, the examination of the seeds of needs showed that many of the community needs can be adequately fulfilled by a strengthened “public” library. These strengths are not merely an extension of a “school” library function.

Based on the results of examining the seeds of community needs, I propose that the Union City Public Library should restructure its services by placing importance on: (Fig. 54)

- Connecting the community to digital/networked information,
- Supporting the local economy, and
- Serving as a community place a source of community identity
- community centripetal force -.

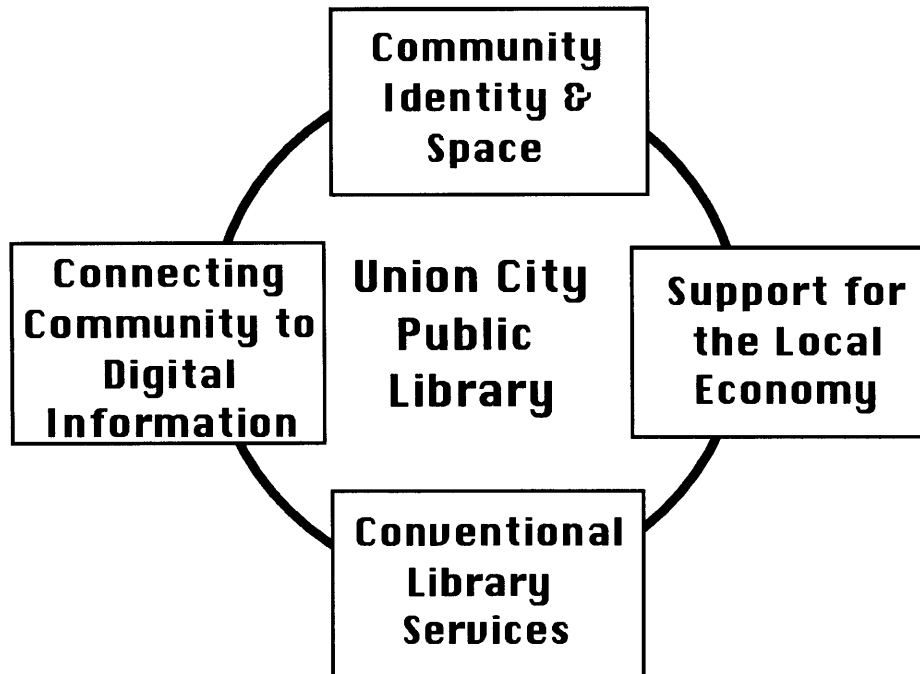


Fig. 54 Proposed Library Functions

In expanding the existing public library's functions as proposed, I suggest that the city and the UCBOE not to adopt the current plan to replace the public libraries' function with the new school library, but to invest a part of the state funding to remodel the existing libraries or to build a new public library building that suits desired future functions. A cluster of visual images for the future library is shown in Fig. 55. Also, a simplified diagram which illustrates a sample concept of the new library complex is given in Fig. 56. Details of the plan are to be discussed, depending on the strategy that the city adopts.



Fig. 55 A Cluster of Images for a Public Library That Links the Community to Digital/Networked Information, Enhances Community Identity, Provides Community Space, and Supports the Local Economy in Addition to Providing Conventional Library Services

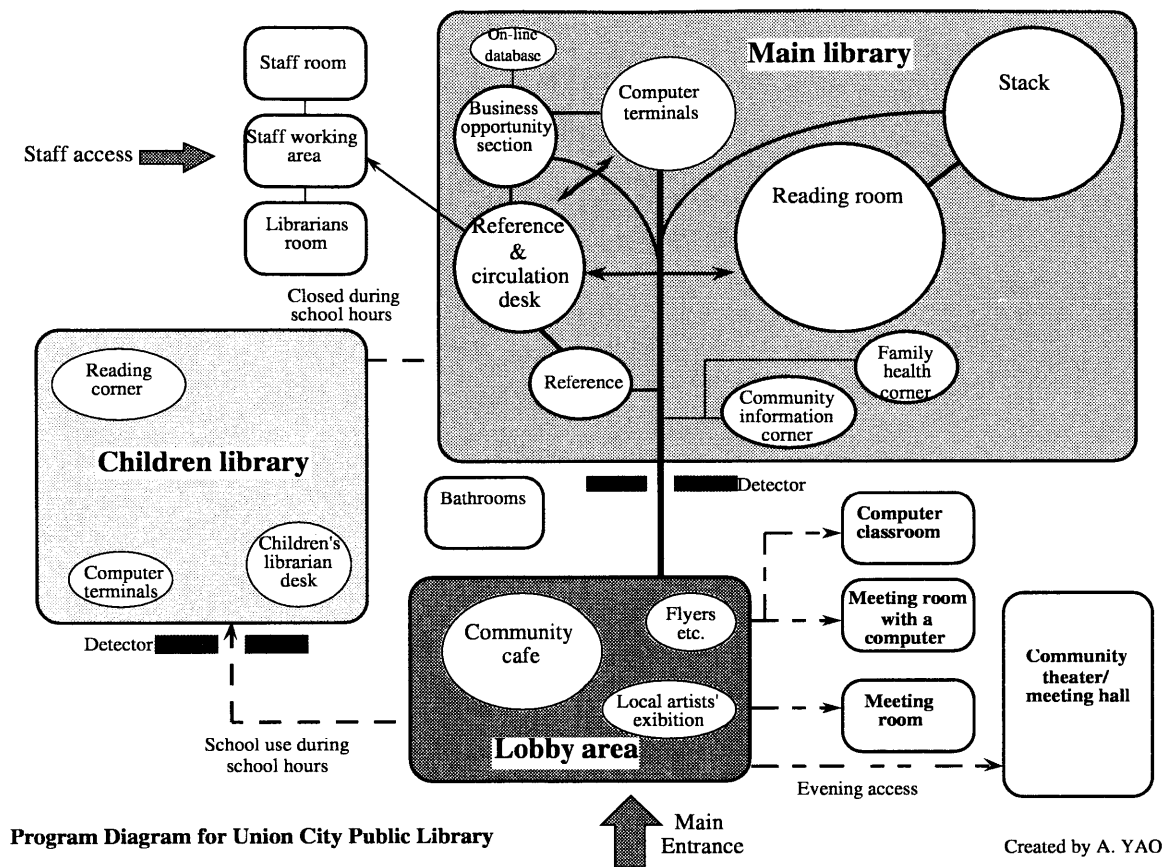


Fig. 56 A Simplified Diagram for a Sample Concept for a New Public Library. Under this plan the new public library will be adjacent to a K-8 school, and the children's library is shared with the school¹.

The proposed strategy for the UCBOE and Union City is to allocate the "one-time" state funding for educational facilities into "sustainable" community development, by enhancing the links among school education, community learning, local economy, jobs, community environments, future continuous funding, etc.. In spite of its declining popularity, the position of public library

¹ This is in accordance with the plan in Fig. 52.

in city management has enormous potential to play an important role in enhancing these links as judged from the seeds of needs that are already in the community. (Fig. 54) From the library's standpoint, this one-time funding represents a good opportunity to discontinue its vicious circle by restructuring the services. By prioritizing its services to reflect community needs and by creating links with other city functions, the libraries can regain community support and thereby rationalize steady funding into the future. (Fig. 57) Funding improvements can, on the other hand, help improve the library's existing services -- creating a healthy strategic circle.



Fig. 57 Creating Links

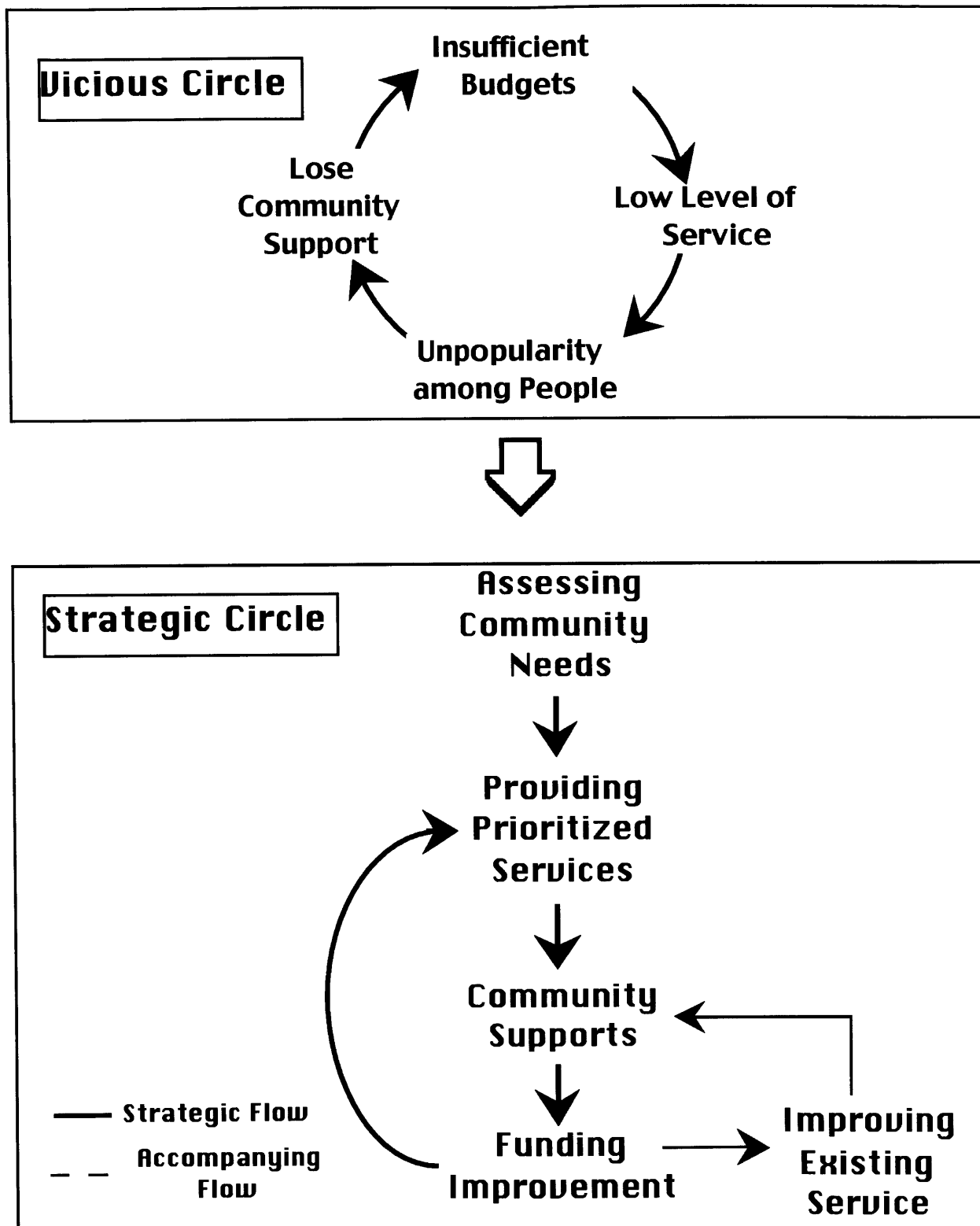


Fig. 58 Transforming from Vicious a Circle to a Strategic Circle

3.2 Conclusion

3.2.1 Local Governments and Public Libraries

In this thesis, potential functions for the public library system of a small city are discussed to illustrate the significant roles that the public library can play in small cities and towns. As demonstrated by the case of Union City, public library functions can be extended by providing prioritized services that reflect community needs and by creating links with other city functions.

The potential of public libraries in enhancing a city's well being is not limited to the proposed functions of the Union City Public Library. The case of Union City, however, can help other local governments develop a vision for their public libraries. Priorities for public libraries vary from city to city. In considering the priorities of city management, each city should re-examine the potential functions that the public library can play. As opposed to the existing passive practice, the new approach will allow public libraries to meet the social needs of their communities.

3.2.2 Information Technology and Local Institutions

The public library was chosen in this thesis, as an example of a local institution significantly influenced by information technology. As discussed from various points of view, the impact of information technology on the public library is so enormous that the current practice of public libraries is to be profoundly questioned. Though the degree of impact may vary, the experiences of the public library would represent what the other local institutions may also go through.

However, as demonstrated by the Union City case and the other examples, the influence of information technology on a local institution is not straightforward, but is closely interlinked with the historical and social backgrounds of the local institution, as well as with the size, history, and

socio-economic status of the community. In the Union City case, the introduction of information technology needs to be oriented toward economic issues such as supporting local economy and providing training for job skills. In addition, providing physical access to information technology is essential due to the difficulties many residents have in paying for private access in Union City. Perhaps, residential communities with a higher income level would have different priorities. So would small towns in rural areas, retirement communities, so-called edge cities and others. Further studies are expected to examine a local institution in those areas for its influence and use of information technology.

In addition, there seems to be an unexpected by-product of information technology of the increase in people's yearning for community gathering spaces that offer an escape from physical isolation, which is indicated by the recent boom of cafes, super bookstores, and even chain copy shops, as demonstrated.

For the well-being of a community, information technology should be incorporated into local planning. The complex connections of the social elements as discussed should be understood and carefully taken into consideration by local governments, even when the projects are highly future oriented.

Appendix

Appendix 1 p.170 – p.183
"Business Information" King County Library System¹

Appendix 2 p.184
"Bellevue Regional Library Home Page," The Bellevue Regional Library²

Appendix 3 p.185
"Bellevue and Eastside Information," The Bellevue Regional Library³

Appendix 4 p.186
"The Bellevue Chamber of Commerce Home Page," Bellevue Chamber of Commerce⁴

Appendix 5 p.187 – p.190
"Economic Profile," Bellevue Chamber of Commerce⁵

Appendix 6 p.191 - p.194
"Business," Union City⁶
"Loft Space," Union City⁷
"Urban Enterprise Zone," Union City⁸

¹ "Business Information," King County Library System,
<http://www.ksls.org/kcls/buref.html#Stock Exchange> (last accessed on May 10, 1998).

² "Bellevue Regional Library Home Page," The Bellevue Regional Library,
<http://www.kcls.org/brl/brlpage.html> (last accessed on May 10, 1998).

³ "Local Information," The Bellevue Regional Library,
<http://www.kcls.org/brl/localinf.html> (last accessed on May 10 1998).

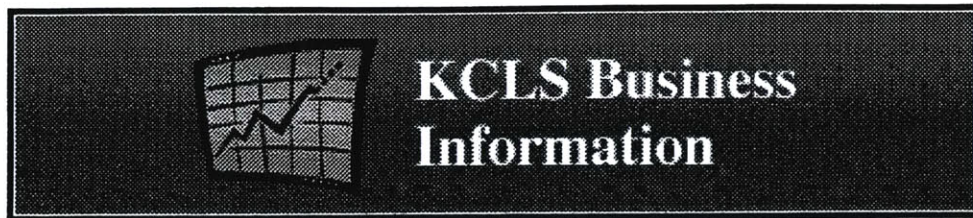
⁴ "The Bellevue Chamber of Commerce Home Page," Bellevue Chamber of Commerce,
<http://www.bellevuechamber.org/default.cfm> (last accessed on May 10, 1998).

⁵ "Economic Profile," Bellevue Chamber of Commerce,
<http://www.bellevuechamber.org/economy/default.cfm> (last accessed on May 10, 1998).

⁶ "Business," Union City Department of Revenue and Finance,
http://www.union-city.k12.nj.us/community/city_gov/mayor_office/business.html (last accessed on May 10, 1998).

⁷ "Loft Space," Union City Department of Revenue and Finance,
http://www.union-city.k12.nj.us/community/city_gov/mayor_office/loft_space.html (last accessed on May 10, 1998).

⁸ "Urban Enterprise Zone," Union City Department of Revenue and Finance,
http://www.union-city.k12.nj.us/community/city_gov/mayor_office/uez.html (last accessed on May 10, 1998).



King County Library System provides access to business web sites on the following subjects.

<u>Employment</u> National Employment Local Employment International Employment Salaries Companies	<u>Finance</u> Stock Quotes Comprehensive Financial Money Management Specialized Investment Currency Exchange Rates Stock Exchanges Companies News	<u>Business</u> Comprehensive Business Local Business Local News Small Business International Business Government Statistics Patents and Trademarks
<u>Taxes</u> Federal Tax Forms State Tax Forms General Tax Information	<u>KCLS Resources</u> Online (infoNet) Sources On Site Sources Business Information	<u>Search Engines</u>

KCLS Resources

|| [Online Services](#) || [On Site Services](#) || [Business Information](#) ||

[King County Library System On-Line Catalog](#) provides access to the following on-line (modem and dial-up) or on-site business resources.

Online Sources

National Newspaper Index includes *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Wall Street Journal*.

General BusinessFile includes business topics, directory, financial and news articles on public and private, local, regional, national and international companies. Indexes the "Puget Sound Business Journal".

Pro CD Phone includes U.S. residential (white page) and business (yellow page) telephone numbers.

Answerfile contains answers to frequently asked questions.

[AskUs](#) offers you an opportunity to e-mail us for the information you need.

On Site Sources

Business books, cassettes, videos, magazines, and government documents, and CD-ROM business indexes and directories. Circulating materials may be reserved from the comfort of your home and delivered to your nearest community library.

Business Information

King County Library System has a Business Reference Librarian on staff with extensive experience in locating specialized business information, particularly in the Pacific Rim area. For information on how to use this service, ask a Reference Librarian in your local King County Library System Library. To locate your local library, search [Community Libraries](#).

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Employment

[|| National Employment](#) [|| Local Employment](#) [|| International Employment](#) [|| Salaries](#) [|| Companies](#) [||](#)

National Employment

[America's Job Bank](#): One of the largest job-listing services linking all 50 states. Lists over 105,000 employment opportunities across the U.S., including the U.S. Dept. of Labor and many state employment agencies.

[American Red Cross](#): Volunteer opportunities and news.

[Business Job Finder](#): Variety of business career sites maintained by Ohio State University.

[Chronicle of Higher Education](#): Positions available at educational institutions.

[Career, College and Business Resources from the Chico High School Library](#): Practical information including Occupational Outlook Handbook, Dictionary of Occupational Titles, SAT Skill Lessons, College Board Online, and financial aid.

[CareerMosaic](#): Top job usenet groups primarily for the posting and searching of technical positions.

[CareerPath](#): Help-wanted ads (classified ads) posted from 23 major daily newspapers nationwide. Registration required. No fee.

[Catapult on JobWeb](#): Professional associations, colleges and universities, and links to corporate sites.

[Cool Works](#): Permanent and seasonal jobs in national parks, ski resorts, summer camps, and cruise ships.

[Dartmouth College Career Services](#): Job openings in the Federal government and from the "Chronicle of Higher Education".

[Entry Level Job Seeker Assistant](#): List for job seekers who have never held a full-time, permanent job in their fields or have less than a year of non-academic experience.

[E-Span](#): National job listing for technical jobs.

High-Tech Careers Virtual Job Fair: Thousands of openings and direct submission of resumes.

IntelliMatch: Job postings, resumes, hot jobs, and employer information.

Internet Career Connection: Resume posting and searching of its job bank.

Job Web: College students, new graduates and alumni operated by the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

Law Employment Center: Legal recruiters, legal temp staffing, salaries, and employment trends.

Management Consulting Online: Consultant careers, thoughts, trends, and firms.

MedSearch - Healthcare Careers: Healthcare job openings, company profiles, resume discussions, and tips.

The MonsterBoard: Resume writing, including a career counselor who consults via e-mail.

Online Career Center: Employment opportunities from over 3,000 employers. Post your resume or search for jobs.

Philanthropy Journal: Volunteers, non-profits, charities, and foundations.

Riley Guide--Employment Opportunities and Job Resources on the Internet: Margaret Riley's Homepage with good links to other sites.

RON - Recruiters OnLine Network: Network of 1500 recruiters for recruiting firms.

TESTPREP.COM (TM) Home Page: Free Test Preparation on the Internet: Thousands of screens of math and verbal lessons and over 700 practice problems.

FinAid: The Financial Aid Information Page: Comprehensive, independent, and objective guide to student financial aid from the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA).

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Local Employment

The Right Connection: Screening, testing, interviewing, customized recruitments, and resume posting from Washington State Employment Security. Includes Washington state labor market publications and data.

Career Resource Center: Washington State Job Service listings and federal jobs.

Today's Careers: Northwest job openings and resume posting.

Boeing jobs: Employment opportunities and on-line job application.

Microsoft Homepage Job Listings

Seattle Times Employment Classifieds Online

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International Employment

Internationalist: Employment opportunities around the world.

Salaries

Business Job Finder: Comprehensive employment site with many links. Maintained by Ohio State University.

JobSmart--Salary Info Index: Over 120 salary surveys.

Executive PayWatch: AFL-CIO information on salaries for business executives.

Salary Calculator: Cost of living figures for U.S. and international cities.

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Companies

NYPL How to Find U.S. Company Information: New York Public Library's guide to researching company information. Includes basic information, news, company profiles, financial information, covering different formats: in print, CD-ROM, and on the web. Many of the resources are available in King County Library System's libraries.

PR Newswire: Late-breaking corporate news and press releases.

NetPartners Company Site Locator: Index to company home pages.

Hoover's Online: Comprehensive company directory.

Companiesonline: Dun & Bradstreet company directory. Registration required. No fee.

Thomas Register of American Manufacturers: U.S. manufacturing companies. Registration required. No fee.

CorpTech: U.S. technology manufacturers and developers.

WSRN.com Wall Street Research Net: Financial information on U.S. and Canadian companies including companies listed on the Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, and Alberta stock exchanges.

Zacks Investors Window: Financial information on public companies.

Cyberstocks: In-depth information on Internet companies.

Search SEC EDGAR Archives: Key word search of 1995, 1996 and 1997 Edgar documents.

SEC Filings: Definitions and filing requirements.

Annual Reports Library: Corporate reports for public companies, mutual funds, foundations, banks, and public institutions world wide, including samples that explain terms.

PRARS: Information Request: Public Register's Annual Report Service: Free annual reports.

Internet Nonprofit Center: Information on nonprofits and links to home pages, and bulletin boards. Some annual reports.

Company Research on the World Wide Web: a Subject Guide for Union Activists: Links to many sites for corporate social responsibility issues, NLRB rulings, SEC violations, campaign contributions, and OSHA

settlements.

InterNet Bankruptcy Library: Hot news in the bankruptcy world including distressed securities data.

Company Information on the Web: 8 Step Guide: On-line instructions for searching company information.

Standard Industrial Classification Search: Access to the complete SIC Code with keyword searching. From the U.S. Dept. of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration

U.S.ZIP Code Lookup and Address Information: ZIP codes for an address, city or vice versa.

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Taxes

|| Federal Tax Forms || State Tax Forms || General Tax Information ||

Federal Tax Forms

U.S. Treasury: IRS forms, publications, and information.

State Tax Forms

State Tax Form Index: State tax departments with addresses and phone numbers from Maxwell Technologies' Index of States.

General Tax Information

TaxWeb: Federal and state tax information. Links include the official state home page, the state governor, the agency responsible for the administration and collection of taxes, tax codes and statutes, any judicial entities with jurisdiction over tax disputes, and current legislation.

Research Institute of America: State and federal tax information, pensions and benefits, estate planning, and international tax information.

Ernst & Young: General tax help from a major accounting firm.

I.K.Lasser: Tax preparation and tax law changes.

H&R Block: Tax forms and general tax tips.

A History of Taxation: Outline of U.S. tax history by Professor Omer at the University of Illinois.

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Finance

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|| Currency Exchange Rates || Stock Exchanges || Companies || News ||

Stock Quotes

[SchwabOnline](#)

[Yahoo! Quotes](#)

[CNNfn-Quote Search Service](#): 15 minute delay.

[DBC Online Stock Quotes](#): 15 minute delay.

[Security AFL Quote Server](#): 15 minute delay.

[Stock Smart](#)

[Stock Quote Service](#)

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Comprehensive Financial

[Financial Data Finder](#): Global business and financial information from the Ohio State University Department of Finance.

[Finance and Investment](#): Many financial data web page links from University of Pennsylvania Wharton School of Business, Lippincott Library.

[WebEc](#): World Wide Web Resources in Economics: Categorized free economic information on the Web.

[Detectives Guide to Financial Information](#): How to use the web for financial information.

[STOCKS.COM](#): Massive financial resources guide.

[Financial Information Link Library \(FILL\)](#): Extensive worldwide financial resources. Categorized by country.

[Economist Jokes](#): Jokes about economists and economics.

Money Management

[Web Investors Dictionary](#): Definitions of terms from "ask price" to "zero coupon bonds".

[IBM'S Guide to Understanding Financials](#): Introduction to reading financial statements in a company's annual report.

[Stockbroker Fraud Resource](#): Description of the common types of stock broker fraud and facts about recovering losses from brokerage firms that mishandle your money.

[invest-o-rama!](#): Internet directory for investors by Microsoft.

[The PODIUM of Investment Advisors](#): Investment advisors' home pages, directory of investment advisors, standards, practices, and news links.

[Xplore Investing](#): Investment information and market quote services.

[InvestorGuide - Your Guide to Investing on the Web](#): Directories for mutual funds, stock research, and

public companies.

NETworth: Information for individual investors who make their own investment decisions.

Investment Research: Investing tips for beginners and pros from San Diego's Data Transfer Group.

Microsoft Network Investor: Stock market and investment information from Microsoft Corp.

StockWiz: Resources for technical analysis.

StreetEYE: Wall Street Internet Resources Index. Search engine for resources for investors and investment professionals.

PAWWS Financial Network: Integrated portfolio accounting, securities and market research tools, real time quotes, and on-line trading. Paid subscription

KiwiClub Web: Banking and economics.

TurtleTrader.com: Commodity trading advisor with free historical data and offshore investing information.

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Specialized Investment

Mutual Funds

FundLink: Comprehensive list of mutual-fund companies.

Mutual Funds Interactive: Quotes, charts, news, fund manager profiles, and links to Canadian fund sites.

Welcome to Dreyfus: More than 800 pages of indexed information on the company's mutual funds and brokerage services.

Trendvest Investment Analysis & Ratings: Ratings and projections of future performance.

Morningstar.net: Reports, news, mutual fund information, and stock quotes from Morning Star Technologies which is unrelated to Morningstar, Inc. Registration required. No fee.

Fidelity Investments: International sites, fund information, and NAV's.

The Vanguard Group: Discussion, news, and announcements.

Bonds:

Bonds Online: Bonds, bond funds, corporates, municipals, treasuries, and brokers.

CDs and Money Market Accounts

BanxQuote: Highest yielding CDs and money market accounts listed by state.

DRIPS Dividend Re-Investment Plans

Drip Central: List of companies that have re-investment plans.

Small Cap Investment

Small Cap Investor: "Small cap" stocks.

CheckFree Investment Services Quote Server: "Small cap" investment services, research center, and quotes.

IPOs Initial Public Offerings

IPO Central: Initial Public Offerings.

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Currency Exchange Rates

Currency Converter: International exchange rates since 1990 by Olsen & Associates.

Foreign Exchange Rates (weekly): Federal Reserve Statistical Release H10 includes historical data.

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Stock Exchanges

Securities and Exchange Commission: SEC filings including annual reports, 10ks, and 8ks.

New York Stock Exchange: Listed companies, market summary, annual reports and investment information.

AMEX: Daily market summary from American Stock Exchange. Includes a list of companies, information on options and derivatives, and news. Archives of averages and daily averages.

NASDAQ Stock Market Home Page: Quotes, index activity, Nasdaq 100, most active, security look-up, and market news.

Chicago Board of Trade: Commodity trading information.

Chicago Mercantile Exchange Home Page: Prices, products, news, educational resources, and commodity trading basics.

FIBV the Federation Internationales des Bourses de Valeurs: International association of stock exchanges.

Finance Watch: World stock exchanges information including futures and options. Database by Axone Services and Development S.A. of Switzerland.

Paris Bourse: Listed companies, member firms, news, financial sites, and contacts.

Soficom: French stock exchange and related financial markets.

London Stock Exchange

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Companies

NYPL How to Find U.S. Company Information: New York Public Library's guide to researching company information. Includes basic information, news, company profiles, financial information covering different formats: in print, CD-ROM, and on the internet. Many of the resources are available in King County Library System's libraries.

PR Newswire: Late-breaking corporate news, and press releases.

NetPartners Company Site Locator: Index to company home pages.

Hoover's Online: Comprehensive company directory.

Companiesonline: Dun & Bradstreet company directory. Registration required. No fee.

Thomas Register of American Manufacturers: U.S. manufacturing companies. Registration required. No fee.

CorpTech: U.S. technology manufacturers and developers.

WSRN.com Wall Street Research Net: Financial information on U.S. and Canadian companies including companies listed on the Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, and Alberta stock exchanges.

Zacks Investors Window: Financial information on public companies.

Cyberstocks: In-depth information on Internet companies.

Search SEC EDGAR Archives: Key word search of 1995, 1996 and 1997 Edgar documents.

SEC Filings: Definitions and filing requirements.

Annual Reports Library: Corporate reports for public companies, mutual funds, foundations, banks, and public institutions world wide, including samples that explain terms.

PRARS: Information Request: Public Register's Annual Report Service: Free annual reports.

Internet Nonprofit Center: Information on nonprofits and links to home pages, and bulletin boards. Some annual reports.

Company Research on the World Wide Web: a Subject Guide for Union Activists: Links to many sites for corporate social responsibility issues, NLRB rulings, SEC violations, campaign contributions, and OSHA settlements.

InterNet Bankruptcy Library: Hot news in the bankruptcy world including distressed securities data.

Company Information on the Web: 8 Step Guide: On-line instructions for searching company information.

Standard Industrial Classification Search: Access to the complete SIC Code with keyword searching.

U.S. ZIP Code Lookup and Address Information: ZIP codes for an address, city, or vice versa.

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News

Pathfinder: Articles from Fortune, Money, and other business magazines.

PR Newswire: Timely access to corporate news releases.

Wall Street Net: Latest news on corporate debt and equity financing. Archival data, including prospectuses over the last 12 months. For issuers and investment bankers.

Dow Jones Business Information Services: Financial news.

New York Times Business Connections: Markets, investing, companies, and business news. Registration required. No fee.

CnnFinancial Network: Up-to-date financial news. Download recent program scripts.

Financial Times: Free and timely worldwide news, stock indices, and thirty minute delay quotes from London Stock Exchange.

The Financial Post: Canada's financial newspaper.

FINWeb: Finance journals, working papers, databases, and other finance web servers.

Federal Reserve Board: Beige Book summarizes regional current economic conditions as reported by each Federal Reserve District.

Web Finance: Short news articles from the Investment Dealer's Digest magazine.

Bloomberg Personal: Worldwide financial news.

Platt's: Global pricing for the commodities market. Covers news, energy, petrochemicals, metals, and shipping. Paid subscription

American City Business Journals: Local and regional economic conditions, companies, people, and news articles.

Historical Quotes

Pacific Brokerage Services: Historical pricing.

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Business

[Comprehensive Business](#) || [Local Business](#) || [Local News](#) || [Small Business](#) || [SCORE](#) ||
|| [International Business](#) || [Government Statistics](#) || [Patents & Trademarks](#) ||

Comprehensive Business

GRA Research Hotlinks: International business links listed under "GRA Research Hotlinks".

Berkeley Business Guide: Business web links from the University of California, Berkeley.

Internet Information Sources on the Internet: Index: Selective guide to internet sites with emphasis on the United Kingdom from the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland.

Nijenrode Business Web Server: International web business links from Nijenrode University, The Netherlands.

Academic Business Libraries's Web Pages: Links to top business school library web pages from the University of Washington School of Business Administration Library.

Prices's List of Lists: Clearinghouse of rankings of companies, organizations, and people from Gelman

[Library, George Washington University.](#)

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Local Business

[Home Page Washington:](#) Current economic conditions, chambers of commerce, consumer protection, Washington State government resources, and economic development councils.

[Labor Market Information:](#) Data and statistics on Washington's labor market and economic conditions from Washington State Employment Security Office.

[State of Washington Office of the Secretary of State:](#) Information concerning corporations, charities, elections, and voter services.

[State of Washington Department of Licensing:](#) Business licensing information.

[Washington State Department of Revenue:](#) General tax information, forms, reports, publications, and state business records database.

[Washington State Department of Labor and Industries:](#) Labor and industry training, directory, and publication information.

[King County Business Guide:](#) Business licensing, statistics, departments, and publications for MetroKing County.

[Municipal Research & Services Center of Washington:](#) Municipal codes, Revised Code of Washington, Washington Administrative Code, library services, publications, and news.

[Association of Washington Cities:](#) General government news and issues, city newsletters, and public works newsletters.

[Puget Sound Regional Council:](#) Resources and research for developing policies and decisions about regional growth.

[Home Page Washington:](#) Washington cities, counties, ports, public utilities and infrastructure.

[State and Local Governments:](#) Meta-indexes for state and local government information, state maps, and state government information from the Library of Congress.

[Real Estate Program at Washington State University:](#) Washington State real estate market. Select "Market Data" for quarterly real estate reports on Washington State.

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Local News

[Northwest Source:](#) "The Seattle Times", "Seattle Post-Intelligencer" (PI), and "The Issaquah Press". The Community News Group includes "Federal Way News", "Highline News", and "Des Moines News".

[King County Journals:](#) "Mercer Island Reporter", "Snoqualmie Valley Reporter", and "Northshore Citizen".

[Eastside Journal:](#) Newspaper for the eastern portion of King County, Washington State.

[South County Journal:](#) Newspaper for the southeastern portion of King County.

[Puget Sound Business Journal](#): Seattle's daily small business newspaper, featuring regional and local economy, business, people, and news.

[DIC online](#): Regional construction industry news, people, and the economy from "The Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce".

[Washington CEO](#): Seattle's business magazine featuring top ranked business lists, CEO profiles, company profiles, economic conditions, and news.

[Washington Magazine](#): Travel, leisure, and living in Washington State.

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Small Business

[Edward Lowe Foundation-Championing the Entrepreneurial Spirit](#): Best sites for small business and entrepreneurs collected and evaluated by foundation staff and listed under "smallbisNet Hailed Sites."

[U.S. Business Advisor](#): FAQs about taxes, social security, and workplace safety. Includes W-2, postal, and Small Business Administration loan forms.

[Small Business Administration](#): Guidance in starting, expanding, financing, and marketing your business.

[The Smart Business Supersite](#): Articles, checklists, book information, URLs for topics ranging from employment procedures to accounting. Interactive features such as message bulletin boards.

[The American Express Small Business Exchange](#): Useful assistance for beginners, such as how to seek funding and a simple business plan. **Ask the Advisor** section answers your questions and refers you to other online sources.

[State Business Records Database](#): Business owner searches from the Washington State Department of Revenue business records.

[The Wall Street Journal interactive Edition](#): Small Business Suite: Small business news. Paid subscription.

[American Demographics](#): Consumer and demographic trends, marketing techniques, and forecasts from "American Demographics" and the Marketing Tools, and Forecast departments.

[Smallbiz](#): Small business features, departments, and resources from Microsoft.

[Websites for BC Small Business](#): Small business guidance and business directory for British Columbia.

[Canada Business Services Centres](#): Canadian business-oriented federal government programs, services, and some regulations. A Business Services Centre is located in every province providing more local information.

[The Court TV Small Business Law Center](#): Sample legal forms, documents such as confidentiality agreements or work-for-hire contracts.

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SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives)

SCORE is the Service Corps of Retired Executives, a volunteer, non-profit association providing business counseling in association with the Small Business Association. Counselors offer free personalized business

counseling in many [King County Library System Community Libraries](#).

Please contact your local library to schedule an appointment or contact the SCORE Office at 206-553-7320 for times and locations.

SCORE offices are located in downtown Seattle at the U.S. Small Business Administration, 1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 1700, Seattle, WA 98101 Phone 206-553-7320

[SCORE On Line](#): One-on-one counseling with SCORE counselors via electronic mail.

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International Business

[The U.S. Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration](#): Regions, countries, industries, trade information, export assistance centers, and import administration.

[The Office of Trade & Economic Analysis](#): Trade data from the U.S. government.

[United States Trade Representative's Homepage](#): History, people, reports, agreements, and testimony.

[The Embassy Page](#): World-wide embassies and consulates.

[International Business, Trade, Investment and Tourism Center Information](#): Local international business and trade information for Washington from the Trade Development Alliance of Greater Seattle.

[Industry Canada](#): Canadian business (export) information similar to the U.S. Department of Commerce National Trade Data Bank (NTDB).

[Canadians: The Canadian Resource Page](#): General site on Canada.

[LANIC](#): Latin American Network Information Center: Latin American business information.

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Government Statistics

For a more comprehensive list of government Internet statistical resources, please visit the [King County Library System's Federal Statistics](#). For government web statistical sources of special interest for business, please consider the following list.

[Economic Statistics Briefing Room](#): Current economic indicators such as production, sales, orders, and inventories.

[Statistical Abstract](#): On-line version of the 1996 Statistical Abstract, the standard source of U.S. industrial, social, economic, political, and international statistics.

[U.S. Bureau of the Census](#): Demographic, economic, and social data collected by the federal government.

[County Business Patterns](#): Detailed geographic, industry, and other information for U.S. business establishments.

[County & City Data Books](#): U.S. data from 1988 and 1994 for population, health, housing, the labor force, income, and the economy.

[Bureau of Labor Statistics](#): Data on employment, wages, and prices.

Fedstats: Data from more than 70 agencies.

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Patents & Trademarks

[U.S. Patent and Trademark Office Home Page](#): Patent and copyright information including limited searches.

[Patent & Trademark Information at the University of Washington Engineering Library](#): Guides for doing patent or trademark research at the University of Washington Engineering Library, Washington State's Patent & Trademark Depository Library.

[Patent Server](#): Patent searches from 1971 to present from IBM's Patent Server.

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[Reference Services Overview](#) | [Return to KCLS Home Page](#)

[Comments to: webmaster@kcls.org](mailto:webmaster@kcls.org)
<http://www.kcls.org/kcls/busref.html>
Last updated: 9 April 1998

Bellevue Regional Library



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|| [Information about the Bellevue Regional Library](#) ||

World Wide Web Links to Information about:

|| [Bellevue and the Eastside](#) || [Business](#) || [Employment](#) ||
|| [Federal, State, and Local Government](#) || [Medicine and Health](#) ||

[KCLS Homepage](#)

Created and maintained by Bellevue Regional Library Staff

Comments to: webmaster@kcls.org

<http://www.kcls.org/brl/brlpage.html>

Last updated: August 22, 1997

Bellevue and Eastside Information

City of Bellevue

1990 Population: 97,758
Projected 2000 Population: 105,395
Size: 31 square miles

Information Source: Puget Sound Regional Council. Population and Employment Forecasts Report, August 1995.

Destination Eastside

Destination Eastside contains links to information about Bellevue and Eastside businesses, schools, parks, transit, and shopping.

Eastside Journal

Contains excerpts from the current issue as well as a searchable archive of the headline, business, and sports sections.

Homepage Washington

This is a comprehensive collection of links to local government websites in Washington State.

King County Government

Connections to King County Government services and agencies.

Northwest Real Estate

From this website you are able to search from a portion of the real estate multiple listings for Bellevue and the Puget Sound region.

Links to Organizations

[Bellevue Art Museum](#)

[Bellevue Chamber of Commerce](#)

[Bellevue Community College](#)

[Bellevue Downtown Association](#)

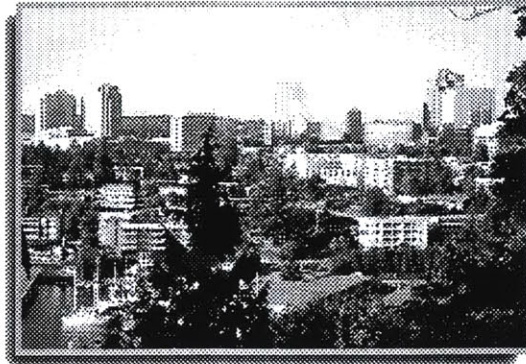
[Bellevue School District](#)


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Comments to: webmaster@kcls.org
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Last updated: 14 July 1997



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- Feedback



<u>Business in Bellevue</u>	<u>Infrastructure</u>	<u>Charts & Graphs</u>
<u>Government</u>	<u>Locating/Relocating Your Business</u>	<u>Tourism/Hospitality</u>

BUSINESS IN BELLEVUE

Employment/Growth

The Pacific Northwest, perhaps more than any other area of the United States, has experienced a phenomenal growth boom over the past two decades. Nowhere is that more clear than in the Puget Sound Region. Seattle has become the focal leader for a new age of industries such as aerospace, coffee, fashion and music. Just outside Seattle, but close enough to call its port our own, Bellevue has grown to become the metropolitan hub for the Eastside's Technology Corridor, a community of high technology industries and cities that rival the Bay Area's famed "Silicon Valley."

In a December 1996 opinion survey of industry and business leaders around Puget Sound, Hebert Research, Inc., of Bellevue, discovered business confidence ratings at their highest level this decade. Over 79 percent of the survey's Eastside respondents expected sales to increase, 46 percent expected prices to increase (although 44 percent expected prices to remain the same), 69 percent expected net income to increase and 77 percent expected wage levels to rise. That strong vote of economic confidence balanced against about 14 to 19 percent who felt things would remain the same, and roughly 5 percent who believed sales and incomes would decrease.

In King County, which encompasses Bellevue, the Eastside and Seattle, employment has grown steadily since 1990. Economic forecasts predict the final five years of the century will see nearly a 20 percent increase in employment countywide.

King County has so many jobs, more than 10 percent of its workers must come from outside the county. Compare King County's employment demand to that of neighboring counties or Washington state as a whole, and its clear why rapid growth is occurring here.

Employment growth in Bellevue over the past three decades shows how the city has transformed from a suburban residential center for employers in Seattle, to become a thriving economic engine and job importer. Growth in the number of businesses and employment in Bellevue and on the Eastside was about 25 percent greater than King County as a whole.

The Washington state employment forecast calls for a 3 percent annual increase through the turn of the century. Most of that growth will occur in Puget Sound job markets. Even greater than the rate of job expansion in the Puget Sound region, estimated to grow at an average rate of 3.08 percent through 2000, will be job growth on the Eastside, forecast at 3.91 percent for the same period.

Bellevue and the Eastside have become prime real estate for top national and international firms to locate their headquarters. For a list of top ten companies headquartered on the Eastside and in King County, please visit the CHARTS section of this website.

Land Use

Bellevue is built up, but not completely out. Single family neighborhoods occupy nearly half of Bellevue's land, with parks and recreation facilities on about 12 percent. And, yet, over 10 percent remains vacant for future development. Downtown is the focus for higher density use in the super block core. There, more mixed-use high-rises will combine commercial tenants with multi-family residential units. New European courtyard-style buildings, which allow more premium office space with the inclusion of the open courtyard, are being considered for the super block core. **Trained Workforce**

A majority Bellevue's residents (69%) hold jobs, about 54 percent work full time. Of those full time workers, 80 percent hold white collar positions. It is no mystery why. In Bellevue and the whole region resides a workforce that is well educated and well trained. In part, it is our desirable lifestyle that draws the best from around the country to our region. In part, it is because of educational ties to the corporate world, here, and an ethic that emphasizes learning and education as a lifelong process.

Bellevue Community College is a prime example of how educators and industry can join to build a better workforce. BCC created its new Center for Emerging Technologies to help meet the huge local demand for workers in quickly evolving software, computer and other technology related industries. In addition, graduates of the University of Washington and other four-year institutions in the area, represent the highest standards of education in the country.

For statistics on Bellevue's workforce, check out the CHARTS section of this site.

Key Industries

Bellevue is by far the economic breadwinner on the Eastside, with easily three times the business of its closest neighbors, Kirkland and Redmond. Bellevue's volume and depth in every key industry clearly set its leadership role as the Eastside's business center, and a growing player in the region. The city has a diverse economic base. Nearly 75 percent of the firms doing business in Bellevue are in construction/contracting, services and retail trade.

Technology

The Eastside's economic success is engineered from location and ingenuity. Bellevue is the center of the Eastside's Technology Corridor, more than 1,500 acres of master-planned corporate campuses along I-405, home to an increasing number of aerospace, bio-medical technology, computer hardware/software and service related industries. It is here that software giant Microsoft Corporation started up and is currently headquartered. While high tech job growth continues to expand

10 to 12 percent per year statewide, easily half of those jobs are located in Bellevue and its surrounding communities.

Much of the increasing transportation/communication/utility business in Bellevue (expanding at an annual rate of nearly 15 percent since 1990) is due to the rising number of communications firms. The demand for phone systems, cellular phones, pagers and internet services goes hand in glove with Bellevue's general business growth, but is especially powered by information hungry high tech industries.

Wholesale/Retail

Bellevue's close proximity to interstate highways, rail, international air and sea ports makes it an ideal location for wholesale trade. The number of wholesale firms in Bellevue steadily rose from 1,127 in 1990 to 1,319 in 1996, an average annual growth rate of 2.67 percent.

Retail represents over 50 percent of Bellevue's economy. Bellevue's downtown has a long tradition as a retail center, focused on Bellevue Square, a regional "super-mall" that has one of the highest sales to floor-space ration in the country. Other Bellevue retail centers such as Factoria, Eastgate, Crossroads and Overlake are beginning to mature much as downtown did 10 to 15 years ago.

The automobile trade, represents 18.9 percent of the Eastside's retail market. Electronics/music sell big (11.3 percent). The Eastside's rising hospitality trade focused by Bellevue's Meydenbauer Center is increasing demand for more restaurants (currently 10.8 percent) and entertainment. Bellevue's restaurant trade increased by \$30 million from 1993 to 1996.

Manufacturing

While not the largest element in Bellevue's economy, light manufacturing continues to grow steadily, and performs as a stabilizer in the mix of the overall economy. Most of Bellevue's manufacturers are located in the Overlake area.

Services

From headhunters to contract worker (temp) services, consultants and management companies, Bellevue's service sector has become one of the city's largest economic contributors.

Finance/Insurance/Real Estate

Bellevue's prestigious high rise core provides office space for numerous professionals and regional head offices. The city's location, central to the Eastside and Seattle, make Bellevue's downtown a logical home for banks, trust companies, Realtors and insurance firms. As an office center, Bellevue has become the focal point for a tremendous amount of financial, real estate and legal activity.

Office / Industrial Usage

The majority of the Eastside's office lies - or rather climbs skyward - in Bellevue. Downtown Bellevue offers 4 million square feet of Class A, B and C space in 39 buildings. The Eastside and in particular Bellevue enjoy high absorption and low vacancy rates.

In 1996, industrial vacancy dropped to about 4 percent. Office vacancy rates also dropped for the area to around 5 percent. Software, computer/electronic and communication firms led demand in both industrial and office markets.

Microsoft, Metawave Communication, Innovation, and Genie Industries all leased industrial space of 20,000 square feet or greater in the first quarter of 1996. Fidelity National Title, Contractors Supply, SeaMed and Apex Computers, also took major industrial space.

During 1996, Nextel, Western Wireless, Software Testing Labs, and Asymetrix all leased office space of 20,000 square feet or greater. Other new large office tenants included Cyber SAFE Corp., Almac Arrow Electronics, Intermation, Inc., Nextlink, Real Time Data, and the Reppond Company.

International/Trade Bellevue, with its Puget Sound proximity on the Pacific Rim - one day closer to Asia than any other port on the U.S. mainland - finds new strength in the emerging diversity of its economic base and rich array of ethnic and cultural heritage. Canada is just two hours north, up I-5. And Bellevue is in excellent position to deal with the new, opening Russian markets. Bellevue has four sister cities, Kladno, Czech Republic; Liepaja, Latvia; Yao, Japan; and Hualien, Taiwan.

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Business



Rafael Fraguela
Dept. of Revenue and Finance

For years, Union City had been the embroidery capital of the United States. Such materials as men's and women's clothing, hats, apparel for children and other lines of goods, highlighted the economic market. People from far and wide came to New Jersey to test and buy the wonderful fabrics that "the Garden State" had to offer. Its warehouses had some of the hardest working citizens in all the world laboring around the clock. Then, all of a sudden, these companies started moving their businesses to the south, as well as overseas. Many people lost jobs and the unemployment rate soared drastically.

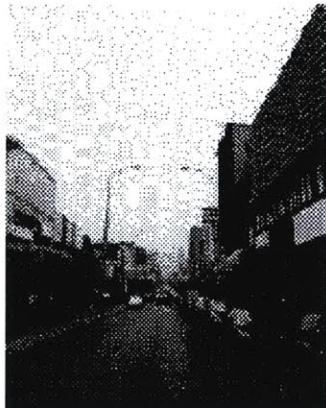
Times have changed since our yester-years and in Union City, more prosperous businesses have begun to emerge. People still come far and wide, but not for the same purpose. Instead they come to test and buy merchandise on Summit and Bergenline Avenue. As an ethnically diverse city, shoppers, as well as people, are attracted to the variety of things we have to offer. From various foods and restaurants, to music and cultural events. Union City keeps our avenues in good quality, for example, the recent improvements on the streets and our low 3% sales tax. Merchants are equally interested, as well, because we have so much business potential and the availability of loft space among our avenues.

[Urban Enterprise Zone](#)

[Loft Space in Union City](#)

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Loft Space



One of the most defining assets of Union City is the availability of low-cost loft space on the upper floors of some of our commercial buildings on Bergenline and Summit avenues. Using this available space, entrepreneurs can move their businesses out of their current crowded quarters into Union City.

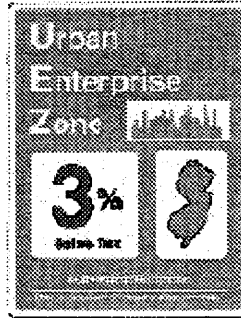
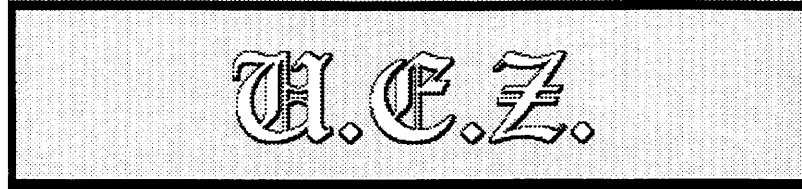
Another advantage of moving your business to Union City is the city's easy access from Manhattan and its boroughs via the Lincoln and Holland tunnels, and from other areas via the New Jersey Turnpike - which is less than three miles away - and Route 1 & 9 which brings visitors to the area from up and down the east coast.

Our stores and businesses not only serve consumers from Union City, but from all around the state.

With all of these attributes, Union City will prove to be a leading competitor for your business.

-
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The City of Union City has designated the following as "areas in need of rehabilitation" under the New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zone regulations:

1. Summit Avenue, from 5th Street to 18th Street
2. Bergenline Avenue, from 16th Street to 49th Street

These areas comprise the City's primary business districts and provide necessary goods and services for residents of the surrounding neighborhoods, jobs for city residents and substantial property tax revenues for Union City. These target areas are predominantly developed with a variety of retail and service uses, and in some instances contain residences on the second and/or third floors.

Zone Development Plan

The proposed Urban Enterprise Zone areas have experienced a marked decline in both the quantity and quality of the retail/service establishments. The following elements of a zone development plan will provide for much needed improvements:

1. Infrastructure improvements: the city will utilize the Federal Community Development Block Grant program funding to provide improvements including new sidewalk treatments, handicapped accessible curb cuts, manhole and catch basin replacement, paving, street trees and street furniture.
2. Storefront improvements: the city may provide a low-interest loan or grant program to business and property owners to make facade improvements to individual storefronts. This program would be provided through funds from the City's Community Development Block Grant allocation.
3. Merchants: the city will continue to provide technical assistance to local merchants associations. This technical assistance includes periodic public meetings to discuss problems and concerns of merchants and to provide information about business funding assistance.
4. Financial institutions: the city is working with local banking institutions to set up business loan programs under the Community Reinvestment Act. The loans will be for storefront improvements and business

expansion.

5. **Transportation improvements:** the city is working with New Jersey Transit to develop a transit stop on the proposed Hudson River Light Rail System to be located on the corner of Bergenline Avenue and 49th Street. This will provide needed links to this mass transit system to bring shoppers and employees from Hudson County and elsewhere to Bergenline Avenue.

6. **Community facilities:** the city has entered into a long-term lease with NJ TRANSIT to occupy the unused bus garage located on Bergenline Avenue between 27th and 29th Streets. The acquisition of this property permitted the city to consolidate several city services and facilities and to sell off unneeded buildings. Located within the 27th Street building are the Midtown Police Precinct and several police divisions including the Traffic Division, the Juvenile Aid Bureau, the Community/Police Partnership, and the D.A.R.E. program; central storage and maintenance of city vehicles; the operations of the Department of Public Works and the Union City Parking Authority.

Marketing Plan

In order to effectively market the Urban Enterprise Zone program to businesses, both inside and outside of the Zone, and to attract private investment, the following elements are proposed:

1. The public, property owners and potential tenants will be made aware of the program by means of:
 - a. Public notices, public meetings, advertisements and press releases which include information on the UEZ program
 - b. Distribution of letters, fact sheets or brochures in both English and Spanish, explaining the program and giving information about the benefits of the program.
 - c. Bilingual advisors will be available to tenants, owners and potential tenants to answer questions and provide assistance concerning such matters.
2. Advertisements and other information will be placed in newspapers such as Avance, La Nacion, and the Jersey Journal/Hudson Dispatch. The City will maintain copies of all press releases, ads, photographs, public meeting minutes and distribution materials utilized in and during the course of this program.

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