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I'm a native Southern Californian, back when there were

and

Scripps Institution of Oceanography Library

in 2007. And now you have released a brand new platform called Torrossa. Do we have the timeline correct?

MC: Yes, we launched our first collection, the award-winning Editoria Italiana Online, in 2003 with a relatively small selection of eBooks and e-journals by prominent scholarly publishers from Italy. Since my father founded the company in 1958 our mission has been to assist academic libraries in building their global collections, providing them with relevant bibliographical information, books, and journals from the countries we represent.

As a library supplier, we closely followed the changes that, after the debut of HighWire Press in 1997, brought about the migration of STM journals to digital, and we were convinced early on that users would demand the transition to digital even in the Social Sciences and Humanities where the concept of relevance over time overshadows timeliness.

Our conviction and the great support of the library community lead us to the establishment of our Digital Division in 2000 and investments in systems not only in systems but also in resources dedicated to working with publishers.

In 2007 we updated our platform and in 2010 we launched the Edición Española Online collection which, as EIO was and is for Italy, constitutes a snapshot of current research in the Humanities and Social Sciences from a variety of publishers from Spain. Alongside these two comprehensive collections, a number of other publishers selected our platform to offer their own special eBook collections, such as Leo S. Olschki and Zanichelli, or access to their e-journals, in either print-online or online-only package options, such Fabrizio Serra Editore and Franco Angeli.

In the past year, we launched the Torrossa platform (www.torrossa.it), on which the content we host continues to grow and multiply; il Mulino is just one of the publishers that has recently joined Torrossa.

ATG: Tell us about the latest Torrossa platform. How has it evolved from the 2003 version? In what specific ways does it reflect the changes in the marketplace?

MC: When we decided it was time for a new platform, we aggressively sought input from the librarians who use the platform every day and work with researchers in the field and students, as well as consulting with publishers and authors. The feedback we gathered at a recent Charleston Juried Product Development Forum was also instrumental in our planning.

The Torrossa platform has all of the features today's users have come to expect: a neat and intuitive interface, a quick search textbox, and will be a librarian tasked with Scripps user outreach and instruction, and I continue to do collection development in marine and earth sciences as well as Scripps archives/special collections. Other library users will also continue to receive many of the same services and resources they have in the past. 

ATG: What does your experience with the Scripps Institution of Oceanography Library closing tell you about the future of specialized, departmental libraries? What about the future of research libraries in general?

PB: In the case of the Scripps Library closure, while challenging for some in the short term, it’s reflective of the need to realign and streamline facilities, collections, and budgets as the academic research library continues to evolve. Looking into the future, as scholarly eBooks are preferentially acquired, as are e-journals, then one would expect a steadily declining use of physical collections, which of course will continue to impact all libraries. At some point, the cost-effectiveness needs to be examined about shifting physical collections in part or in entirety to compact shelving on campus or to a less expensive off-campus facility with a reading room and with on-campus delivery. Having said that, the academic research library is as essential as it has ever been to the academic enterprise. The relationships between librarians and their users evolve, but the services and the resources provided by academic libraries continue to be paramount in both research and teaching.