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Update on the Welch Medical Library

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Update on the Welch Medical Library

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This brief communication updates a presentation given at the **2010 Charleston Conference** that described, in part, **Welch Medical Library's** journey to an all-electronic collection. The **Welch** journal collection was then almost entirely online, and the next goal was to remove up to 80% of the print collection that duplicated those online holdings. Staff developed criteria for selecting titles to withdraw (e.g., out-of-scope works and or those that duplicated our electronic holdings

but were also held in trusted third-party archives like the **National Library of Medicine and Portico**.)

A temporary staff member was hired to help with the extra work. She and cataloging staff began identifying and removing the appropriate titles and then correcting the catalog records to reflect the removal.

Four years later **Welch** has moved even closer to an all-electronic collection. We have only six current journal subscriptions in print format and spend less than .2% of our budget on print books. Print has not dis-

appeared completely, however. Print books can be requested via the catalog and are then delivered to and retrieved from a user's office on campus. Recently **Hopkins** joined the Borrow Direct program, and, as a result, the collection of shared print materials available to Welch users has grown enormously.

After weeding slightly more than 80,000 volumes, **Welch** stopped to consult with a committee of users from across the medical campus about the future of the **Welch** building. In response to this committee's

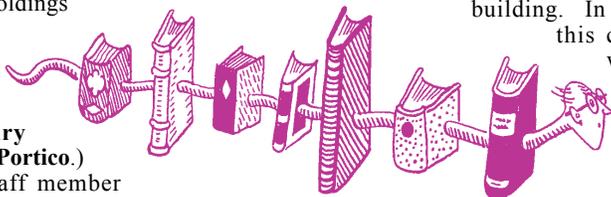
work the decision was made to pause the weeding project for now. Neverthe-

less **Welch** staff continue to generate lists of titles for expected future removal. We believe that eventually **Welch** will be asked to remove the print collection from the building. We have seen this occur in other academic medical libraries. The print collection requires valuable space in a grand building on a large, crowded, decentralized medical campus. Our proactive efforts now will allow us to make

careful recommendations about what to keep and what to weed.

In addition to changes in the weeding project, library staff have been re-located; the **Welch** building has been repaired and renovated; and a new academic center has been moved into its ground floor. The West Reading Room, home to the famous portrait of the Four Doctors, was refurbished to facilitate quiet study, and serve as a space for lectures, or a hall where up to 100 people could dine. A handicap-accessible bathroom was installed to meet building codes. The East Reading Room was renovated to create inviting areas for individual and group study. Long-deferred repairs and upgrades were made. Energy-efficient windows replaced single-pane ones on three sides of the building, two leaking skylights were repaired, and many electrical outlets were added for users who bring their laptops and other devices needing to recharge.

The renovated **Welch** building has once again become a favorite site for events on campus. The **Welch Library** continues to grow its collections and services, delivering them wherever our users are. 🌸



The Joe and Rika Mansueto Library at the University of Chicago

by **Andrea Twiss-Brooks** (University of Chicago Library) <atbrooks@uchicago.edu>

Beginning more than a decade ago, the **University of Chicago Library** began a planning process to address the need for additional shelving space for collections. Planning included involvement by library staff, University faculty and administration, and other stakeholders and culminated in the construction of the **Joe and Rika Mansueto Library**, a storage library, which was dedicated on October 18, 2011.¹ With the opening of this facility, the University demonstrated a commitment to keep the print collections on campus for the next few decades. Peer institutions have chosen to move significant volumes of materials to off-site storage facilities when faced with capacity issues; local opinion held that this solution would impede scholarly research. While faculty at the University value the availability of large full-text databases like **HathiTrust**, online journal subscriptions, and commercial eBook offerings, in at least some disciplines these resources are not viewed as replacements to on-site print collections. This

is what the previous Library Director, **Judith Nadler** wrote:

"Mass digitization leads users to collections; it does not take their place. As companies such as Google and libraries around the world digitize a growing proportion of books and make them searchable online, such search results will increasingly point the way to our rich print collection, fueling scholarly demand for access to these materials."²

The new **Mansueto Library** uses state-of-the-art robotic storage and retrieval technology to house up to 3.5 million volumes (or the equivalent in archival boxes or other formats) of material in high-density storage space, providing scholars with delivery turnaround times of 15 minutes. The selection of materials shelved in the **Mansueto Library** is focused on those whose removal from the browsable shelving in the **University of Chicago's** five campus libraries will have the most limited or controllable effects on research and teaching.



The Library also wanted selections which could be easily explained to library users, as well as selections that provided a large volume of material which could be identified and processed in a timely fashion. During the first year of operation several hundred thousand volumes were transferred from various campus libraries.

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