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UC and State Libraries Agree to Create New Information Services

Information sharing for all Californians took a step toward the future today with the announcement of a broad-based plan to link the Library of California with the University of California's California Digital Library.

"We are forging a system that will make information accessible to every Californian in a way never before envisioned, much less accomplished," says Dr. Kevin Starr, the state librarian. "The California Digital Library brings to this partnership the resources of the world's greatest public university system. This means a wealth of information beyond anything easily imagined. This also means a future in which information, like democracy itself, will belong to everyone."

The Library of California (LOC) was created by the state legislature in 1998 to link all the libraries in the state. The agreement between the LOC and the California Digital Library (CDL) encourages cooperative work to develop digital information and services.

The partnership also addresses the challenges of preserving digital materials, efficiently selecting and licensing digital content, and designing friendly online gateways to make this material accessible to the public.

The LOC was created to provide users of all types of libraries access to the collections and resources of public, school, government, academic, and special libraries throughout the state. Since its creation, the LOC has devoted itself greater resource sharing,

cooperative acquisition of digital materials, and direct service delivery on-line and through regional library networks.

Inaugurated by University of California President Richard C. Atkinson in 1997, the California Digital Library was established as a collaborative effort of the UC campuses and their libraries. Its mission is to advance scholarship and science, foster excellence in teaching and learning, and promote service to the public by developing and providing continuous access to digital content and services. The CDL also encourages and supports innovations in scholarly communication and publishing.

The University of California was a strong proponent of the legislative efforts to create the Library of California. CDL spokespersons see the emerging LOC program as a natural and crucial channel for promoting collaboration among California's libraries.

Among the areas of immediate focus for the partnership are several that increase access to library collections throughout the state. The California Periodicals Database, which lists over 860,000 magazines and journal titles owned by more than 550 California libraries, is hosted at the CDL. Originally developed with federal funds administered by the State Library, ongoing maintenance and development of the heavily used and publicly available database is being supported by the LOC.

The CDL's Online Archive of California represents nearly 5,000 collections of photographs, manuscripts and other archival materials in libraries, museums and historical societies throughout the state. The LOC-CDL agreement extends access to "finding aids" for all of those collections as well as to a fascinating array of digitized materials drawn from them that includes, for example, photographs of the aftermath of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, diary pages from a member of the ill-fated Donner party and sketches and artwork created by early California residents.

Establishing convenient, long-term access to government information is also a priority for the partnership. The CDL's government information initiatives include "California

Counts,” an online gateway to social science data, to be established with support from LOC. Joint funding in excess of \$600,000 has been allocated to support project development. California Counts will include data on population, housing, health, crime, economic, education, environment and other topics, much of it drawn and integrated from key state agencies. Most important, the social science data that is being targeted is popular among a wide variety of people across the state, from patrons in a public library, to clients of a corporate library, as well as high school students and researchers from the University of California.

“This partnership provides a unique opportunity for the Library of California and California Digital Library to reach a higher level of public service,” said Richard Lucier, the CDL’s university librarian and executive director. “We are very pleased to support the evolving collaboration across the state’s libraries, and to welcome the Library of California as a partner in our efforts to extend digital library services to California residents.”

According to Diana Paque, director of the LOC, cooperative ventures between the CDL and the LOC are fundamental to using California library resources wisely. “CDL’s experience with digital information provides a resources to be used rather than duplicated, and it is a benefit all Californians can share through the LOC.”

James Dawe, president of the Library of California board and a San Diego attorney, said: “The key to the future of libraries in California is cooperation. The information resources we have now, such as large databases, are far too expensive to duplicate. With the growth of the Web and the dispersal of computers to libraries, it is possible now to share information electronically as never before. The California Digital Library is a very big component in this picture.”

More information about the CDL can be found at <http://www.cdlib.org/>; for the Library of California the address is <http://www.library.ca.gov/loc/>.

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