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Back on the shelves: the Libraries collections steadily return to Hale Library

Kansas State University Libraries

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When most students and researchers log into a database and begin their research, they typically search by keyword, subject, author or possibly a specific journal title. But now, a new grant-funded project will help create the capability for researchers to search for articles by location or environment.

K-State Libraries academic services librarian Livia Olsen, in partnership with the University of Idaho, was awarded nearly $100,000 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to plan for a web application that will allow researchers a flexible way to improve Library Services to plan for a web application we are developing further, Staff will update the Croplands Research Database to include features such as automated article importation and assignment of a controlled vocabulary using crop system spatial data layers and geotagging.

“Changes to JournalMap, the web application we are developing further, will help improve finding articles by geographic region,” said Olsen. “For example, a researcher could easily find articles that were published in a specific country or region. The tool even allows for searching by type of environment, altitude and biome, among several other classifications.”

K-State Libraries IT staff designed and created the Croplands Research Database, and have maintained it for nearly ten years. Once the new version of JournalMap, along with its application programming interface, has been fleshed out, IT staff will update the Croplands Research Database to include features such as automated article importation and assignment of a controlled vocabulary using crop system spatial data layers and geotagging.

“The addition of filters like climate and soil type can help searches find other parts of the world with similar circumstances so the search might also be relevant,” said Olsen. “While the focus is on the ecological literature, location is important to many other disciplines. It basically makes searching for relevant research much easier.”

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation’s libraries and museums. It advances, supports and empowers America’s libraries, museums and related organizations through grant making, research and policy development. Its vision is a nation where museums and libraries work together to transform the lives of individuals and communities. To learn more, visit www.imls.gov and follow IMLS on Facebook and Twitter.

The Libraries collections steadily return to Hale Library

After the 2018 fire damaged and displaced Hale Library’s entire physical collection, the challenge of cleaning, reorganizing and curating the collection for the return to Hale Library became an important goal.

Luckily, less than one percent of the collection was damaged beyond repair. The remaining materials which were cleaned and then stored, mostly in caves in Kansas City, have been in the long process of being sorted and slowly moved back into Hale Library by Libraries staff and Belfor, a disaster recovery company. Michelle Turvey-Welch, head of metadata, preservation and acquisitions, said their goal is to make sure the circulating collection is curation so that it best fits the needs of the campus and community. Hale Library’s physical collection includes more than 1.2 million books—that number doesn’t even include the multitude of multimedia, such as DVDs and recordings.

“We’ve faced a unique challenge in that Hale’s collection had not undergone a comprehensive review before, and we’re doing so now as we move books from the caves back to campus and then back into Hale,” Turvey-Welch said. Throughout 2020, semi-trucks delivered boxes of the cleaned materials to Executive Court, a temporary off-campus location which served as a staging facility. Libraries staff used the collection review decisions to inventory the books before Belfor staff put them in order. The call numbers of each book were then carefully read to double check they were in perfect order. The books were re-packed, delivered to Hale Library, put on the shelves and then checked one last time to make sure they were in the correct order.

Staff and Belfor crew members started reshelving materials in the summer of 2020. Currently, more than 300,000 print items in the general collection from call numbers of each book were then carefully read to double check they were in perfect order. The books were re-packed, delivered to Hale Library, put on the shelves and then checked one last time to make sure they were in the correct order.

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