

UC-Irvine's Main Library reopens

Some said it couldn't be done, others said it shouldn't be done, but we did it and it is done! On Thursday, January 2, a retrofitted and renovated Main Library at the University of California, Irvine (UCI), reopened after having been totally closed for three months and open only for limited stack access for an additional three months.

The dangers of living in earthquake country hit home two years ago when UCI's Main Library was rated seismically poor. A long-planned and much needed renovation of the library's two main public service floors was put on hold while librarians, architects, and engineers began the task of determining how best to upgrade the building. The decision was to undertake both a retrofit and a renovation. The retrofit necessitated the unprecedented step of closing the Main Library, a busy facility serving the research and teaching needs of the arts, humanities, social sciences, and management programs, to all staff and users for three full months. Staff devised creative ways to maintain key library services without physical access to the library, including operating a fully functioning Reference



The Current Periodicals and Newspapers Room at UC-Irvine's renovated library.

and Government Information Desk in the Science Library, relocating other important public service functions and portions of the collection, and providing expedited interlibrary loan service, including subsized commercial document delivery, for patrons requesting materials shut away in the Main Library. On September 30, with the retrofit portion of the project complete, a Fall Temporary Entrance (aka MLFTE) opened to allow access to collection stacks on the basement, third, and fourth levels, while construction continued on the other floors.

In January the new Main Library opened to cheers of acclaim and sighs of relief from staff and users. Construction cost about \$3.1 million, and the total project cost was approximately \$5 million.

With a 28-station technology enhanced classroom, a student communications room for e-mail access, a new Multimedia Resources Center, and custom-designed exhibit gallery to display special library collections, UCI's Main Library is poised to meet the information needs of the campus and surrounding communities.—*Ellen Broidy, University of California, Irvine* ■

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