



The Web site *Design Features for Law Libraries* contains about 350 photos of the design and functional features of various U.S. law libraries.

A One-Stop Web Site for Law Library Design

Web Site Provides Roundup of How Other Libraries Plan Space and Functionality

by Robert Genovese

When the University of Arizona's James E. Rogers College of Law Library in Tucson, Ariz., decided to construct a new law library building in October 2000, the law library staff wanted to see how other law libraries designed their facilities. So I traveled to law libraries around the United States to examine the style and structure of their buildings.

With digital camera in hand, I took the first steps to creating a law library design Web site that provides a photographic catalog of various facility design options for law libraries considering construction or renovation projects.

The Web site, *Design Features for Law Libraries* at <http://www.law.arizona.edu/library/librarydesign/>, was part of my sabbatical project. I visited 23 libraries in 15 states and the District of Columbia. In the summer of 2001, I traveled to 16 libraries at universities in the western United States, including Gonzaga University; Brigham Young University; and the universities of Washington, Oregon, Utah, Idaho, Colorado, Nevada and the Pacific. I then visited seven libraries in the summer of 2002 at eastern higher-education institutions, including Boston College, Cornell University, Georgetown University, the Catholic University of America and New York University.

To gain an objective cross-section of design options, I visited libraries that had undergone new construction or renovation, as well as those operating with long-standing facilities. I photographed each facility with a digital camera, taking more than 1,000 digital photographs total.

After sorting and organizing the photos, I posted about 350 pictures to the Web site. The images are arranged into 27 functional or design categories, ranging from specific types of furniture, such as carrels and study tables, to function-specific areas, like mail processing and microform, to overall architecture issues, including general design elements and building exteriors. Each section contains thumbnail images to compare various library design elements at a glance. Users of the site can view a larger version of each thumbnail image for a closer examination.

The Web site turned out to be more than just a source of design ideas for the James E. Rogers College of Law Library; it is a one-stop shop for any other library planning to remodel or constructs its facilities. The site's various photos are useful to help law librarians understand what general and specific functional designs have worked for other law libraries and what design elements should serve as cautionary lessons about what does not work in law library architecture.

One picture may be worth a thousand words, but, in this case, 350 pictures becomes a practical way to begin the planning process.

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Comparing Computer Labs, Conference Rooms, Copier Areas and Carrels

Wonder how other law libraries handle questions of space planning and design? Visit the University of Arizona's *Design Features for Law Libraries* Web site at <http://www.law.arizona.edu/library/librarydesign/> to see how 23 law libraries approach the following issues:

- Administrative areas
- Carrel seating
- Circulation desks
- Classrooms in the library
- Compact shelving
- Computer labs
- Conference rooms
- Copier areas
- Design elements
- Display areas
- Entrances
- Mail processing
- Microform areas
- OPAC areas
- Reference desks
- Reserve areas
- Seating areas
- Special collections
- Staff lounges
- Storage areas
- Study rooms
- Supply storage
- Technical services