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Collection Centric to User Centric Academic Library Spaces: Building Requirements of Net Generation Users

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Abstract This paper intends to examine the needs of the net generation users regarding library spaces. In the light of the data collected from 81 users from University of Hyderabad and Maulana Azad National Urdu University, the study looks into the preferences of users and whether the increasing use of Internet requires changes in the library spaces for the future generation. The modern academic community including teachers, students and researchers are more oriented towards using information available on the internet. There is a tendency of the users to spend more time on the web. Libraries are looked up on as learning spaces for collaborative and networked learning. The future of libraries lies in providing a platform to the users where they can converse, collaborate and share the information. Hence, library buildings in the 21st century are moving away from traditional collection-centric to user-centric service rich libraries.
Keywords *Modern Library Buildings; Academic Library Spaces; Net Generation Library Spaces; User Centric Academic Library Buildings; University of Hyderabad Library Building; Maulana Azad National Urdu University Library Building*

1. Introduction

A well-established library is essential for an academic institution. Library houses the books and other material to support the research and other educational activities of the academic institution and provides variety of services to promote the use of books and satisfy the needs of users. Library provides the space required for learning and expanding the knowledge of the students.

Traditionally, libraries were collection centric, primarily focused on acquiring, organizing, storing and preserving the required information for easy retrieval and use. Literature reveals that in the pre Gutenberg era, the monastic libraries, church libraries etc. housed great collections of manuscripts and contained huge reading rooms. The paintings of great artists decorated the walls of these libraries. The libraries served only a selected few and are not open for the public. In the 18th and early 19th centuries with the expansion of education and growth of educational institutions, Libraries also envisaged a change in terms of their growth and services. There is a growth in terms of the collection of books and also readers. The libraries were no longer limited to the selected few. The libraries had different areas- stack area, reading rooms etc. but still closed access was practiced in most of the libraries.

In the late 19th century, several universities have established their libraries. Libraries usually are located in the centre of the campus. The libraries had spacious rooms adjoining the stacks and open access was encouraged. The entrance of the library is usually occupied by circulation desks, cataloguing cabinets. The book stacks occupied more room. The buildings had good ventilation allowing natural light and air. Growth of the collection demanded more physical space. Preservation, maintenance and security of the books were the major concern of library staff which is continuing even today. The important criteria for planning collection centric library buildings were –

- Growth in the physical collection
- More space to accommodate the growing book stacks and collection
- Providing spaces for readers to access the collections
- Service spaces
- Maintenance, preservation and conservation of library collections
- Safety and Security of the library holdings
- Extension or expansion of the buildings

21st century witnessed number of changes brought about by the technology, explosion of information sources, growth in the number of open access and open educational resources and thereby changes in the needs of the users. The modern academic community including teachers, students and researchers are more oriented towards using information available on the internet. There is a tendency of the users to spend more time on the web. Libraries are looked up on as learning spaces for collaborative and networked learning. The future of libraries lies in providing a platform to the users where they can converse, collaborate and share the information. Hence, library buildings in the 21st century are moving away from traditional collection-centric to user-centric, service rich libraries. This paper intends to examine the needs of the net generation users regarding library spaces.

2. Research Questions

The Study intends to address two important questions –

- In the light of increasing use of internet by the students, do they still prefer physical library space?
- What changes, the net generation users are looking for in terms of library spaces?

3. Review of Literature

There is difference of opinion regarding the requirement of physical library buildings in the internet era. Many people believe that there will be no need for a physical library, because information will be accessible from the computers on their desktops with the press of a button. Others believe that Technology itself is causing increased demand for space in many areas of the library. There are growing numbers of computer workstations for patrons and staff alike and other equipment such as network files, server's needs are specialized and additional space often not found in existing facilities (Lucker, 1992).

A growing role of the library is helping students and others learn to use the new technology to access information. This is requiring libraries to supply more space for face-to-face consultation with information professionals (Clemmer & Smith, 1992) and most often necessitating the provision of a large, well-equipped user instruction room (Bazillion, 1994).

The digital age, contrary to predictions, has had a largely positive impact on library design. The increase in the use of IT and e-resources allow libraries to be more flexible and the spaces within them are more fluid. Library spaces are no longer defined by the collections as in the past but need to encourage interaction between, and among, library users and library staff. The technological advancements referred above are releasing library staff from routine tasks and driving the move toward a user-focused rather than a collection-based approach to both services and the layout of spaces. Library premises are no longer largely governed by the storage and display of resources or by the need for space-consuming issues and service desks but rather by the needs of users. The creation of exciting and attractive library space has been shown to bring people into the physical library to use the virtual resources. The library as meeting place is another well-recognized trend in library design. The concept of the library as a "third place"—a place away from both the workplace and the home to study in peace, work collaboratively, or socialize—has been much documented (Banning et al., 2006; Oldenburg, 2001).

Freeman (2005), has noted that "rather than threatening the traditional concept of the library, the integration of new information technology has actually become the catalyst that transforms the library into a more vital and critical intellectual centre of life at colleges and universities today" (Latimer, 2010) has identified the following drivers leading to a changing approach to the design of academic libraries: the increasing availability of e-resources and the concomitant shift in the balance between printed and virtual collections; technological advances such as self-issue/return, the automation of manual handling, the use of sorting robots, compact shelving, and RFID technology; social networking—the library as a meeting place; and the need to market libraries in the face of increasing competition from other information providers.

The need for libraries to market themselves has become increasingly important, and this in turn has had an impact on library design. There is a strong need to create an identity for the library; as Arets (2005) has pointed out, a building that looks exciting on the outside will entice people in to find out what is going on inside. The library building itself becomes a marketing tool. The library at Cottbus has been visited by approximately 20,000 tourists since it opened in 2005 (Degwitz, 2010).

In India there are very few studies focused on library buildings. Some researchers attempted to study the standards and norms for library layout in India. Kumud Prabha (2005) studied the norms and standards used for library layout in India. Bureau of Indian Standards provides that a library should have a stack room, a Librarian's room and a reading room having seating capacity of 40 to 120 chairs. The Stack room should be big enough to accommodate 6,000 to 10,000 books at least. The paper concludes that there are no authentic standards for libraries in India.

Rathinasabhapathy, G. (2014) examined the various standards prescribed by various regulatory bodies of professional education such as AICTE, MCI, DCI, PCI, NCTE etc. And found that none of the professional bodies have suggested clear cut norms for library buildings and furniture.

Review of literature reveals that –
- There are no significant studies on the impact of technology on library design in India
- In countries like UK and USA, approach to library buildings is moving from collection centric to user centric and providing space for collaboration, networking and sharing information for the net-generation users.

4. Methodology

In order to know the needs and preferences of users regarding the library space, a small survey is conducted where structured questionnaire is distributed to 100 students studying at the two central universities namely – University of Hyderabad (UOH) and Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU), Hyderabad. Convenience sampling is used. Eighty two responses are received. Data regarding - requirement of physical library building, frequency of library visits, user preferences regarding spaces for quiet study, discussions, presentations, training rooms etc. were collected.

5. Library Building Specifications of Selected Universities

A. University of Hyderabad
(http://igmlnet.uohyd.ac.in:8000)

University of Hyderabad is one of the reputed institutes of higher education, known for its excellence in research and distinguished faculty. IGM Library caters to the information needs of faculty, research scholars and students in Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Management, Sciences and Engineering. The main objective is to make the Library the most effective Learning Resource centre to contribute to the quality of higher education. The library has latest ICT infrastructure. Library Building provides congenial learning environment to the users through its various sections including Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) Searching Area, Internet browsing area for accessing e-resources, Laptop zone with Wi-Fi facility, specialized workstations & software for visually-challenged students.

The University Library is situated at a central place and constitutes 57000 S. ft. Area The building has a reading space with seating capacity to accommodate 400 users. Apart from the reading space, there are 30 individual reading carrels, a lounge of 2000 S. ft. for browsing and relaxed reading. The Building also has an IT Zone for accessing e-resources. Library has a separate Air-conditioned Annex Building with 2 reading halls with 200 seating capacity and Wi-Fi, which is kept open on all the days round the clock (365 days 24 hrs.)

At present the library has a total collection of about 4.00 lakhs volumes including monographs, text books, back volumes of journals, theses/dissertations, CDs/DVDs. The library is subscribing around 300 print journals in various disciplines of the university and providing access to more than 35000 e-resources including e-books and UGC Infonet e-resources.

B. Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU), Hyderabad
(http://www.manuu.ac.in/central_library.php)

The MANUU Library was established in the year 1998 along with the University. The Library has shifted to its newly constructed independent building in Dec. 2008. The New Library Building has G+1 with 3300 sq.mts of built up area and Seating capacity of 200. The Central Library is the most modular, functional and uses modern technology for its operations. The library is fully computerized and using NewGenLib LIS Software for day to day operations. The library is equipped with state of the art ICT infrastructure including CD/DVD mirror server, Bar code technology, 3M Security System, Biometric device and paging system for public announcements.

The library has more than 58,000 books, subscribes to 179 journals and 389 Audio and Video CDs. The University is a member of the countrywide Infonet e-journal consortium. The Library has a Reading Room with seating capacity of 200. Library Building includes separate section for OPAC, cubicles for research scholars, audio visual section comprising T.V., MP3 System, Walkman with Headphones for listening to Audio cassettes. Library provides online access to Springer link, JCCC-UGC infonet, JSTOR, etc. through INFLIBNET E-journal consortium. Library also provides links to several freely available

online databases such as Wikipedia, answers.com, DOAJ, DOAB, Indiastat etc. The library provides Internet Access service to all library members free of charge for browsing e-resources.

6. Analysis & Findings

A. Background

The background information of the respondents under study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Background Information of the Respondents

S. No.	Description	MANUU No. (%age)	UOH No. (%age)	Total
1	No. of Respondents	41 (50%)	41 (50%)	82 (100)
2	Category of the Respondents			
	Undergraduate	15 (36.6%)	4 (9.8%)	19 (23.3%)
	Postgraduate	21 (51.2%)	22 (54.7%)	43 (52.4%)
3	Gender of the Respondents			
	Male	37 (90.2%)	33 (80.5%)	70 (85.4%)
	Female	4 (9.8%)	8 (19.5%)	12 (14.6%)

The Table 1 gives the background information of the respondents from the two Universities under study. Out of total 82 respondents, 41 are from UOH and 41 are from MANUU. Out of the total respondents, 23.3% are under graduate students & 52.4% are post graduate students. Gender-wise analysis of the respondents reveals that majority (85.4%) are male students and only 14.6% of them are female.

B. Library Building

The respondents are asked whether they require a physical library building in the context of changing information & communication scenario.

Table 2: Respondent's Opinion Regarding Requirement of a Physical Library Building

S. No.	Requirement of Physical Library Building	Name of the University		Total No. (%)
		MANUU No. (%)	UOH No. (%)	
1	Yes	39 (95.1)	40 (97.6)	79 (96.3)
2	No	2 (4.9)	1 (2.4)	3 (3.7)
	Total	41 (50)	41(50)	82 (100)

It is evident from Table 2 that 96.3% responded in favour of the physical library building and only 3 (3.7%) users in both the universities felt that physical library building requirement is not necessary.

C. Library Visits

Table 3: Frequency of Library Visits by the Respondents

S. No.	Frequency of Library Visits	Name of the University		Total No. (%)
		MANUU No. (%)	UOH No. (%)	
1	Daily	35 (85.4%)	30 (73.2%)	65 (79.3%)
2	Weekly	6 (14.6%)	10 (24.4%)	16 (19.5%)
3	Monthly	0 (0%)	1 (2.4%)	1 (1.2%)
4	Total	41 (50%)	41 (50%)	82 (100%)

Data from Table 3 reveals that 79.3% users visit the library every day, 19.5% visit the library once in a week and only 1.2% respondents visit the library once in a month.

Table 4: Response with Regard to the Quick Visits to the Library

S. No.	Quick visits	Name of the University		Total No. (%)
		MANUU No. (%)	UOH No. (%)	
1	Yes	33 (80.5)	37 (90.2)	70 (85.4)
2	No	8 (19.5)	4 (9.8)	12 (14.6)
	Total	41 (50)	41 (50)	82 (100)

The respondents are asked whether they make quick visit to the library or spend considerable time in the library. The analysis is presented in Table 4. Majority of users i.e. 85.4% responded that they made quick visits to the library, whereas only 14.6% of them spend considerable time in the library.

D. Library Assistance

From the table no.5, it can be seen that majority of the users (81.7%) preferred to search for books and information on their own and only 19.5% seek assistance of the library staff in locating the books.

Table 5: Responses with regard to Searching/Locating books in the Library

S. No.	Search/Locate books in the Library	Name of the University		Total No. (%)
		MANUU No. (%)	UOH No. (%)	
1	Self-search	31 (75.6)	36 (87.8)	67 (81.7)
2	Take assistance of library staff	10 (24.4)	5 (12.2)	15 (19.5)
	Total	41 (50)	41 (50)	82 (100)

E. Location of Library Building

Table 6: Respondents' Preference for Library Building in the Vicinity of the Department

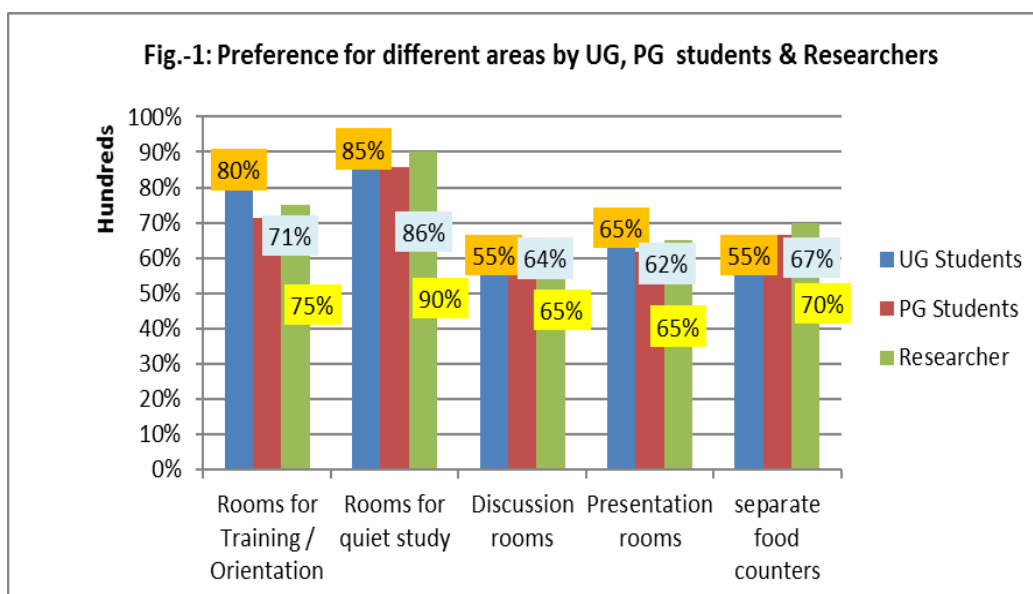| S. No.	Location of the Library	Name of the University		Total No. (%)
		MANUU No. (%)	UOH No. (%)	
1	Strongly agree	40 (97.56)	41 (50)	81 (98.8)
2	Agree	1(2.44)	0 (0)	1 (1.2)
3	Disagree	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
	Total	41 (50)	41 (50)	82 (100)

The Table 6 shows that majority of respondents (98.8%) strongly felt that library should be located at a central place and should be within the vicinity of their departments.

F. Preferred Areas in the Library

Table 7: User Preferences for Different Areas in the Library

S. No.	Preferred Areas	Name of the University					
		MANUU			UOH		
		Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
1.	Rooms for Library orientation / training programs for using e-resources	33	8	41	28	13	41
2	Rooms for Quiet Study	37	4	41	34	7	41
3	Discussion Rooms	28	13	41	23	18	41
4	Presentation Rooms	29	12	41	23	18	41
5	Food Counters	30	11	41	23	18	41
6	Separate reading rooms for men & women	26	15	41	9	32	41

From the Table 7, it is evident that majority users favour having separate rooms for library orientation/training programmes in using e-resources; rooms for quiet study, separate discussion rooms, presentation rooms, food counters. Due to religious customs, users of MANUU favoured separate reading rooms for men and women.

Figure 1: Preference for Different Areas by UG, PG Students and Researchers

Figure 1 presents analysis of preferences for different areas by 3 categories of students under study. UG students showed preference for separate rooms for training and orientation in the use of e-resources in the library, while all types of users agreed that there should be rooms for quiet study especially the researchers. Majority of Researchers and PG students require spaces for discussion and presentations also. Most of the Researchers and PG students expressed that separate food counters are required within the library so that they can spend longer hours in the library.

G. Facilities in the Library

Table 8 shows the preferences of the users for different facilities to be provided in the library. From the table, it is evident that users of both the universities preferred to have the facilities like – Internet Lab, Access to Institutional Repository, Digital Library, and Research Cubicle, computer workstations, laptop connections and Wi-Fi facilities in the library. The users preferred to have internet facility (98%), Generator (100%), Digital library and Laptop connection (96%), safety and security (83%), computer and other electronic equipment (74%). which are very much essential in present day library building planning.

Table 8: Respondent's Preferences for Different Facilities in the Library

S. No.	Facility	Name of the University							
		MANUU				UOH			
		Very much required	Required	Not required	Total	Very much required	Required	Not required	Total
1	Internet Lab	32 (78%)	8 (19.8%)	1 (2.4%)	41 (100%)	28 (68.3%)	13 (31.7%)	0	41 (100%)
2	Institutional Repository	20 (48.8%)	16 (39%)	5 (12.2%)	41 (100%)	21 (51.2%)	19 (46.3%)	1 (2.4%)	41 (100%)
3	Digital Library	30 (73.2%)	9 (21.9%)	2 (4.9%)	41 (100%)	30 (73.2%)	11 (26.8%)	0	41 (100%)
4	Generator	33 (80.5%)	8 (19.5%)	0	41 (100%)	31 (75.6%)	10 (24.4%)	0	41 (100%)
5	Seminar Hall	15 (36.6%)	13 (31.7%)	13 (31.7%)	41 (100%)	13 (31.7%)	18 (43.9%)	10 (24.4%)	41 (100%)
6	Research cubicles	30 (73.2%)	8 (19.5%)	3 (7.3%)	41 (100%)	27 (65.9%)	10 (24.4%)	4 (9.7%)	41 (100%)
7	Computer workstations	28 (68.3%)	11 (26.8%)	2 (4.9%)	41 (100%)	25 (61%)	16 (39%)	0	41 (100%)
8	Laptop connections	30 (73.2%)	8 (19.5%)	3 (7.3%)	41 (100%)	27 (65.9%)	10 (24.4%)	4 (9.7%)	41 (100%)
9	LAN/WAN	30 (73.2%)	8 (19.5%)	3 (7.3%)	41 (100%)	29 (70.7%)	11 (26.8%)	1 (2.4%)	41 (100%)
10	Wi-Fi	27 (65.9%)	9 (21.9%)	5 (12.2%)	41 (100%)	30 (73.2%)	11 (26.8%)	0	41 (100%)
11	Classrooms	15 (36.6%)	13 (31.7%)	13 (31.7%)	41 (100%)	13 (31.7%)	20 (48.8%)	8 (19.5%)	41 (100%)

H. Significant Factors of Library Buildings

The Table 9 gives the Users preference from both the universities for different factors important for Library building. The users opined that library should have more facilities for safety and security (83%); computer and other electronic equipment (74%), Plants (70%) and Open spaces (66%) are very important aspects in the library.

Table 9: Respondent's Opinion on Factors Important for Library Building

S. No.	Facility	Name of the University							
		MANUU				UOH			
		Very Important	Important	Not Important	Total	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Total
1	Open spaces	33 (80.4%)	7 (17%)	1 (2.4%)	41 (100%)	21 (51.2%)	17 (41.5%)	3 (7.3%)	41 (100%)
2	Colour	22 (53.7%)	15 (36.6%)	4 (9.7%)	41 (100%)	19 (46.3%)	18 (43.9%)	4 (9.7%)	41 (100%)
3	Natural lighting	29 (70.7%)	8 (19.5%)	4 (9.7%)	41 (100%)	26 (63.4%)	14 (34.1%)	1 (2.4%)	41 (100%)
4	Plants	35 (85.4%	5 (12.2%)	1 (2.4%)	41 (100%)	22 (53.7%)	16 (39%)	3 (7.3%)	41 (100%)
5	Tempting furniture	21 (51.2%)	14 (34.2%)	6 (14.6%)	41 (100%)	25 (61%)	12 (29.3%)	4 (9.7%)	41 (100%)
6	Computer & Other electronic devices	31 (75.6%)	8 (19.5%)	2 (4.9%)	41 (100%)	30 (73.2%)	10 (24.4%)	1 (2.4%)	41 (100%)
7	Mobility &Wireless communication	29 (70.7%)	10 (24.4%)	2 (4.9%)	41 (100%)	32 (78%)	8 (19.5%)	1 (2.4%)	41 (100%)
8	Safety & Security Measures	38 (92.7%)	2 (4.9%)	1 (2.4%)	41 (100%)	30 (73.2%)	10 (24.4%)	1 (2.4%)	41 (100%)

7. Findings

1. The students are asked if they need a physical library building in the present day context, 96.3% responded in favour of the physical library building.

2. Data revealed that 79.3% users visit the library every day, 19.5% visit the library once in a week and only 1.2% respondents visit the library one in a month.

3. While 85.4% of users responded they make quick visits to the library, only 12% of them spend considerable time in the library.

4. Just above half of the respondents (56.1%) preferred to sit at the same place in the library every day while the remaining 43.9% change their place for reading.

5. Majority of the users (80.5%) preferred to search for books and information on their own and only 19.5% seek assistance of the library staff in locating the books.

6. Almost all users (99.8%) felt that library should be located at a central place and should be within the vicinity of their departments.

7. Majority users favour having separate rooms for library orientation/training programmes in using e-resources; rooms for quiet study, separate discussion rooms, presentation rooms, food counters.

8. The users preferred to have internet facility (98%), Generator (100%), Digital library and Laptop connection (96%), safety and security (83%), computer and other electronic equipment (74%),

Plants (70%) and Open spaces (66%) which are very much essential in present day library building planning.

9. Generator facility has been recorded highest percentage from both the Universities i.e., 41 (100%) in MANUU and 41 (100%) in UOH, followed by Internet facility with 32 (78%) in MANUU and 28 (68.3%) in UOH.

10. The facility of Digital library has also recorded similar preference from both MANUU and UOH with 30 (73.2%) response. The LAN/WAN facility have been given 30 (73.2%) preference while 29 (70.7%) preference have been given in UOH.

11. The facility for laptop connections in MANUU has recorded 30 (73.2%) while UOH has recorded 27 (65.9%). Importance have been given to Wi-Fi facility with 27 (65.9%) in MANUU and 30 (73.2%) in UOH.

12. University-wise breakup of the responses for factors important for library building like Plants is 35 (85.4%) in MANUU while in UOH it is 22 (53.7%).

13. For Open spaces, the respondents have given their preference as 33 (80.4%) in MANUU while in UOH the preference is 21 (51.2%).

14. Another factor important for library building is availability of Computer and other electronic device for which the preference is 31 (75.6%) by respondents from MANUU and 30 (73.2%) from UOH.

15. Safety and security measures have been given more importance 38 (92.7%) by the respondents from MANUU and 30 (73.2%) from UOH

8. Conclusion

It is clearly seen from the findings that in-spite of the increase in use of Internet and electronic resources, learners and scholars prefer to have a physical library building with good collection of print and electronic resources. Study also shows that in the net-generation, people want to get connected to one another, learn collaboratively and share their research. Due to the same reason the users preferred to have discussion rooms and separate rooms for making and sharing presentations, apart from spaces usually allotted for quiet study by the libraries. Natural lighting, open spaces for circulation of air and plants will make learning environment more conducive to serious kind of studies and research.

It is interesting to note that even though technology enables 24/7, anytime, anywhere access to learning as well scholarly resources and users can access the library through their desktops without coming to the library, most of the users still prefer to spend more time in the library. Therefore, we can say that ICT is not posing a threat to the library buildings but can be seen as an opportunity for users to use the library space in more innovative ways. Academic Libraries should plan the spaces also keeping in view the current needs of the learners, in order to make them more and more user-centric learning spaces. Literature reveals that very few systematic studies are made on the different aspects of academic library buildings in India. Hence more research needs to be done on user-centric library spaces.

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