



Fifty Years at the Library

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In 1970, you walked into the library in Carroll Hall, and you saw a card catalog flanked by a reference desk and a circulation checkout. In 2020, you walk into Bierce Library—which has been open in the same location since 1973—smell coffee brewing, see computer terminals and inviting workspaces, climb stairs to walk through stacks of books and materials to private carrels, and see offices sprinkled around the outer edges. The library is still the heart of the Hilltop, but while it looks the same, its program has changed. In 1970, the library collected as much material as possible, provided indexes to navigate within its collections, and educated everyone to use those materials. In

2020, delivering materials online to scholars' desktops creates an interface of heightened convenience.

Two of the most important steps that led from Carroll Hall to the library on your desktop were organizations in which The University of Akron was a founding member: the Ohio College Library Center (OCLC), which has transmogrified into a worldwide member-driven library cooperative from its modest start as a way to increase access and delivery of materials among libraries in the state; and OhioLINK, which started as a way to limit duplication of materials, hasten interchange among member institutions, and promote coordination in collection management. In these fifty years, the card catalog disappeared from that entrance to the library and has been replaced by an on-line catalog, and most every material in the state became referenced and shareable from a computer.

So, why come to the library at all? Because it is still the heart of the campus.