



USGS Great Lakes Science Center

Library and Information Services

Information for Research

A quality research program depends on accurate and timely information. Scientists require information at many points in the research process--while forming a hypothesis, in preparation of research proposals, while developing a study plan, during the study, and once the study is complete and results are being written to share with other members of the research community. A good information program informs scientists about existing knowledge and avoids duplication of research efforts. The mission of the USGS Great Lakes Science Center's John Van Oosten Library is to provide information services to meet all these needs.

A Tradition of Service

The Library, named in honor of Dr. John Van Oosten, the Center's first director, was officially dedicated in 1966. Since that time, the collection has grown, and electronic tools that enhance and speed information delivery increasingly replace print resources. In the midst of these many changes, the Library's focus on service has remained unaltered. Using all the tools, people, and print and electronic resources at their disposal, the two-person Library staff provides reference and literature searching services, obtains documents needed by scientists, maintains a collection of materials in various formats, provides training in the use of new information resources, and works toward improving access to Library collections and services by taking advantage of today's technologies. The Library staff also distributes Center-authored publications and manages the internal manuscript process.

Service Where the Science Is

Nearly half of the Center's staff is located at one of its eight field locations. The Library staff makes an extra effort to deliver information to researchers who are not able to visit the Library in person by researching, copying, and sending information via mail, e-mail, phone, and fax. Electronic networks that speed communication and information delivery are improving the Library's capability to respond to the special needs of scientists located in the field.



A Unique Collection

A specialized collection of technical materials supports the research activities of the Center. This collection includes books, print and electronic journals, reprints, photographs, archival materials, and computerized databases. The Library's resources are used daily by the Center's scientific staff. The value of the collection's unique resources is also reflected in its wide use by others. Through its participation in a shared computer network, the Library staff responds to requests from other libraries for copies or loans of material from its collection. Other users visit, call, or e-mail the Library for information.

Times They Are A Changin'

Everyday we hear about the new ways in which information is being stored, accessed, delivered, and managed. In order to provide better access to information about publications authored by GLSC scientists, the Library staff created a searchable database available from the Center's Web site. From the Library's Web page, Center scientists can access electronic databases and journals, and people from around the world can search the Library's catalog and find out more about the Library's collections and services.

Looking to the Future

The Library will continue using appropriate tools and technologies to make increasing amounts and types of information available in the ways that best serve Center scientists, our partners, and the public. One thing that will remain unchanged, no matter what the future brings, is the Library's focus on service in support of the Center's mission.

