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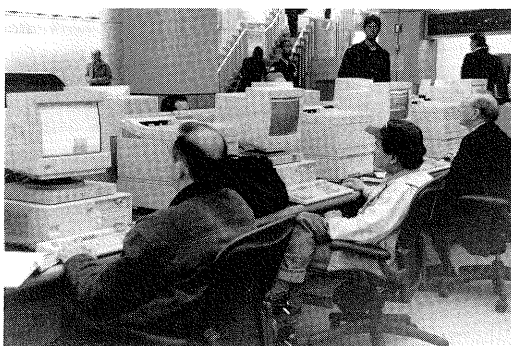
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SCIENCE AND BUSINESS INFORMATION CENTER OPENS IN NEW YORK CITY

By Esther Harriott



NYPL OPENS ITS SCIENCE, INDUSTRY, AND BUSINESS LIBRARY

When the new Science, Industry and Business Library, known as SIBL, opened on May 2, the occasion not only marked the conclusion of The New York Public Library's year long Centennial celebration, it also launched a new era in the institution's history. SIBL occupies part of an early-20th-century landmark building, the former B. Altman department store—but its interior has been transformed by the architects Gwathmey Siegel & Associates into a library for the 21st century.

"SIBL is the nation's premier public information center devoted to science and business," said Library President Paul LeClerc. "It puts The New York Public Library in the forefront of the information revolution and, in our second

century of service, reaffirms the Library's mission to make all its resources available to everyone."

Computer and telecommunications technologies connecting SIBL to other libraries, educational institutions, offices, and homes here and abroad will give SIBL's users, both inside and outside its walls, access to a world of electronic information. This is not to say that books have vanished, or that reading-room coziness has been replaced by high-tech impersonality. Just beyond the entrance lobby on Madison Avenue at 34th Street, visitors coming into the Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman Circulating Library and Reading Room are greeted with the reassuring sight of a block-long wall lined with 50,000 books. They can browse through these shelves, look at current business and science magazines, check out books, or sit and read at the comfortable chairs and tables, just as they would in any library.

What is different is almost invisible wiring that permits users to plug in their laptop computers, connecting them to all The New York Public Library's online catalogs—both branch and research collections—and to its World Wide Web site on the Internet. Those without their own laptops can use the eight online

terminals in the Cullman Circulating Library for access to the same information. Or they can go to the lower level—which encompasses the rest of SIBL's public space and is reached by staircase or glass elevator—to tap into these networked connections at the 42 terminals of the Online Catalog Center.

Next to the Online Catalog Center is the B. Altman Delivery Desk, where users pick up books and periodicals that are transported on automated book lifts from the five upper levels of stacks, compressed into what used to be three sales floors. The stacks hold 1.2 million books and more than 110,000 periodical titles, which, along with a vast collection of patents and a collection of approximately 1 million items on microform, both located in the Microform Room, constitute the research collections. Together with the 50,000-volume circulating collection, these holdings, enhanced by electronic resources, make SIBL one of the world's largest public libraries in its field.

Two public service levels are architecturally united by the 33-foot-high ceiling of Healy Hall, an atrium that serves as the main lobby for the lower level and as a reception area for events—business seminars and meetings, lectures and workshops—held in the adjacent Conference Center. Ten electronic kiosks, developed and donated by the IBM Corporation (which also donated 60 workstations) are placed at strategic points on both levels of this user-friendly library to guide visitors to SIBL's array of resources and services.

A Profusion of Free Services

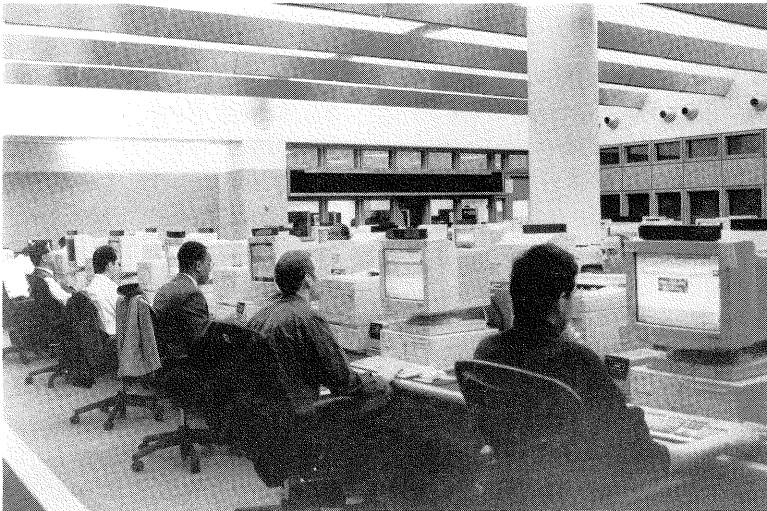
Those looking for specialized information are likely to head for the

McGraw Information Services Center, where they will find a profusion of free services, from research assistance by subject specialists to information tailored to specific kinds of users. SIBL's programs were developed to meet the needs of people in the business and science communities at every level of experience," says William D. Walker, the Andrew W. Mellon Director of The Research Libraries, "and we will constantly reevaluate the quality of our services to make sure that what we are providing is at the appropriate level for the user requesting it."

Services, Free and for a Fee

The Small Business Information Service gives small-business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs information in such fields as demographics and marketing, and access to multimedia software that lets the user create a long-range business plan. The International Trade Resources Service supplies worldwide trade data invaluable to companies competing in the global market. The Science Education Program is developing formal relationships with high school science teachers to encourage them to make use of SIBL's resources for their classroom teaching and curriculum planning. In addition to these free services, "NYPL Express" offers extended research, rapid document-delivery, and other fee-based services to individual and corporate clients.

The McGraw Information Services Center leads into the Richard B. Salomon Research Reading Room, which, like the Cullman Reading Room, offers both state-of-the-art technology, including wiring for laptop computers, and extensive open-shelf reference collections.



Patrons of The New York Public Library's \$100 million Science, Industry and Business Library (SIBL) use computer workstations to gain access to catalogs, databases, and the Internet.

For the most comprehensive electronic research, users can go into the Electronic Information Center, where, seated at 70 workstations, they are able to bring science and business information from all over the globe to their computer screens.

But not only the computer-literate are welcome at SIBL. People new to information technologies may sign up for free, hands-on instruction given by trained staff in the Harrison S. Kravis Electronic Training Center, which is equipped with 30 workstations. "SIBL has been designed to address the information needs of users with varying degrees of technological sophistication, and from diverse educational, economic, and cultural backgrounds," notes Library Chairman Elizabeth Rohatyn. "For those who can't afford computers and the other expensive tools needed to take advantage of the latest forms of information, this wonderful new library opens a door to the information age."

Blending Old and New

The architects have succeeded in creating an information-age facility with the inviting ambiance of a traditional library. Contemporary in design, SIBL's interior blends elements that refer back to the early 20th-century landmark building with those that look ahead to the 21st century. Wood used in furnishings and shelves is the original warm oak, restored or replicated; the original vaulted ceilings are supported by the original columns, now reinforced to hold the weight of the stacks, and covered in traditional terrazzo. The new staircase is covered in terrazzo too, offset by railings of sleekly modern stainless steel, which also accents the wall panels and perforated screens. To make SIBL as flexible as possible to accommodate rapidly changing technology, Gwathmey Siegel designed the two public service levels as areas of wide-open space, subtly delineated by panels and screens, and built them on raised floors with all the wiring running underneath, along with easily accessible

connections for future adaptations.

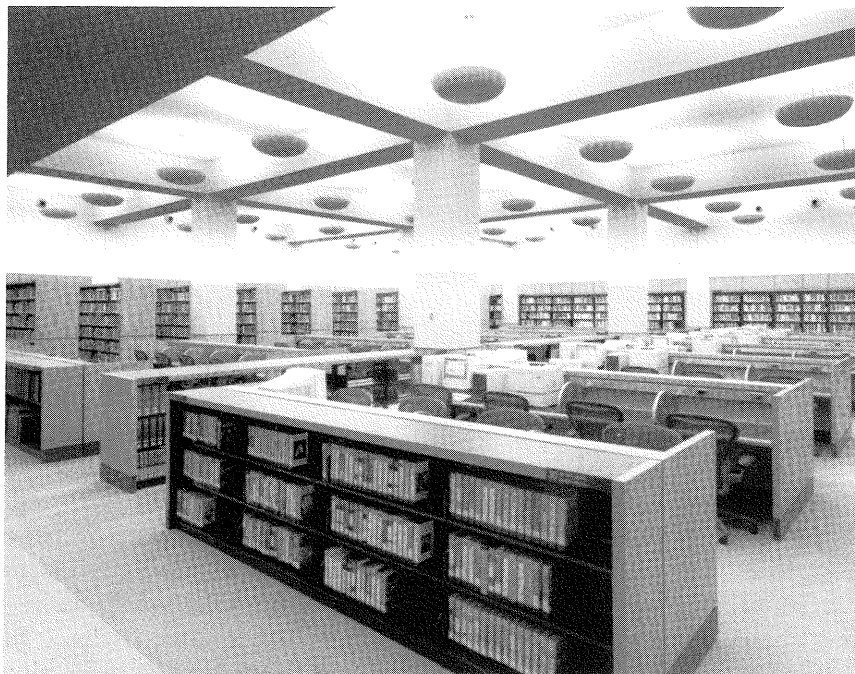
A Public-Private Partnership

SIBL is a \$100 million project—\$84 million for planning and construction and \$16 million for endowment and operation—supported through a partnership of public and private funds, and a long-term financing arrangement. The \$24.5 million goal in government funds has been reached, with \$13 million from the City of New York, \$7.5 million from the State through the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and \$4 million in federal support through the Small Business Administration and the Economic Development Administration. In the private sector, the lead individual gift came from Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman, the lead corporate gift from PaineWebber Group Inc., and the lead foundation gift from the Starr

Foundation. Other major donors include the late Richard B. Salomon, Harold W. McGraw Jr., RJR Nabisco, Chase Manhattan Bank, the Altman Foundation, Library Trustee Alan C. Greenberg and Kathy Greenberg, Library Chairman Elizabeth Rohatyn and Felix Rohatyn, and Library Chairman Emeritus Marshall Rose, and Jill Rose.

SIBL will be a vital engine for economic growth,” says Mr. Rose, who spearheaded the creation of the new library, “and it will give us the opportunity to strengthen and extend The New York Public Library’s leadership role in providing information locally, nationally, and now, globally.”

Esther Harriott is editor of the *New York Public Library News*.



View from the entrance to the Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman Circulating Library and Reading Room of The New York Public Library’s Science, Industry and Business Library. The Room will house a circulating collection of approximately 50,000 books and over 100 periodical titles. Eight online terminals and tables wired for laptop computers will connect readers to online catalogs and the Internet. Photo: © 1996 Peter Aaron/ESTO Photographics.