

Universities purging library resources

By Michael Rubinkam, AP

A library without books? Not quite, but as students abandon the stacks in favor of online reference material, university libraries are unloading millions of unread volumes in a nationwide purge that has some print-loving scholars deeply unsettled.

Libraries are putting books in storage, contracting with resellers or simply recycling them. An ever-increasing number of books exist in the cloud, and libraries are banding together to ensure print copies are retained by someone, somewhere. Still, that doesn't always sit well with academics who practically live in the library and argue that large, readily available print collections are vital to research.

"It's not entirely comfortable for anyone," said Rick Lugg, executive director of OCLC Sustainable Collection Services, which helps libraries analyze their holdings. "But absent endless resources to handle this stuff, it's a situation that has to be faced."

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