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HUNTINGTON BEACH

Library Moves Into Field of High Tech

As libraries have evolved from book depositories into multidimensional centers offering videocassettes, compact discs and computers, the Huntington Central Library has developed Orange County's premier public multimedia center.

Today, as research moves into the field of "hypermedia," the melding of video and computer technologies, the Huntington Beach facility is preparing to become the county's first library to offer the new gadgetry to the public.

As officials in the library's media-services center envision the future, patrons, perhaps in as little as two years, might be able to come to the center equipped with nothing more than an idea and create an entire video production—complete with computer animation, graphics and titles.

"The technology is not really defined at this point. But it's seen as the next generation of great things in computer technology," library supervisor Bill Miller said. "So far, there are just some samples available here and there. But as

it develops, we hope to have units . . . to make this available to the general public."

If research develops as expected, the center could have the capability soon to create professional-quality videos for businesses, civic groups or anyone else who wants to make a flashy presentation, library officials said. Students' written reports may evolve into video reports, they add.

The technology also might enhance patrons' accessibility to existing information.

For example, one may be able to view a specific portion of a book by calling it up on a computer terminal. In addition to the written information, the computer excerpt might include visual and musical augmentation.

"What we're talking about is the merging of various media and different educational information," Miller said. "It's very exciting technology. But you almost need to see it demonstrated to really get an idea of it."

The first glimpse of technology that



the library will offer the public will be a snippet of self-promotion for the facility, Miller said.

Miller and other computer technicians are developing a hypermedia-enhanced video production touting the \$5-million library expansion due to get under way next year. Officials hope to use the video to help fund-raising efforts for the planned three-phase expansion, Miller said.

—JOHN PENNER

HUNTINGTON BEACH

Genealogy Study Like Hunting for Gold

Joan Rambo, piqued by a friend's suggestion and her own mild curiosity, one day in 1967 agreed to attend a genealogical seminar at the Orange County Library.

Her interest in tracing her lineage,

she said, quickly developed into an obsession.

"Pretty soon, I got so wrapped up in this, I said, forget the housework," she recalled recently.

More than two decades later, Rambo says she has traced her Scottish ancestry back to a Magna Carta signatory. And she's still excavating for more clues to her roots.

And as president of the Orange County California Genealogical Society, Rambo today holds monthly meetings to exchange tips with other family tree enthusiasts and introduce novices to the hobby.

The society, founded in 1963 "to gather and disseminate genealogical information," has grown to 750 members countywide, she said.

Their meetings are held at the Huntington Central Library, the launching source for any county resident delving into his or her ancestry.

The library contains 14,000 volumes of genealogical information, by far the most extensive collection in the county, Rambo said.

While most other such depositories throughout the Southland emphasize microfilm and microfiche data, the main Huntington Beach library is devoted primarily to books.

The volumes contain such information as vital-record abstracts, census indexes, various family and Orange County data, surname index files and scores of directories on where to find

specific ancestral sources throughout the country.

Most genealogical outlets specialize in certain regions, ethnicities or types of data, Rambo said. For example, the main library in Pomona contains the most complete available collection of early California family history.

The Huntington Beach library facility is more of a general clearinghouse, helping lineage-seekers narrow their focus and locate specific information, she explained.

And through inter-library loans, a wealth of information may be obtained by mail, she added.

"The great thing about genealogy is you can spend as much or as little time and money as you want," she said. "Originally, I did all my research locally and through the mail. But then, you have some retired couples who spend their time traveling all over finding stuff. Some of them start their own little libraries."

The society is continually gathering information. However, only recently did the Huntington Beach library begin amassing any considerable Orange County historical data.

Rambo says genealogy research is "like hunting for gold. And I'm into the deep, deep mine shafts looking for new gold. I've found all the easy stuff."

And the exploration of one's family tree is never complete, she said.

—JOHN PENNER

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ROBERT LACHMAN / Los Angeles Times

Gary Shippey, left, the Huntington Central Library's media-resources coordinator, with videotapes available for checking out. They range from current titles to educational. John Patten of Fountain Valley, above, looks through the library's compact disk collection.