

A study of the IC² Culture Exploring Project of Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU) Library

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Abstract The paper analyzes the environments confronted with academic libraries and the evolving characteristics of Shanghai Jiao Tong University that give shape to the conception and implementation of an IC² Culture Exploring Project. This innovative model of SJTU Library operation is not only in concert with the strategic goals of SJTU but also with two other conspicuous developmental trends in the larger academic library circle; namely, 1) a trend toward the deepening of library service support in academic arena on the one hand and 2) the trend of diversifying library outreach services on the other hand. Based on our first-hand involvement in all phases and aspects of this project and its subsequent review and analysis undertakings, this paper expatiates upon the IC² Culture Exploring Project of SJTU Library in terms of its vision, its specific mission objectives, its program design, its unique characteristics, its launching process, its salient case studies, its initial results and its strategies for a sustainable development in the future.

Keywords Academic library, innovation, IC² model, IC² Culture Exploring Project, case study

1 Introduction

The basic missions of academic libraries are to render support to academic and cultural enhancement services for the university campus life. Owing to the on-going great societal changes in areas of information users, information technologies, higher education, research and academic communication model, there are also concomitant changes in formulating new strategic goals and service models in the professional field of academic librarianship. Comparing with the past practice, academic library service goals are increasingly more dynamic and multiplex and library service programs and means of their delivery are more all-encompassing and systematic. Such a rapidly changing societal environment that impacts greatly



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on academic libraries was once remarked by Chip Nilges, Vice President of OCLC, as disruptive changes^[1]. This situation compels academic libraries to innovate and create new service programs and measures in order to cope with the changing environment and also to foster its own unobstructed development. There are two developing trends that have currently emerged in academic library circle. One is represented by the creation of the subject librarian mechanism, which deepens library service support in academic arena especially for scholarly communication and knowledge creation. The other is represented by IC (information commons) model, which diversifies library outreach service operations in conjunction with such library innovative measures as library space reconfiguration, function enhancement and one-stop service in keeping pace with the increased public high expectations for a more advanced and digitized library operation. Such high callings from the reading public as well as from library and other professional circles are amply demonstrated by the outpouring of academic articles, reports and strategic plans for academic libraries that paid special attention toward both multifarious library outreach services and innovative new library service programs and practices.

Driven by the increasingly heightened role of academic libraries in support of information, educational and cultural endeavors at their parent institutions of higher learning, SJTU library staff also quickly took the initiative, when the new library building was about to be completed, to re-examine once again their mission and functional viability vis-à-vis the characteristics and strategic goals of their parent university. They envisioned and formulated an IC² service model, which compounds the square capabilities of the IC1 (information commons) and the IC2 (innovation community) so as to fulfill their institutional missions in a more professionally satisfactory manner.

It was in consonant with the changing trend of academic libraries around the globe in strengthening their operations both online and on-site for their immediate college constituencies engaging in such activities as information-seeking, teaching, learning, knowledge creation and cultural endeavors and also concomitantly factored the strategic goals of SJTU into their consideration that the staff of SJTU library brought forward the IC² Culture Exploring Project. It aimed at augmenting the university as a cultural community, fostering cultural atmosphere on campus life and improving students' cultural bearing. This paper expatiates first the origin of this conceived project at SJTU Library and then its process of formulation, goals, and a range of possible programs, characteristics, practical cases, outcome assessment and the prospect of future development. It is hoped that other academic libraries may find our discussion useful and can draw inferences from it in their own such similar undertakings.



2 Background

The main factors shaping the development of the academic libraries included the social environments and the strategic goals of the universities. The IC² Culture Exploring Project of SJTU library results from three confluent factors: 1) The development trends of the academic librarianship; 2) the historical characteristics and the strategic goals of the university; 3) the opening of new library building in September 2008.

Currently, academic libraries are in a changed environment. First of all, the library users have changed greatly. “Digital savvy generation” becomes the main user group of the academic libraries, who are accustomed to a learning style that merges their academic, social and community lives^[2]. Secondly, the quick development of the information technologies makes the digital and ubiquitous library come into being. Thirdly, the emergence of e-learning and e-science requires academic libraries to enhance their operational functions to support new learning and research models. Some scholars point out that scientific data management may be a developmental trend for academic libraries in coping with the changes of the information environment^[3]. Fourthly, the new academic communicating model represented by open access and also by a *modus operandi* of institutional repository that significantly have libraries’ role changed in the knowledge life cycle. It is quite conceivable that academic libraries will take more responsibilities in the area of preserving university’s intellectual asset in the days ahead. Last but the least, the social tide of life-long learning and sustained learning mode of the populace drive academic libraries to venture in bigger steps toward versatility in creating service programs especially in the area of their outreach service delivery efforts.

Although there are still many uncertainties in the development of academic libraries, the trend in deepening academic support service and the trend in diversifying outreach services have emerged to be the two most conspicuous areas of current development. The two distinctive trends can be discerned by the observations and analysis of Hong Kong Polytechnic University Library. It identifies nine key characteristics of future university libraries, namely, everywhere, outreach, social space, digital lives, sustainability, research involvement, knowledgeable librarians, print value, integral contribution^[4]. In the same vein, community functions and outreach service function of academic libraries are also embedded in the strategic plans or in new service undertakings of many academic libraries. For example, Cambridge University Library strategic plan 2005–2010^[5] indicates that it will “maintain the library’s outreach to the general public through exhibition programs, lectures, etc.”; University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign (UIUC) Library develops a five-year strategic development plan that includes the construction jointly with its parent university and possibly other cultural institutions of social networking and



university community^[6]. The American Corner^[7] at University of Macau Library aims at promoting mutual understanding between the United States and Macau in general and in giving sustained support for the strengthening of the university's curricular needs in the area of American Studies in particular by hosting programmed events and activities (i.e. author readings, coached orals, speaker programs, films, workshops, meetings, and exhibitions). All these library innovative programs point to the future of academic libraries in becoming a community-oriented center where all-out service support is rendered for the sake of users' pursuit of their life well-being, social contacts, learning and research endeavors. It is the developing trends of this larger environmental background that greatly stimulated a few staff at SJTU Library in thinking to develop an innovative IC² Culture Exploring Project.

However, it has to be mentioned that an added impetus, for the development of this IC² project was very much shaped by the historical characteristics and the strategic goals of Shanghai Jiao Tong University. It demands the newly constructed library to revise its service model and to take new measures to meet the changing needs of its constituencies. Locating at Shanghai metropolis, an international seaport of world-class, Shanghai Jiao Tong University is one of the key chosen universities of "Project 211" and "Project 985" of China^{a)}. In common with what the foreign university libraries are facing, the SJTU Library is also confronted with the impacts from users' changed information seeking behavior and research habits. The university is renowned for its engineering programs but relatively weak in its curricular offerings in humanities, which results in a somewhat biased public perception that the university campus lacks a vibrant and refined cultural atmosphere. Needless to say that there is certainly great needs for culture cultivation on this campus and also for the cultivation of students' cultural bearings and conduct demeanors. According to its three-step strategic development plan^[8], the university aims to be a comprehensive, research, and world-class university in stages and takes the culture construction as the main strategy to improve its soft power^[9]. The university's strategic goals require its library also to realign and strengthen its service structure and capabilities to be more efficient and effective in rendering support to the University's new emphasis on cultural development along with a host of other innovative teaching programs and research endeavors.

3 IC² Culture Exploring Project

In consonance with the developing trends of academic libraries in providing greater support both in the academic service area and in the outreach service area, the IC²

^{a)} These two projects show the Chinese government's strategic endeavor aiming at strengthening about 100 institutions of higher education and key disciplinary areas as a national priority for higher education in China in the 21st century.



model of SJTU Library aims to transform itself into a new conglomerate entity consisting of the university's knowledge communication center and the culture community center. It effectually integrates the academic community, culture community, physical community and virtual community as an integral whole by applying new applicable information technologies and by carrying out new service programs so as to promote vigorously on campus the culture advancement and academic innovations. Based on a through review of current curricular programs of culture education in higher education today and also a review of relevant bibliographic literature, SJTU Library formulated the IC² Culture Exploring Project to serve as its new strategy in conjoining the common efforts with the parent university to construct the University's culture-community center and to foster students' cultural bearings and civility in demeanor.

3.1 Project formation in retrospect

As a cultural service project, IC² Culture Exploring Project was first proposed by the Humanities & Social Science Section of Reader Service Department of SJTU Library. The draft was written by the section on January, 2009 and discussed in the circle of the Reader Service Department. After revising, the plan was submitted to the Executive Committee of the Library for its approval. The Library's Executive Committee convoked a conference in February 2009 and approved the IC² Culture Exploring Project as a long-term strategic goal in integrating the university library into the university's Culture Community Center. The Committee decided the Reader Service Department to take charge of the project management affairs and the Humanities & Social Science Section to be responsible for such affairs as project planning, implementing and evaluating this project. Funding of this project would be secured by tapping library's special funds and also by soliciting outside donations. Afterwards, the Humanities & Social Science Section began to execute the project in March, 2009.

3.2 Ideas and goals

The basic ideas of IC² Culture Exploring Project are to build up a new library culture platform which consists of adequate space for cultural artifacts exhibitions, group interaction and also for multi-media presentations. In taking advantage of the Library's expertise in providing guidance in such professional fields as literature search and readings, cataloging, edition studies, etc. and its unique role and special ability in fostering the fidelity of the university community to a common cause, the IC² project aims to make the University Library the centerpiece of the University's cultural endeavor. It will conduct culture exhibitions and host a variety of rich and colorful teaching, learning, research and cultural activities. In other words, it strives



to rebuild the Library into a culture-community center of the university dedicated to the newly revised library mission objectives focusing on fostering campus culture development, scholarly communication and pedagogical innovations.

3.3 Characteristics

The Library proposed IC² Culture Exploring Project, which is primarily a culture service project, has many characteristics as detailed in Table 1.

Table 1 The characteristics of IC² Culture Exploring Project

Characteristics	Interpretations
Exerting the effects of a culture platform	IC ² Culture Exploring Project takes advantage of the information resources, space, facilities and a centripetal force of the library to achieve culture platform effects.
Emphasizing creative ideas	Creativity is regarded as the source of the vitality of the culture programs. Besides detailed planning, each activity program of IC ² Culture Exploring Project lays emphasis on creative design, which includes innovative thinking, high personnel qualifications and vigor in engaging in such cultural activities.
Integrating resources of various culture construction units of the university	There are several units on campus that have authorities and responsibilities for the culture development of SJTU. They include Party Propaganda Department, Youth League Committee, Student Cultural Associations, etc. IC ² Culture Exploring Project will achieve better results by collaborating closely with those other culture construction partners.
Encouraging participation	IC ² Culture Exploring Project encourages the participation of teachers and students so as to expand teachers' influence for culture development on campus and also to inspire students' enthusiasms and creativities by means of their participations.
Linking cultural programs with social customs	Some cultural programs can be planned in advance in responding to special occasions of cultural events/festivals such as the "International Book-reading Day" on April 23 and a few others. Or on some other special occasions, a few good books appropriate for the occasion may be selected for guided reading/discussion by using either the physical site of a library or a virtual platform.
Emphasizing the steering effect of culture	Library should develop a reading culture on campus by frequently recommending, displaying, discussing good books and other useful and timely reading materials to students and encourage them also to read more classic works in order to appreciate more their own rich cultural heritage. Make each and every student of SJTU a truly educated person.

3.4 Segments and programs

There are many ways for a university to enhance students' culture training and cultural bearings. These may include but not limited to offer credit-bearing, cultural courses, special lectures, cultural activities, exhibitions for cultural artifacts and systematic cultural resource construction at appropriate campus facilities such as at libraries, archives, museums, etc. According to the life cycle of culture construction, IC² Culture Exploring Project identifies six program segments, namely, 1) Culture promoting segment, 2) cultural enlightenment segment, 3) culture learning segment,



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4) culture accumulating segment, 5) culture flourishing segment and 6) culture innovating segment. One semester is regarded as an executive cycle of our IC² Culture Exploring Project and programmed cultural activities will be carried out in each cycle. Phase I of our IC² Culture Exploring Project began in February, 2009 and ended in July, 2009. The nature of each program segment is shown in Fig. 1.

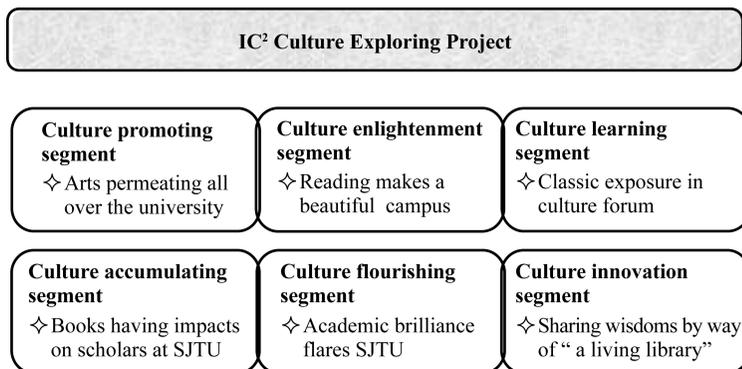


Fig. 1 Programs of IC² Culture Exploring Project.

3.5 Executive process

As a sustainable project, each activity programmed in the IC² Culture Exploring Project will be conducted in a normative process so as to obtain optimal effects.

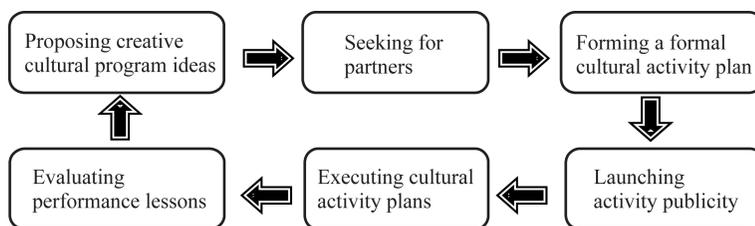


Fig. 2 Executive process of IC² Culture Exploring Project.

4 Practical cases

The Library hosted cultural activities for eighteen times from February to July 2009 in Phase I implementation stage of IC² Culture Exploring Project. Specifically, we sponsored the following events: Two lectures in the culture learning segment, a series of cultural activities named as “reading makes a beautiful campus” in the cultural enlightenment segment, five cultural exhibitions in the culture promoting segment, seven living library activities in the cultural innovating segment, and also



an SJTU academicians' publication exhibition named as "academic brilliance flaring at SJTU" in the culture flourishing segment. A book exhibition program of "books having impacts on scholars at SJTU," which is being planned for the culture accumulating segment will be executed in Phase II of the IC² Culture Exploring Project.

4.1 Case scenario 1: "Reading makes a beautiful campus" in the cultural enlightenment segment

As a repository for preserving books and diffusing knowledge, library has an organic relationship with book reading. SJTU library has hosted a series of reading activities, which is entitled as "reading makes a beautiful campus." These reading related events included a book exhibition, a book review-writing competition and a reading salon from Mar. 12, 2009 to Apr. 23, 2009. The details of these events are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 "Reading makes a beautiful campus" executive affairs

Activity ledger	Executive affairs
Book exhibition	The book exhibition displays books about five topics, i.e. 1) The 300 most influential books during the past thirty years of China's Reform and Opening up; 2) the award-winning books of China (Maodun Literary Award); 3) the representative works of the most popular authors as assessed by Chinese Institute of Publishing Science, SJTU faculty publications and publications of SJTU press. What's more, there were many wonderfully designed posters about those books in display, which attracted great attentions of students.
Book review-writing competition	At the same time in conjunction with the book exhibition, SJTU Library launched a book review-writing competition of university-wide in scope. The Library developed a website for competitors to submit their book reviews and offered an attractive prize. Nearly 200 readers from different academic departments submitted book reviews, from which 18 pieces were chosen as the winning ones.
Salon for reading	SJTU Library hosted the award ceremony for excellent book reviews and a reading salon contest on Apr. 23 (i.e. International Book-reading Day and Copyright Day), 2009. More than 200 students and teachers participated in this event. The salon consisted of 9 segments of activities, such as library director talking about reading, the award ceremony, a lecture about reading, a show performed by Student Cultural Association, etc.

4.2 Case scenario 2: "Academic brilliance flaring at SJTU" in the culture flourishing segment

As all programs require long-term devotions of those who are involved in bringing about them to a fruitful conclusion, the activities that entitled "academic brilliance flaring at SJTU" aims to demonstrate the University's academic excellence and its rich accumulated intellectual assets by collecting and displaying some of SJTU faculties' representative works. It was hoped that such undertakings would foster a stronger sense of pride and social bond among teachers and students alike to their



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beloved Alma Mater. Currently, all SJTU academician’ publications have been collected, reorganized and displayed in stages through the program. Next, the collecting efforts will reach to the works of the following groups such as doctoral candidates and their mentors, those SJTU recipients of Chang Jiang Scholars Program and those SJTU recipients of the National Science Foundation for Distinguished Youth Scholar of China, etc.

4.3 Case scenario 3: “Literary classics exposure in culture forum” in culture learning segment

It is an effective way to nurture a university’s cultural ambiance by hosting lectures about classical literature on a regular basis. For the purpose of constructing a basic culture-nurturing platform of the university, SJTU Library invites outstanding teachers in the Fine Arts and Humanities fields to give lectures about literary classics in Fine Arts and Humanities to enrich students’ knowledge of culture and to improve their cultural bearings in their demeanors through the subtle process of their personal internalization of such culture learning and cultural exposures. Two lectures were hosted in Phase I of the IC² Culture Exploring Project and achieved good results. One lecture was named “the 81st Oscar Award under the current circumstance of the financial crisis,” which was given by Professor YAN Ming of SJTU and the other was entitled “the appreciation of Chinese painting,” which was given by Professor ZHAN Renzuo of SJTU.

4.4 Case scenario 4: “Arts permeating throughout the university” in culture promoting segment

The program is designed to establish a specially designated space germane to cultural creativities. This may include but not limited to exhibitions of cultural artifacts, multi-media presentations, etc. The exhibitions that the Library hosted in Phase I of its IC² Culture Exploring Project are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Cultural displaying activities in “arts permeating throughout campus” program

Displaying ways	Activities
Physical exhibitions in cultural displaying space of SJTU Library	Works on “Erection” created by students from Architecture Department of SJTU “Media design for flying & dancing,” a display of works created by students from Media & Design School of SJTU
Virtual displays in chronological order by the Multi-media Section of the University Library	March 2009: the Oscar Award classic films review April: Chinese painting appreciation May: Celebrities discussing on music: Selected video lectures borrowed from Shanghai Library June: Arts and life: Selected video lectures borrowed from Shanghai Library



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4.5 Case scenario 5: Sharing wisdoms by way of “a living library” in culture innovating segment

The program adopts the idea of “the living library,” where visitors are encouraged to chat in the “living library” with those knowledgeable individuals who volunteered themselves as “books available onsite for momentarily borrowing.” This format of exchange of ideas and personal experience among library readers is conceived as an effective way to promote both social cohesion and social dynamics. The objective of “book reading” is accomplished when two individuals are engaged in and completed, to their mutual satisfaction, a piece of an intellectual dialogue or an experience-sharing session on a pre-determined topic of which one of the participants is immensely knowledgeable about the subject under discussion then the other discussant. The more knowledgeable discussant will volunteer himself or herself to serve in the capacity of a mentor to their topical discussion. This program has successfully hosted such type of events seven times during the Phase I of the Library’s launching of the IC² Culture Exploring Project. On each of these occasions, a different thought-provoking topic was introduced for the reading public to engage themselves in “book browsing and reading in the Living Library.” Accordingly, the following topics have been introduced sequentially: studying abroad, taking the graduate entrance examination, finding jobs, studying English, doing academic research, and so on.

5 Effects and sustainable development

In an environment made up of students, teachers and the university administrators, the effects of IC² Culture Exploring Project can be evaluated by quantifiable values (i.e., the frequencies of activities, participatory partners related with university culture construction, participants from the major culture associations of the university, the enthusiasm of the feedbacks from the university administrators, teachers and students) as well as by qualitative values such as the overall improvement of cultural atmosphere on campus. The effects of Phase I of IC² Culture Exploring Project are shown in Table 4.

The quantifiable values and positive feedbacks, as shown in Table 4, give convincing indications that Phase I of the IC² Culture Exploring Project has obtained preliminary objectives in such areas as constructing a culture platform, improving campus cultural ambiance and culture guidance. In order to develop a sustainable and profound cultural influence in the university, it is suggested that the IC² Culture Exploring Project should lay more emphases on the following aspects in the days ahead:

- Improving librarians’ culture learning and research abilities. As a symbol of culture in the university, library should embody distinctive cultural characteristics



Table 4 Effects of Phase I of IC² Culture Exploring Project

Evaluating methods	Results
Quantifiable values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Library hosted eighteen activities in Phase I of the project with a five-month period, indicating a high frequency of activity occurrence, i.e., one per ten days. Except those in open exhibitions which could not be enumerated, the participants in book review competition, reading salon, lectures, living library and video displaying amounted to 1000. The groups covered 95% of students from the various academic departments of SJTU, which included undergraduates, graduates, doctoral candidates and teachers. The project had the collaboration of 9 participatory partners, which included four collaborative institutions of the university (i.e., Humanities Construction Office of SJTU, the Youth League Committee of SJTU, SJTU Press and the Youth League Committee of Humanities School of SJTU), two student associations (i.e.: Student Alliance Association of SJTU and Qiushui Book Association) and Emerald database corporation. There were seven major student culture associations participated in the project, i.e. Book Drifting Association, Book Review Committee of SJTU BBS, Ox and Horse Book Association, White Rock Poetry Association, Yuan Association, French Corner and Science Fiction Association.
The atmosphere on site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The exhibitions attracted a large number of readers to visit, one of which even wrote an essay to comment on the exhibitions. The room hosting the reading salon was full of students and the atmosphere was so enthusiastic that both teachers and students participating in it could not help expressing praises and thanks to the host. There was no seat left on lecture site of classical literature. Some students even stood to listen, which showed their great interest in the topics being presented. The discussions about one lecture was ranked among the best ten topical discussions of SJTU BBS.
The feedbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the most important information service entity, the newsroom of Shanghai Jiao Tong University Newspaper gave the event associated with "reading makes a beautiful campus" activities with full page coverage. The teachers who participated in some of the events thought that it was very significant to host such activities at SJTU. One teacher who is in charge of a class of Mechanical Engineering School, even indicated his wish to incorporate the reading salon activity as a practical training component in his class of Scientific Concept of Development. Many student participants expressed their appreciation through emails about the launching of this culture enhancement project taken by SJTU Library. They claimed that the project has improved their comprehension about culture and also shaping up their cultural bearings as well. They all hoped that SJTU Library would continue to develop more such cultural programs.



not only by the façade appearance of its building but also by the quality of various cultural services rendered by their librarians. SJTU Library should establish learning-oriented mechanism and improve librarians' qualifications through on-job training and by continuing education so as to build a first-class culture platform.

- Integrating the Library's extensive resources for campus culture cultivation for the development of a sustainable and effective mechanism for such culture

permeation undertakings. Although SJTU Library has paid much attention to the collaboration of some empowered units for culture enhancement on university campus in Phase I of the project, a more co-coordinated and systematic strategy of a campus-wide scale should be developed in order to ensure the sustainable development of the project and to exert its cultural influence more pervasively throughout the university.

- Developing a virtual culture community. As an important development trend for future libraries, a virtual community (including a virtual culture community as its focal point) should be constructed. It is based on current information resources and technologies. Driven by the strategic goal of being the culture community center of the university, SJTU library could make good use of the established sessions of culture reading, special library collections in culture and cultural artifacts display to create a virtual culture community.
- Developing a brand name effect for its multifarious cultural services. It is necessary for the library to become the centerpiece of the culture community of the university and to have its own distinguished service brand. The growing focus of its cultural service brand may be in the areas of reading guidance, a special repository for the University's accumulated intellectual asset, culture exhibitions and a lecture series of classical literature, etc.
- Offering short courses on guided readings for classics of world literature. In fact, it is a fundamental mission for libraries to advocate reading for world classics since classical works represent the quintessence of the traditional cultures of different world civilizations. Libraries will have an important role in university culture enrichment program by offering such a course.
- Surveying and summarizing the characteristics of the culture curriculum offered in different academic departments of the University and devising a more flexible mechanism to collaborate with them so as to integrate the academic supporting services and cultural services of the library to obtain optimal effects.

6 Conclusion

Ranganathan once said that “the library is a growing organism”^[10]. SJTU library is reforming its service model and taking up new service measures to project a new professional image for meeting the challenges in the new information era. Some of the practical cases that took place in Phase I of the IC² Culture Exploring Project are attempts made by SJTU Library for cultural service reorientations and also for innovations. The results demonstrate that it has had a good beginning. Nevertheless, SJTU Library could improve its service efficiency further and achieve the strategic goal even better for being at the center of culture community on the University campus. The library will surely in time to become a more academically relevant,



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more charming, more versatile and more vibrant growing organism. The SJTU Library and information professionals are having undoubtedly a pivotal role to play not only just in reshaping up their parent institutional culture but also in many ways to add a new dimension of an enchanted professional practice of romanticism to a highly technically oriented information environment of ours.

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