

# College shares books, music, exhibits via computer

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Museums with four walls aren't the only place for exhibitions. These days, anyone can see Houdini's handcuffs, Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence signature or hear the sounds that snakes make without leaving home.

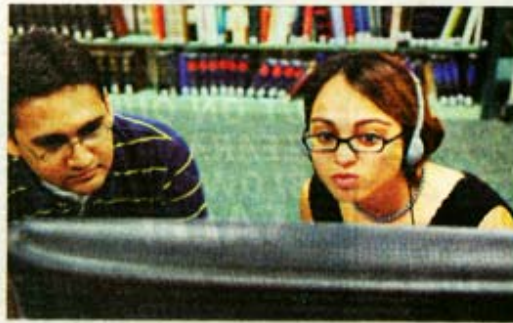
Major museums, including the Smithsonian Institution and the American Museum of Natural History, are turning to the World Wide Web to share their glass-cased knowledge with a broader audience.

Locally, Florida Atlantic University Libraries has spent more than \$80,000 to go digital, using the Internet and advanced technologies to display its special collections.

For museums and universities, online exhibits draw in visitors, help reach audiences around the globe and allow organizations to do more with their information, because there are no walls to hold them back.

FAU's The Arthur and Mata Jaffe Collection, Books as Aesthetic Ob-

■ DIGITAL CONTINUES ON 15



**FAU STUDENTS:** Rushikesh Patel and Salwa Ismail listen to listen to classical Yiddish songs from the Judaica Music Rescue Project online collection. Staff photo/ Carey Wagner

## Library through computer

### ■ DIGITAL

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jects, which features beautifully crafted books valued more for their artistic merit than their content, has some books online. The collection contains books printed by letterpress and other early printing systems, rare books, pop-up books and specially bound books. A physical exhibit is expected to be mounted in early 2007.

The materials reflect the ways books have been constructed over time. Through the online exhibit, visitors can see scanned book covers, photos of the exhibit's objects and even turn pages of certain books.

The Jaffe Collection Gallery inside the library, which is undergoing an expansion, presents one exhibit a season and began online exhibits last year. The exhibits stay online, long after the display cases are emptied.

"Online exhibitions are great tools for reaching folks who would never get to this part of the world," said John Cutrone, book arts coordinator for the Jaffe Collection. "As Mr. Jaffe likes to say: 'You can go to the Victoria and Albert [Museum], and you can go to the Louvre, but you won't find these books there. You'll only find 'em here.'"

The National Archives in Washington began producing online exhibits in the mid-1990s. Archive officials said they have become valuable resources for researchers and students used to a digital world.

Some exhibits have multimedia components, including streaming video and sound. For example, the "Watergate Files" features original, 1972 television news broadcasts that first told of the burglaries of the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee in the Watergate Hotel, which led to President Richard Nixon's resignation.

"The online exhibits complement," said Miriam Kleiman, a spokeswoman for The National Archives. "They can enhance a person's experience, because a lot of our exhibits have so

### WHERE TO FIND ONLINE EXHIBITS

THE ARTHUR & MATA JAFFE COLLECTION, [www.library.fau.edu/depts/spc/jaffe.htm](http://www.library.fau.edu/depts/spc/jaffe.htm)

JUDAICA SOUND ARCHIVES, [www.fau.edu/jsa](http://www.fau.edu/jsa); for the public listening station, call 561-297-2207

SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM, [www.nasm.si.edu](http://www.nasm.si.edu)

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES, [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov)

much information, and this is a way to give people the highlights."

Online exhibits can provide much more information than a regular exhibit, said Vicki Portway, head of the interactive media and electronic outreach division for the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum. The museum has had online exhibits on the Wright Brothers, the golden age of commercial travel and even *Star Wars*.

"We can explore topics in more depth, because we don't have the physical or financial roadblocks that our regular exhibits have," Portway said. "We can also add more pictures and links to other resources to maximize the online experience."

At FAU's Judaica Sound Archives, anyone can listen to classical Yiddish songs online or by stopping by the archives' new listening station in the library. Visitors can take in *Gut Shabes (Have a Good Sabbath)*, *Mein Ruhe Platz (My Resting Place)* and many other works.

"We're not only sharing these with the world, we're preserving them for future generations," said Rita Pellen, associate director of libraries for FAU.

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