

Case Study

University of Virginia Ivy Library: Asserting Power is Lasting Knowledge

University of Virginia Ivy Library | Charlottesville, VA



Growth Originates From Within

“A mind, stretched by new ideas, may never return to its original dimensions.” This Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. quote summarizes the value of continually pursuing information to expand your perspective, and in turn, your imagination and understanding. In higher education entities, this not only resonates with staff and students but also with those tasked with providing the structures that facilitate growth.

Ivy Library – an off-site shelving facility managed by the University of Virginia (UVA) Library – is located about two miles from the University of Virginia central grounds on Old Ivy Road. When opened in 1995, the 10,000 square foot building had the capacity to hold approximately 750,000 items serving campus libraries and UVA’s respective schools of learning. These materials are central to UVA’s core mission to support research and teaching with the collections and services they manage. As such, each location requires the systems and space to be flexible enough to respond to the changing needs of their patrons and adapt to the latest technologies that affect teaching and learning.

After 15 years of compiling materials, administrators found the facility’s eight ranges of 40’ tall by 155’ long static shelving were just about filled to capacity. Additionally, staff found too many items were getting lost because there wasn’t an efficient way to track where items were other than the initial login record. In need of a storage solution that offers literal and figurative expansion, UVA looked for support in stretching the capacity and functionality of Ivy Library. While there was no doubt a solution was needed for the facility, what that solution would be, was up for debate. UVA administrators originally proposed to build a similar building next door, however, the cost of construction was



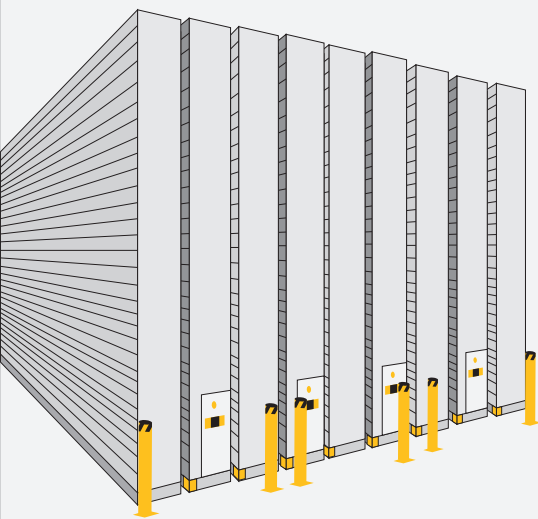
outside their desired scope. Not wanting to approach the option of having to dispose of rarely used items to make space, administrators looked for a storage expert to provide a new idea to stretch their minds and the capacity of the existing off-site facility.

Selecting A Subjects Matter Expert

When Ivy Library was constructed in 1995, there were skeptics – both on and off campus – to the value of moving books and other materials out of campus libraries and into an off-site shelving facility. Similarly, when plans for expanding its capacity in 2010 required closing the facility for approximately 18 months, more detractors voiced their opinion. To overcome these sentiments, administrators at the university sought out a proven storage partner and solution that could better serve students, staff, professors, researchers, and visitors.

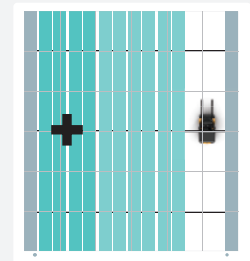
As the team at Ivy Library was familiar with Spacesaver’s XTend® High-Density Mobile Storage System from an

industry reference, they reached out to our local storage representative to provide a revised floor plan with this as the main storage solution. Upon evaluating the marked improvement XTend® could provide for their operations, UVA approved a proposal for Spacesaver to manufacture and install XTend® Mobile High-Bay Storage Systems as the retrofit for the Ivy Library facility.



XTend®: A Stacked Acceptance Letter

- *Doubled the capacity of the facility*
- *~70% less than the proposed cost to construct an additional facility*
- *Mobilized shelving reduces wasted aisle space*
- *Customizable shelf sizes to store varied items*
- *Streamlined cataloging process*
- *Freed up space on campus for adaptation*
- *Allowed UVA to stay in the same building*



A Moving Presentation

In order to install the XTend® system within the Ivy Library, the building had to be completely emptied of its shelving and the materials housed on them. This encompassed roughly 55,000 boxes of items including CDs, microforms, books, pamphlets, paperwork, bound journals, cassettes, LPs, and models. With those safely in storage, Spacesaver's certified installation technicians began installation of the XTend® system's anti-tip rails, which included pouring additional concrete to make the tracks flush with the floor.

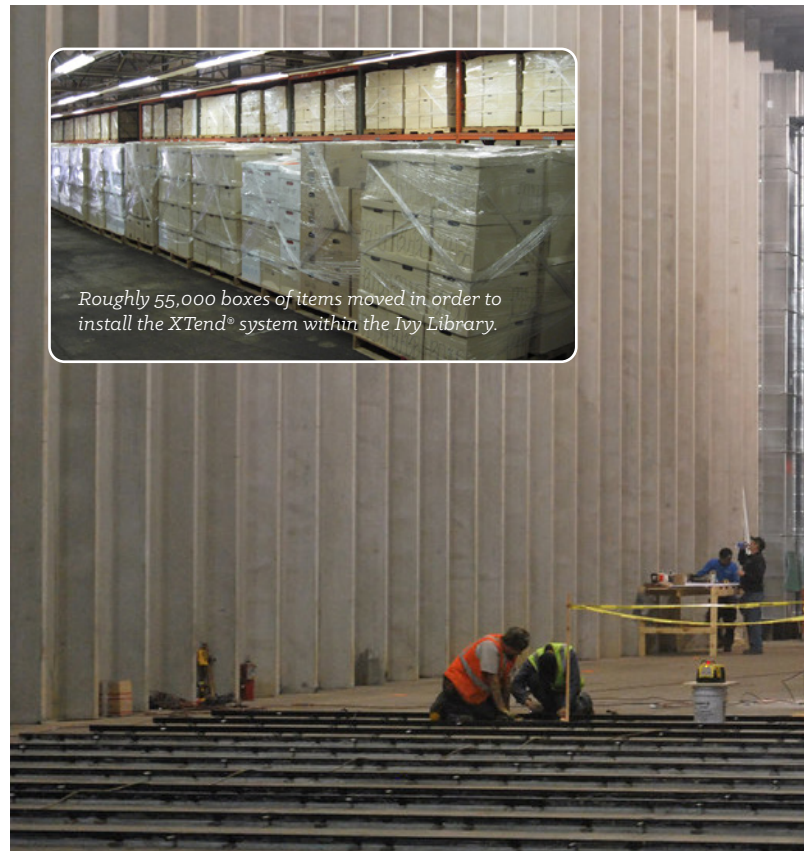
With the rails in place, there was nowhere to go but up. This is where Spacesaver's certified installers showed their mettle (or steel, to be exact). Over the course of several months, our dedicated experts mounted electrically powered carriages onto the rails and configured the shelving to securely store the unique materials within. The completed system, standing 34' tall and running 277' from front to back, perfectly optimizes the building's footprint, leaving exactly enough space for order pickers to safely maneuver at each end.

Controlled by innovative electronic controls and supported by integral safety features including aisle-entry and Photo Sweep® Sensors, the library's mobile shelving allows users to safely and securely access materials with the touch of a button. Furthermore, this powered operation supports the safe and smooth movement of carriages carrying more than 3.4 million items – a massive increase in capacity from the facility's original static shelving. "Dealing with these tall shelves loaded with tons of books and other items, we are able to operate the systems with peace of mind because we've seen the safety features at work successfully," said Caleb Mechem, Print Collection Strategist. "The system's ability to stop movement when an object as small as a piece of paper triggers the sensors is vital to maintaining the safety of our staff and materials."

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Indexing Inventory Across Campus

Depending on the focused area of study, specific reference materials must be accessible for patrons to use in each campus library or school. With that and a continuous struggle to integrate emerging means of studies - shared space, access to technology, and special collections – within the constraints of each facility, the retrofit of Ivy Library helped to free up space for collaborative work within library branches. For example, because of its ability to move more than 60,000 pieces to the Ivy Library, UVA's Shannon Library has expanded its open study space and capacity to house special exhibits like its Tibetan collections room, government documents room, and Stanley and Lucie Weinstein Buddhist and Asian Studies Library.

To fully utilize these new systems and boost their ability to more efficiently fulfill materials requests, each item was reviewed by staff to ensure it was

FUN FACT: To support the retrofit, Ivy Library staff moved about 850,000 items at least three times, barcoded almost 400,000 of those items, scanned everything twice into the GFA inventory management system, and shelved them onto their Spacesaver XTend® High-Bay Mobile Storage System.

properly described in the library catalog, outfitted with the correct bar code, and assigned to the appropriate container for optimal preservation before being returned to the Ivy Library facility. For books and bound journals – which are the bulk of the items housed at Ivy Library – this meant being sorted by size and placed in acid-free cardboard trays.



An Ever-Improving Report Card

Installed more than a decade ago, the XTend® system has provided continued value for Ivy Library, its staff and those it serves. "Finding the books is so much easier that it's almost impossible to fathom the difference between the Spacesaver system and our previous system," said Steve Bartlett, Ivy Library Manager, who worked on the retrofit project from day one. "Spacesaver worked wonderfully with us, giving us virtually everything we asked for and in the best way. The system has worked out even better for us than we planned."

So, what made – and makes – this system the best possible solution for Ivy Library? Functionality, dependability, and accessibility. Top to bottom and front to back, these shelving units can be reconfigured for fit items of all sizes. This allows the facility's staff to centrally locate specific items in an environment that best supports them and promotes easier access when requested for pickup/drop off by the Ivy Library courier that comes to the facility twice a day. They also store special collections and archival materials that don't circulate freely and aren't in the online catalog but can be specially requested and delivered.

"Not all shelves are created equal," said a Director at the university. "This project has really expanded our capacity to retain materials that otherwise might have ended up in a much less desirable, accessible place. Sitting in a secure, environmentally controlled building one day away isn't the worst thing that can happen to a book that hasn't been touched in years."



From top to bottom and front to back, these shelving units can be reconfigured for fit items of all sizes - from special collections and archival materials that don't circulate freely (stored above) to book storage (stored below) promoting easier access when requested for pickup/drop off.

The facility also included updated controls of temperature, humidity, air exchange, and lighting to adjust to the increase in capacity and ensure a proper environment for the long-term preservation of the varied materials housed there. Now, collections are better managed within the facility and in the university's online catalog, creating increased access for all.



Scan here for the Video Case Study! 



The Student Becomes The Teacher

Mechem stated that libraries reach out to his team often for advice and to learn more about Ivy Library and their unique functionalities. He tells them when working with a vendor – like Spacesaver – libraries should focus on making the relationship a partnership and don't be afraid to say what is needed and wanted out of a system, because there may be solutions the vendor possesses or can develop to solve your problem. His advice is to start the project with what would be the ideal situation and try to get as close to it as possible.

It was this mentality that supported our local rep in developing and delivering new and more efficient solutions for the facility in the form of our XTend® Mobile High-Bay Storage System. Not only did the solution account for space constraints, but it also was designed to accommodate the facility's available space and not its assumed limitations.

Even after more than quintupling the storage capacity of the facility, there's still room for growth at Ivy Library. "The ability to have a warehouse building with high-density storage where we are able to store so many millions of items has opened up possibilities for how we can continue to serve not only students and staff across campus but also researchers from all over," said Mechem.



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