If you haven’t visited the newly refurbished Level 1 of the Robert W. Woodruff Library building since last spring, you really need to stop by and enjoy. More power, upgraded wireless capability and vibrant color have made the space a happening – and more useful – place on a minimal budget.

New additions to the floor include a casual group seating area and 22 new power options, including activated or newly installed outlets at each table to accommodate laptops and chargers, says Charles Forrest, director of library facilities for the Emory Libraries.

“We’ve moved furniture to adapt to the needs and settings that students have requested in user surveys,” Forrest said. “Our students tell us they want comfortable seating they can arrange as they need for individual or group study. Power is a top priority for plugging in laptops and charging phones and PDAs.”

The cost per square foot for the upgrade of Level 1 was just 1/20th of that figure for the Level 7 renovation last year, Forrest said.

“On Level 1 we didn’t need to demolish or build walls, and we bought only a small amount of new furniture for the microform equipment; even the service desk was reused,” he said. “The emphasis of the Level 1 renovation was power, paint and reorganizing the flow of traffic to make better use of that space.”

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University Technology Services worked with the Library to add four wireless access points to Level 1, with a potential simultaneous load-carrying capacity of 120 users. On Level 7, UTS added two access points with a simultaneous load-carrying capacity of 60 users. Each location was determined through careful monitoring of the Woodruff wireless footprint through the busiest parts of last year’s semesters. The additions ensure smooth surfing for wireless users in both locations, says Alan Cattier, UTS’ director of academic technologies.

The formerly beige, brown and white study area that shares a floor with Jazzman’s Café is now a kaleidoscope of rave red, kimono violet and luau green. To promote creative expression and communication among library users, the main wall facing Jazzman’s now features broad strips of “whiteboard” paint on which students can write with erasable markers. Students are using these for taking notes at group project meetings, inviting other students to events, scribbling scripture -- and some budding artists have sketched striking portraits for the enjoyment of their peers.

“Level 1 is quickly becoming one of the most popular locations in the library,” Forrest said.

Other Level 1 upgrades include the relocation of the service desk and microfilm and fiche reader-printers closer to cabinets holding the microfilm and fiche collections.

Level 1 is open 24 hours between noon on Sundays and 8 p.m. on Fridays; and from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturdays.

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