As part of the library’s renovations, the smart classroom was given a whole new look. Now containing 22 iPads and 26 laptops, the lab offers a compact and easy-to-operate space for classroom work, facilitating student interactivity. The library is able to configure all the iPads at once with a program that allows them to be maintained with only the apps necessary for classroom functions. Paired with moveable, lightweight tables, new chairs, carpet, and a bright coat of paint, the lab has been used by teachers across the academic spectrum.

Mrs. Hopper’s geometry classes have practiced math concepts using Manga High, a math site for online instruction, games, and quizzes, while Ms. McCormick’s Molecular Biology students have used the iPads to research and cite scientific journal articles. Next quarter her Honors Biology students will use the 3D Brain app. Also, Mr. Burke gave a quiz using Haiku on the individual iPads to his art students. Mr. Davis Smith has also recently used the iPads for Government Club research sessions. Finally, the Library Research classes have taken advantage of a library catalog app, NoodleTools for writing research papers, and EBSCOhost’s research databases - all in the lab. The iPads and apps or laptops can be incorporated into any teaching curriculum; ask Mrs. Barnes for a session or sign up to reserve the lab for a class.

Check out the Inside MUS article highlighting the library’s iPad lab.

Would you like to keep up with the books you’ve read or own? Three social media sites allow you to do that online: Goodreads, Shelfari, and LibraryThing. All three allow members to keep a log of the books they’ve read, rate books, read and write reviews, and join discussion groups about those books. Using an online site also allows you to categorize books into groups or shelves, tag your libraries, and find new books to read. Each of these sites is connected in some way with Amazon, so it’s easy to keep track of reading lists and wish lists. Goodreads, the largest of the three, also offers the ability to find quotes from certain authors or about specific subjects, and connect with friends who use the site. Shelfari is similar - allowing you to add a profile, books, and join in their community discussions, while LibraryThing is the oldest and gives more community options. Shelfari will give you a wiki type listing for a book you’re interested in, while Goodreads will show you what your friends think about it. LibraryThing will give you reference information as well. Try one of these sites to inspire your reading list.
Big Star: Nothing Can Hurt Me
(DVD) by Magnolia Pictures. The definitive documentary about the beloved and influential '70s rock band Big Star (including MUS alums Andy Hummel '69 and Chris Bell '69). Together less than four years, the band flirted with mainstream success but never achieved it. Nonetheless, they produced a body of work of seminal importance to pop and alternative music, influencing major artists like REM, The Replacements, Elliot Smith, Beck, The Flaming Lips, and countless others.

Super Graphic: A Visual Guide to the Comic Book World by Tim Leong. This book by one of Wired magazine’s art directors traverses the graphic world through a collection of pie charts, bar graphs, timelines, scatter plots, and more. Super Graphic offers readers a unique look at the intricate and sometimes contradictory storylines that weave their way through comic books.

The Oldest Rookie by Jim Morris. After an injury-plagued stint in the minor leagues in his twenties, Jim Morris hung up his cleats and his dreams to start a new life as a father, high school physics teacher, and baseball coach. Jim’s team knew that his dream was still alive, and they made a bet with him: if they won the league championship, he would have to try out for a major league ball club. Jim Morris was the MUS chapel speaker on January 24.

Sycamore Row by John Grisham. In this sequel to A Time To Kill, Seth Hubbard is a wealthy man dying of lung cancer. He trusts no one. Before he hangs himself from a sycamore tree, Hubbard leaves a new, handwritten, will. It is an act that drags his adult children, his black maid, and Jake Brigance into a conflict as riveting and dramatic as the murder trial that made Brigance one of Ford County’s most notorious citizens, just three years earlier.

Exploding the Phone: The Untold Story of the Teenagers and Outlaws Who Hacked Ma Bell by Phil Lapsley. In 1967, an enterprising young Harvard student, Jake Locke (the names in this book have been changed), stumbled upon an intriguing ad in the Harvard Crimson; curiosity piqued, Jake soon discovered, with the help of the phone company’s own materials and a few other interested people, that he could rig a “blue box” that would allow him to subvert the phone system and make free phone calls.

Narwhals: Arctic Whales In a Melt-ing World by Todd McLeish. Having since childhood been in love with Narwhals, author McLeish spent years pondering their oddities, grace, lore, and biological reality. Finally taking an opportunity to join a team of researchers in Canada and visiting an Inuit hunting camp in Greenland, he had the chance to transform his boyhood fantasies into the stuff of real life.

Apollo 23 by Justin Richards. An astronaut in full spacesuit appears out of thin air in a busy shopping centre. Conversely, a photo shows an immaculately-dressed woman in her best shoes lying dead at the edge of a crater on the dark side of the moon beside her beloved dog ‘Poochie’. Maybe it’s a hoax. But as the Doctor and Amy find out, these are just minor events in a sinister plan to take over every human being on earth.