Jon Jablonski is the director of the Library’s new Interdisciplinary Research Collaboratory, the digital scholarship center at the University of California, Santa Barbara. The Collaboratory provides access to a wide variety of analytical software and services, including support for quantitative and qualitative data analysis and visualization.

Jablonski is also curator of maps, spatial data, and the world’s largest collection of aerial photography in an academic library. The airphoto collection of 2.4 million images shows a comprehensive view of the development of the California landscape beginning in 1927. The paper map collection specializes in global base mapping, and contains more than 300,000 maps.

As a human geographer, he has been examining the massive changes in China’s urban landscapes and economy for the past ten years. In 2007 he was awarded the U.S. Department of Education’s Foreign Language Advanced Study fellowship to study the Chinese language at Peking University and conduct fieldwork in provincial libraries looking at the human aspects of cultural heritage cyberinfrastructure. In 2011, he taught library and information science as a Fulbright Scholar at Wuhan University’s School of Information Management. That year, he also began working with the owners and users of Chinese picture book libraries—part of what he calls the Chinese early childhood industrial complex. Since then, Jablonski has visited more than 30 libraries in seven cities. He has interviewed the owners of these entrepreneurial libraries, read books to groups of children, and led discussions with parents and grandparents about how to encourage an early love of reading. This work builds knowledge of how Chinese middle-class families struggle to negotiate contemporary life inside of an authoritative one-party political system.