

DISTRIBUTED LEARNING AND ACCESS SERVICES

On July 17, 2001, Ross Atkinson, Carmen Blankinship, Susan Currie, Debra Lamb-Deans, Howard Raskin, and Oya Rieger met to discuss the effects of distributed learning (technology-mediated instruction) on various access services such as circulation, e-reserve, document delivery, and annex services. This document summarizes the issues discussed during this meeting and also suggests a number of next steps.

WHO ARE CORNELL'S DISTRIBUTED LEARNING STUDENTS AND WHAT ARE THEIR NEEDS FROM ACCESS SERVICES?

We need more experience to better understand the access services needs of distributed learning students, whose study patterns may be potentially different than residential Cornell students. Especially professional or certificate program students have different motivations and may not need some of the traditional library services as much as residential or degree program students.

As pointed out in the "Cornell: Final Report Of The Evaluation Team Representing The Middle States Association Commission On Higher Education," Cornell does not yet have a comprehensive policy for distributed learning. At Cornell, distributed learning programs can be grouped in five categories:

1. Technology-mediated residential instruction (e.g., see CourseInfo)
2. Residential Cornell courses and programs (degree or certificate) that can be extended to distance learners (remote) through the use of various educational technologies (e.g., offerings of the School of Continuing Education)
3. Degree or certificate Cornell programs from academic units that are specifically designed for distance learners (e.g., Food Industry Management Distance Education Program, ILR Global Education)
4. Cornell-affiliated distance learning programs from non-academic units (e.g., Cornell Lab of Ornithology)
5. eCornell, which targets executives and professionals through certificate programs

We cannot yet predict how fast these different student categories will grow, especially the second and third categories that have a potential to create additional demand for library services. The University seems to be committed to invest in residential distributed learning programs by promoting the faculty use of technology in teaching. However, it is difficult to estimate how rapidly the second and third categories will grow. The library component of eCornell is shaping slowly and will be another year before we get a better idea about the value of these services for eCornell students and the programs impact on the Library.

WHAT ARE THE NEW STUDENT CATEGORIES INTRODUCED BY DISTRIBUTED LEARNING?

Although may not be formally recognized by the University as "students" yet, we see the emergence of new student types as a result of the emerging distributed learning programs. At this point, the library privileges associated with some of these student types are ambiguous. For example, what is the suite of access services provided to a "distant" (non-residential) student who is in a Cornell certificate program?

USER CATEGORY	residential	distance	degree program	certificate program	for credit	non-credit	eCornell
undergraduate							
graduate							
continuing ed							
extramural							
staff							

faculty							
extension							
other							

WHAT STATUS WOULD THE UNIVERSITY GIVE TO THE NEWLY EMERGING STUDENT TYPES?

Cornell University defines who is a “student” and records them in the University’s registrar database. This decision highly affects the Library as these records form the basis for the Library’s Voyager patron ID database. Although the Library can manually designate patron IDs for those without a Cornell ID, it would be ideal to rely on the registrar’s database with minimal modifications.

Due to the decentralized nature of registration at Cornell, the University Registrar’s Office does not hold *all* the records. For example, graduate student records are handled separately.

Cornell students and staff are eligible for getting a NetID, which is required for certain access services. Undergraduate, graduate, and professional students receive their NetIDs at registration. NetIDs provide access to several Cornell services including remote access to the Library’s networked resources. If one does not have a Cornell ID, CIT needs to manually add them to their NetID database. The current NetID system does not have a reliable way of updating and monitoring its records so this causes a problem for short-term access arrangements (e.g., two-month certificate program student).

CORNELL ID enables a full suite of services for students, faculty, and staff: online catalog, full-text resources through Voyager, electronic document delivery (ILR, OKU, Mann), Annex document delivery, recall, hold, renew (some of these services require a Net ID)

NET ID – access to networked resources, email, receive overdue messages, hold, etc.

LIBRARY PATRON ID (Voyager Patron Database) – access to all access services; may require a NetID for email transactions (e.g., need NetID for document delivery or overdue notices as Voyager relies on this system)

WHAT ARE THE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES REQUIRED TO MEET THE NEW DEMANDS BROUGHT UP BY DISTRIBUTED LEARNING?

CUL Access Services is prepared to scale its operations to meet the new demands. They have been gearing up their operations for a potential increase in document delivery and other access services transactions. They cannot add more staff but will continue restructuring their units to adjust their operations for the new demands. O/K/U, Mann, and ILR are ready with their electronic document delivery service models and are aiming direct service to clients with minimal intermediaries. They want to make the print collection as accessible as the electronic one.

The Library may need to explore costs associated with delivery of print materials (UPS) and copyright fees for electronic document delivery. Ideally, the Access Services staff would like to continue providing services with no fees. Anytime you add fees – you add overhead costs for managing these accounts.

As electronic document delivery becomes more popular, on-demand scanning will become a more integral part of access services operations. One of the challenges for the Library is to

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provide equitable technical support for all the unit libraries, in addition to financial assistance to unit libraries with the purchase costs associated with electronic document delivery.

DOES THE LIBRARY NEED CAMPUS-WIDE ACCESS POLICIES FOR DISTRIBUTED LEARNERS?

It will be useful to include some general campus-wide access policies to guide faculty and users in regard to the newly emerging distributed learning services (e.g., distance students and their access to the print collection, document delivery, e-reserves, access services that can be linked from CourseInfo, etc.). This document needs to be accessible from the Library's home page with links to all the unit libraries for specific information. On their own home pages, each unit library can tailor these general policies for their purposes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Monitor the development of distributed learning at Cornell and predict trends and demands as they apply to the Library.
- Promote information sharing among librarians who interact with distance-learning students to better understand the student and staff needs.
 - Conduct a needs assessment study to collect information on usage patterns of distributed learning students in various categories
 - Explore new roles for the Library to be a more integral part of the distributed learning process
- Continue raising the awareness of the University registrar and CIT about the importance of Cornell ID and NetID systems for access to library services. Encourage them to include the Library in their decision-making process as their decisions in regard to these identification systems have ramifications for the Library.
- Investigate how to subsidize the costs associated with delivery of print materials (UPS) and copyright fees for electronic document delivery.
- Provide system-wide technical and financial assistance for unit libraries' on-demand scanning operations.
- Develop system-wide general guidelines for faculty and students who are involved in distributed learning courses to articulate the Library services provided (and not available) for them in support of their distributed learning and teaching.