

Distance Learning/Online Services in Libraries

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Association of College and Research Libraries. (2004). **ACRL Guidelines for Distance Learning Library Services**. Chicago: American Library Association.
<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/guidelinesdistancelearning.htm>

Instructional Technology Council's list of resources

<http://www.itcnetwork.org/reports.htm>

Buchanan, E. A. (2000 Spring). "**Going the Extra Mile: Serving Distance Education Students.**" *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration* 3.2 online at
<http://www.westga.edu/~distance/buchanan31.html>

The following are suggested strategies for libraries serving distance students:

- 1. Establish relationships with vendors and service providers** to allow off-campus access to licensed databases and indexes. Site licenses are often restrictive and dial-in access prohibitive. New policies must permit access by distance students regardless of their location. A dedicated connection with ample lines must be established to fulfill the information needs of the distance learners.
- 2. Create a full-time distance education librarian position.** This professional works closely with departments and instructors to ensure access to materials and services. This person must develop instructional tutorials that can be accessed via the Internet, as well as provide telephone and email assistance to bibliographic instruction.
- 3. Provide timely access to course materials** through electronic reserve, document delivery, or inter-library loan. Course materials must be ready prior to the course inception, as many distance students visit their campuses once early in the semester to complete scheduling, obtain course materials, and meet with faculty members. The earlier the materials are available, the more convenient for distance students.
- 4. Provide a toll free number specifically for library-related requests and services.** If the distance education librarian is unable to take the call, a voice mail system must be in place and return calls guaranteed in a 24 hour time frame.
- 5. Make certain electronic reserve articles are clear** and scanned at the highest possible resolution.
- 6. Provide the file size** so the student has a sense of the time it will take to download the file. Documents should not exceed 15 pages as modem connections may not support file transfers of high size. Larger documents should be broken into multiple parts.
- 7. Students should have a choice** to purchase the requisite documents or download and print them themselves. In conjunction with the department from which the distance class originates, hard copies of all documents should be made available prior to the beginning of class. .
- 8. Long-term partnerships should be explored with other libraries and library systems.** For instance, in the State of Wisconsin, a proposal is pending to establish a collaborative program of library services for distance students in the UW system. This proposal calls for various collaborating libraries from higher education institutions and private academic libraries throughout Wisconsin to join together to serve the needs of distance students. Such services as inter-library loan with delivery to the closest library to a student or delivery to the student's designated address, full text document delivery via email, and access to course materials would be readily accessible through a consortial agreement of the state's libraries.

Johnstone, Sally M. and Barbara Krauth, (2002 July) "Information Literacy and the Distance Learner." White Paper prepared for UNESCO, the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, and the National Forum on Information Literacy, for use at the Information Literacy Meeting of Experts, Prague, The Czech Republic. Online at <http://www.nclis.gov/libinter/infolitconf&meet/papers/johnstone-fullpaper.pdf>.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Institutions interested in designing an information literacy program to meet the special needs of distance learners should consider the following recommendations:

1. Include information literacy as one element of an online self-test developed by the provider institution to inform potential online learners of essential skills and personal qualities needed for success in an online learning program.
2. Require first-time online learners to take a pre-test designed to assess their information literacy prior to their enrollment in any online course.
3. Use technology, especially the Web, to provide an online tutorial or regular credit or non-credit course on information literacy. The online tutorial or course should cover all aspects of information literacy likely to be useful to any online learner.
4. Require all online learners to demonstrate information literacy and technology fluency in using the institution's tools.
5. Require this proficiency demonstration as an aspect of the first online course in which they are enrolled or prior to admitting them to any online course or program.
6. In addition to developing an information literacy program for distance learners, providers should ensure that distance learners have access to help in mastering skills needed to use instructional technology effectively

Other Possible Topics for Discussion

- Campuses with DL programs: Types, how many students, how far & wide?
- Integration of library into your distance learning program
 - Web pages, online forms, policies
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- Making connections:
 - meeting DL students,
 - connecting with administrators and faculty
 - collaboration with IT personal
- Remote access to library services:
 - Remote access to database & print materials/document delivery
 - Virtual reference services
 - Instruction services: web delivered classes, webinars/web conferencing, Web-based library tutorials
- Evaluation of library services
- Intellectual property issues
- Electronic reserves and the digitization of library materials