

# SPEC

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## Flyer 216

### Role of Libraries in Distance Education July 1996

#### INTRODUCTION

Libraries have provided library services to faculty and students involved in *distance education*, an environment in which students were not physically on the originating campus of the course. This has included correspondence courses, television courses, and courses delivered by instructors traveling to other geographical locations such as military bases. During the last several years the technology for the utilization of interactive audio and video to deliver courses has been refined and implemented. This form of distance education is referred to in this survey as *distance learning* and involves the utilization of equipped and wired classrooms on and off campus. Because research libraries have a long history of collaborative activities with the faculty and students and with the telecommunications and computing units, distance learning (interactive video) course programs have provided opportunities for expanded library activities.

The intent of this survey was to gather information about current distance education and distance learning initiatives in ARL libraries. This SPEC Survey had three objectives: 1) identify libraries involved in distance education activities and determine the extent and/or level of involvement; 2) determine library services delivered to remote patrons; and 3) ascertain the management and support provided by libraries for distance learning (interactive video) programs.

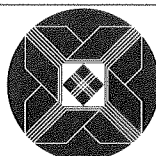
#### SURVEY RESULTS

Of the 119 ARL members, 74 (62%) libraries responded. Of these 74 respondents, 46 (62%) indicated that their institution is participating in distance education programs. Those institutions indicated that the distance education program is administered most often by continuing education (30) and the academic departments offering the courses (34), while only seven libraries are responsible for the program's administration. Types of distance education programs included interactive video distance learning (40), instructors traveling to remote sites (32), videotaped courses or portions of courses (28), and others including Internet, correspondence, satellite, and cable TV.

Responses to the issues of network management and technical support of distance learning (interactive video) indicated that 42 institutions have distance learning classrooms located on their campus. The classrooms are most often located in academic departments, continuing education units, and information technology units. Only seven libraries reported that a distance learning classroom was located in the library. The types of networks used are either dedicated T1 or switched networks. The Codecs, MCUs, and other equipment conform to H.320 standards. Only two libraries reported that they are responsible for the proper functioning of the equipment; information technology and continuing education units are most often responsible for this activity.

Twenty-three libraries provide instructional support assistance to the faculty for the development of distance education courses. The most frequent types of support include instructional design, course redesign, multimedia development, and instructional evaluation. Library orientation services offered include Internet/World Wide Web use, equipment operation, general overview of the distance education environment, and multimedia development. Other campus units that provide these services are information technology, continuing education, and the individual departments offering the courses.

Library services that support distance learning courses are offered by all but three of the libraries responding. These libraries also provide remote access to their library's online catalog. Of the 43 libraries, 32 allow for the circulation of library materials to distance education students at remote sites while an additional seven provide limited access. Thirty-five of the 43 libraries provide interlibrary loan service to distance education students, and 29 of these 35 have no restrictions to library services. Access to interlibrary loan for remote site patrons is provided most often through e-mail (22) and World Wide Web forms (12). Reference services are provided by telephone (34), scheduled "one-on-one" (27), and World Wide Web (15). Eighteen libraries reported establishing reserve services with receiving institutions.



Thirty libraries have resource sharing agreements established with in-state partners and OCLC's reciprocal borrowing program. Library services are most often coordinated by access services departments (19) and extension library services or distance education coordinators (9).

Funding for the development of the distance education program such as special funding from grants, state or federal government, or reallocation within the institution is received by 13 of the 43 libraries responding. Only six libraries reported having a permanent budget for distance education.

#### CONCLUSION

While approximately two-thirds of the libraries responding indicated that their institution is participating in distance education programs, only seven libraries have responsibility for administering this

campus program. Very few are involved in the technical aspects of distance learning but approximately one-half of those libraries responding are involved in instructional support for faculty. Most libraries and institutions where there is a distance education program provide a range of library services. Because of the range of responsibility and increasing technology programs of libraries, it is suggested that libraries should consider pursuing opportunities for expanded involvement in distance learning (interactive video).

*This Kit and Flyer were compiled by Carolyn A. Snyder, Dean of Library Affairs; Susan Logue, Assistant Head, Instructional Support Services; and Barbara G. Preece, Assistant Head, Access Services; Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and were prepared as part of the OMS Collaborative Research/Writing Program.*