

S Y S T E M S A N D P R O C E D U R E S E X C H A N G E C E N T E R

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Electronic Theses and Dissertations
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INTRODUCTION

This issue of *Transforming Libraries* summarizes the current state of electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs), reporting on efforts in 13 institutions. ETD programs are, for the most part, still under development in many libraries, with only Virginia Tech currently in full production. And though emerging partnerships and consensus building have characterized many local campus efforts, widespread adoption has been relatively slow. This survey examines the various projects in existence, assessing the many benefits that ETDs offer, as well as the barriers to full adoption, primarily the issue of "readiness," as schools confront electronic publishing and what it both offers and requires.

KEY ISSUES

Electronic publishing of theses and dissertations is not merely a technical concern. Indeed, this basic aspect is perhaps the one most easily resolved. The human and legal issues, on the other hand, are the ones that require more attention. In *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*, both the technical and nontechnical implications of ETDs are discussed. Perhaps that of most concern for students is how ETDs affect their publication potential. For others, intellectual property rights and the increased availability that electronic texts offer have caused concern about plagiarism and creditation.

One aspect of ETD programs that may prove difficult for some institutions in adaptation is orientation and training. Deciding who will provide the training (library, department, etc.) and trying to reach faculty and administrators are just some of the questions that need to be answered. Learning the PDF or SGML format often proves to be a main concern for those involved, and it also raises the issue of standards. Whether the computing facility will provide the programs and whose responsibility it will be to meet the set standards are also of concern, as are the costs involved, not only in regard to the electronic aspects, but for the program overall.

One of the primary benefits provided by ETDs is increased access. The electronic format lends itself to indexing, as well as the potential for electronic distribution. But it also poses questions about restrictions to these theses/dissertations and—more importantly—archiving and preservation. Just how these documents are to be stored has caused many institutions to run parallel paper/microform and electronic holdings or rely on UMI for archiving.

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

Thirteen institutions are represented in the Reports from the Field. They range from two institutions that have begun to require electronic submission of ETDs to a number that are in pilot or exploratory mode. There is also input from UMI. The following institutions are represented:

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- Cornell University
 - Université Laval
 - National Library of Canada
 - North Carolina State University
 - University of South Florida
 - University of Texas
 - University of Toronto
 - The Tri-University Group (TUG)
 - UMI
 - Virginia Tech
 - West Virginia University
 - William and Mary
 - University of Wisconsin

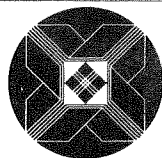
Details about the survey of these institutions, including some survey documentation and selected resources for further reading, appear on the Transforming Libraries accompanying website for this issue:

<http://www.arl.org/transform/etds/index.html>.

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The electronic component of Transforming Libraries can be found at <http://www.arl.org/transform/index.html>.

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