

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Historical methods and venues of instruction are being rapidly replaced by the wide-spread use of more convenient and user-friendly technologies.

The tidal wave of information known as the Web is radically changing professional notions on how, when and where students best learn.

STOP
SURFING



START
TEACHING

TEACHING AND
LEARNING
THROUGH
THE INTERNET



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Web Accessible Full-Text Databases: Essential Library Resources For Online Teaching And Learning

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As demonstrated by the successful conferences “Stop Surfing Start Teaching: Teaching and Learning Through the Internet” over the last three years, distance learning through the web is an emerging trend that is likely to grow and flourish. Web accessible full-text academic databases have become essential library resources for supporting online teaching and learning.

A Means to Equal Access for Distance Education and On-Campus Learners

Traditionally, one of the great advantages of on-campus learners is their accessibility to a physical library on the campus for print journals and networked electronic resources. Whereas, distance education learners have had to rely on regular mail to receive their requested documents or special arrangement with their local public and academic libraries to access needed information. This circumstance is changing through the development of web-based technology, where many database vendors are providing web accessible full-text databases. This provides a means for equal access to library resources for distance education learners.

There are two types of web accessible full-text databases. The first type is full-text databases created by database vendors which span an array of full-text journal and newspaper articles. Examples of these that are used by the Seton Hall University Libraries include Bell & Howell's *ProQuest Direct*¹, and LEXIS-NEXIS' *Academic Universe*² The database vendors contract directly with print journal and newspaper publishers. Through subscription to the academic databases, a library obtains access to full-text journal and newspaper articles without necessarily having to subscribe to the print titles. The second type is full-text databases provided by journal publishers themselves. Once a library subscribes to the print copy of a journal, it is generally eligible to access the online full-text articles provided by the publisher itself. Seton Hall University Libraries subscribe to print journals through EBSCO, a vendor that provides integrated serials access and delivery solutions worldwide through subscription management. EBSCO provides *EBSCO Online*, a web access program that allows print journal subscribers to access full-text online journals without additional cost to the library³.

The library's provision of off-campus access to commercial online databases needs to be further developed. A recent study showed that only 63 (57.8%) of 109 surveyed libraries provided off-campus access⁴. The study showed that all off-campus access to commercial online databases required the use of identification and/or password for authentication. Their methods of provision included use of a proxy server, providing instructions on how to make special browser configurations on the user's home computer, and providing instructions on how to receive database

identifications and passwords through the library's reference desks. The Seton Hall University Libraries provide special identifications and passwords for remote access to *ProQuest Direct* and *EBSCO Online*; proxy server access is provided for *LEXIS-NEXIS*. Use of proxy server is the ideal approach to providing remote access because faculty and students can use their own university account ID and password. However, this approach is dependent upon vendors' setup of their database servers. "Database vendors need to work with libraries to enable and facilitate easy off-campus access to their databases."⁵

An Affordable Alternative to Subscribing to Print Journals

The issue of journal price affordability concerns college/university libraries around the world. An open letter signed by librarians at Austrian, Dutch, German, and Swiss university libraries pointed out that subscription price increases in 1999 escalated as high as 27.3%, significantly above that of library budgets.⁶ According to a Cornell journal study, the prices of commercially published agricultural journals increased 77.8% between 1988 and 1994 on a price per page basis, while journals published by associations and societies increased by 33.3%.⁷ Electronic access to full-text journals may provide an opportunity for a new approach to pricing. Electronic journals could be a potential solution to escalating serials costs.⁹

Currently, the Seton Hall University Libraries subscribe to 1,776 print journals and provides web access to 2,173 full-text journal titles in electronic format through Bell & Howell's *ProQuest Direct*. The authors compared electronic and print journal pricing in an attempt to help librarians make informed decisions regarding journal subscriptions and non-renewal reductions. A list of 1,776 print journal titles was compared against a list of full-text journal titles from the *ProQuest Direct* database. The analysis revealed that 429 print journal titles were duplicated in electronic format. This list of duplicated titles spans about two dozens broad subject categories. The 1999 prorated cost for the duplicated electronic journal titles would be \$9,163, whereas the same titles in print format (1999) would cost \$48,843, offering the possibility of a net cost reduction of about \$40,000 by not renewing the print subscriptions.

A comparison of the duplicated electronic and print journal titles shows that subscription to electronic academic full-text journals is less costly than print journal titles. A library can possibly "save" a sizable amount of money if it does not renew the duplicated print journal titles. The money from the cost difference can be available for re-allocation for other needed library program activities. However, prior to implementing such a strategy, the librarian must consider the long-term implication for non-renewal of titles that duplicate in print and electronic format. The question of the differences between access to electronic full-text journal databases and print journals must be answered. Access to electronic full-text journal databases and print journals have several differences:

Electronically available titles through *ProQuest Direct* can be searched by keywords and publication. If a user knows the issue and page number of an article, the user can go directly to the publication title. The

issues are arranged by date in descending order with the latest issue listed first. However, accessing a full-text article through an electronic database is like one-stop shopping. Once a user finds an article, the user can view the article immediately on the computer screen and print it. In contrast, when accessing an article in a print journal, a user needs first to search an electronic database or an index to find a citation and then physically locate the specific issue in the journal stacks.

The reliability of an electronic database is a key criterion when making a decision to maintain a title only in its electronic format. The electronic database should be always available for access. If duplicated titles are identified in a reliable database such as *ProQuest Direct*, the library should have less hesitancy about non-renewal of duplicated print journals. The library needs to publicize the availability of electronic full-text journals to faculty and students through a variety of channels. Format acceptance, particularly off-campus access, is readily achieved as a strong advantage of electronic full-text journals. Librarians, faculty, and students need to know the titles of electronic full-text academic journals that are available and how this format supports student learning and faculty teaching and research

Issues to Be Explored

Many issues need to be further discussed and explored before librarians can confidently rely on electronic full-text academic journals. For example:

1. What is the long-term impact of the transition from the University Library from being an archive for paper subscriptions to being an access point for copy on the “knowledge” infrastructure of the institution?
2. When the Library discontinues a print journal, it still has back issues on the stacks. In case the Library has to discontinue an electronic database, it may lose access to its electronic back issues. How should we deal with the issue of non-availability of back files in case of discontinuing an electronic database?

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³EBSCO Online [Online]. Available: <http://www-us.ebsco.com/online/Reader.asp> (Last Accessed July 24, 2000)

⁴Bao, Xue-Ming, "Academic Library Home Pages: Link Location and Database Provision," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 26 (May 2000): 195.

⁵Ibid., 195.

⁶Alison Abbott, "University Libraries Put Pen to Paper in Journal Pricing Protest," *Nature* 398 (Apr. 29, 1999): 740.

⁷Michael Rogers and Norman Oder, "Cornell's Journal Pricing Study Out," *Library Journal* 124 (Feb. 15, 1999): 94-97.

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⁹Robert A. Pikowsky, "Electronic Journals as a Potential Solution to Escalating Serials Costs," *The Serials Librarian* 32 (3/4)(1997): 31-56.

WebU And SpinNC.Org: Two Models Of Program And Service Delivery In The Knowledge Ecology.

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Since its formation the Division for Public Service and Extended Education has been empowered to respond to the changing needs of the citizens of southeast North Carolina. Through its public service mandate the division leverages the unique resources of the University of North Carolina at Wilmington to promote innovative solutions to address the region's needs. One area of notable success has been the mentoring of several technology-mediated partnerships. Though these partnerships have a strong technology component, the division assists in building human capacity, provides technical assistance, and facilitates long-term programming commitments.

The division has actively participated in the Cape Fear Regional Partnership Network, North Carolina Information Highway, Southeast Public Interest Network of North Carolina, and the North Carolina Research and Education Network. The division's commitments to these organizations have demonstratively increased the region's technology literacy. From broadband, interactive, videoconferencing networks to community networking databases, the division's leadership and technical guidance has changed the lives of citizens in southeast North Carolina, but unfortunately this has not been enough.

A recent study from the United States Department of Commerce revealed that North Carolina is 46th in the nation in Internet access. This statistic is particularly troubling when you consider North Carolina's commitment to a statewide ATM SONET network. Plainly too few citizens are enjoying the benefits of our state's technological edge. The digital