



# DLS Newsletter

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## A Word from the Chair

Dear Colleagues,

As we move through the academic year, we are well aware of the diversity and seemingly ever-changing definition of our distance learners. Librarians, library administrators, and others continue to educate and provide support to distance learners whether they are geographically far from our physical libraries or researching from their residence hall rooms. The complexity and pervasiveness of information resources and technologies and methods of delivering instruction challenge each of us everyday. The Distance Learning Section (DLS) continues to provide leadership, support and new ideas for all of us involved in distance learning.

We find and nurture commonalities with other sections in ACRL such as Instruction, University Libraries, Community and Junior College and the Library and the Information Technology Association (LITA). Our well-attended and well-received 2003 ALA program in Toronto, "Crossing Our Borders: Partnering with Faculty and Instructional Designers in the Online Environment," proved an excellent example of cutting edge best practices and cooperation.

What truly distinguishes DLS is the dedication and professionalism of its members. Membership continues to grow reflecting both interest in distance learning activities and the previous accomplishments of the section.

Following are some noteworthy initiatives of the section.

- The Social Events Planning Committee is now official! This group will commence planning for

section gatherings at forthcoming ALA conferences and the section's 15<sup>th</sup> year Anniversary Celebration in 2005 at the ALA Conference in Chicago.

- DLS approved the "Haworth Press Distance Learning Librarian Conference Sponsorship Award" concept, charge and committee membership structure at 2003 annual. Final approval by ACRL is pending.
- A DLS membership survey providing a "snapshot" of those us involved in distance learning will soon be available on the DLS web site. This survey will guide us in strategic planning, membership and outreach efforts.
- The DLS Guideline Committee will be presenting the section's revised guidelines at ALA midwinter 2004.

If you interested in volunteering for committee membership, please contact the DLS Vice Chair, Stephen Dew at [stephen-dew@uiowa.edu](mailto:stephen-dew@uiowa.edu). The October issue of *C&RL News* will feature a call for committee volunteers and an application form. If you have questions or comments about DLS, please contact me at [kcconle@ilstu.edu](mailto:kcconle@ilstu.edu).

Cheers,  
Kathe Conley  
DLS Chair, 2003-2004  
September 2003

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## Web Notes: Free Audio Resources

*Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary:* Thousands of words pronounced for you

<http://www.m-w.com/dictionary.htm> <<http://www.m-w.com/dictionary.htm>>

*Voice of America Pronunciation Guide:* Pronunciations of the names people, places, and things you hear about in the news.

<http://ibb7.ibb.gov/pronunciations/> <<http://ibb7.ibb.gov/pronunciations/>>

*Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab:* Listening quizzes, exercises, and conversations specially designed for students of English as a second language.

<http://www.esl-lab.com/> <<http://www.esl-lab.com/>>

*World Poetry Audio Library:* A smattering of poems, in English (some are translations), by well-known poets.

<http://www.english.eku.edu/Pellegrino/worldpoetry/>

*Wordsmith.org: A Word A Day:* Sign up to receive a new word every day – with a pronunciation, definition, and a quote or two – or just browse the archives for “old” words.

<http://wordsmith.org/awad/index.html> <<http://wordsmith.org/awad/index.html>>

*HistoryBuff Historic Voices Library:* A dozen or so digital versions of historic audio clips – from Amelia Earhart to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to John F. Kennedy to P.T. Barnum.

<http://www.historybuff.com/media/historicvoices.html>

*History Channel: Speeches:* Recordings of several hundred speeches ranging from Hank Aaron to Mao Zedong.

<http://www.historychannel.com/speeches/> <<http://www.historychannel.com/speeches/>>

*National Public Radio:* All your favorite public radio programs from “All Things Considered” to “Car Talk”.

<http://www.npr.org/> <<http://www.npr.org/>>

*Audio Bible:* The full text of the old and new testaments with audio.

<http://www.audio-bible.com/bible/bible.html> <<http://www.audio-bible.com/bible/bible.html>>

*Audio Quran:* The Quran, in Arabic, with accompanying text in Arabic.

<http://www.arab2.com/quran/index.htm> <<http://www.arab2.com/quran/index.htm>>

*Navigating the Bible (Torah:)* Side-by-side Hebrew (with transliteration) and English with audio recordings in Hebrew.

<http://bible.ort.org/intro1.asp?lang=1> <<http://bible.ort.org/intro1.asp?lang=1>>

Brian Mikesell (St. John's University)

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## Distance Learning Section Midwinter Social

Plan to see old friends and meet new ones at the DLS Social in San Diego. On Saturday, January 10, 2004, from 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m., DLS members will be gathering at a restaurant or bar (to be decided) in San Diego within walking distance of the Convention Center. The social will be an informal drop-in where members and guests can purchase drinks and snacks and visit with colleagues. Information will be posted on Offcamp and the DLS web site about the location of the event.

The new DLS Social Events Planning Committee is planning informal socials for Midwinter 2004 in San Diego, Annual 2004 in Orlando, and Midwinter 2005 in Boston, before we launch the first DLS Social at Annual 2005 in Chicago in conjunction with our 15th anniversary as a section. Please plan to join us for the DLS socials.

Anne Marie Casey (Central Michigan University)

## Off-Campus Library Services Conference May 4-7, 2004

In an interview about his latest book *Anarchist in the Library*, Siva Vaidhyathan has this to say about libraries “A library is a temple to the notion that knowledge is not just for the elite and that access should be low cost if not free, that doors should be open”. Since all librarians would like this description it goes without saying that you will be interested in what Siva has to say as the featured speaker at the next Off-Campus Library Services Conference May 4-7, 2004 in Northern Scottsdale Arizona. His views on intellectual property are considered controversial by some groups of people such as publishers.

Siva is a cultural historian and media scholar and is currently an assistant professor of Culture and Communication at New York University. He is the author of two books, both of which are of interest to the off-campus crowd *Copyrights and Copywrongs: The Rise of Intellectual Property and How it Threatens Creativity* (New York University Press, 2001) and *The Anarchist in the Library: How Peer-to-Peer Networks are Transforming Politics, Culture and Information* (Basic Books, 2003). Vaidhyathan has written for many periodicals, including The Dallas Morning News, The Chronicle of Higher Education, The New York Times Magazine, MSNBC.COM, Salon.com and The Nation. His research on media and cultural issues has been profiled by programs on National Public Radio, CNN, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, International Herald-Tribune Television, Pacifica Radio, Voice of America, and Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting.

If you are interested in attending this conference please follow the instructions below to subscribe to the conference listserv. The traffic on this list will be low and will be used primarily to collect e-mail addresses for those who are interested in conference information.

Send a message to:

LISTSERV@LISTSERV.CMICH.EDU

In the message area type:

subscribe OCLSCONF your first name your last name.

For example: subscribe OCLSCONF Jane Smith

Please visit our web site periodically at <http://ocls.cmich.edu/conference.htm> to get the most up-to-date information about the conference.

Connie Hildebrand (Central Michigan University)



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### Subscribing to OFFCAMP

The OFFCAMP Listserv has been established for “discussion about all aspects of service to remote users, including but not limited to branch campus service, state regional, national, and international academic programs and their associated constituents.”

To subscribe to OFFCAMP, send an e mail message to:

listserv@listserv.utk.edu

In the body of your message type:

SUB OFFCAMP YOUR NAME

See the Web interface at: <http://listserv.utk.edu/archives/offcamp.html>

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### How to Join DLS

To join the Distance Learning Section, contact:

Membership Services

ACRL

50 Huron Street,

Chicago, Illinois 60611

18005452433 ext. 2521

email: [acrl@ala.org](mailto:acrl@ala.org)

<http://www.ala.org/acrl.html>

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### Editors' Note

This *Newsletter* is available on the DLS Web page.

Please send corrections to either editor: [nburich@ku.edu](mailto:nburich@ku.edu)

3 or [fadevlin@ku.edu](mailto:fadevlin@ku.edu).

## Off-Campus Conference 2002 : My First Impressions

When my supervisor suggested I co-present with her at the Off-Campus Library Conference, I was more excited at the prospect of writing the paper than attending the conference, which at the time seemed too far away! Being a medical librarian, I had attended several medical library conferences. But I was new to distance librarianship, so this conference was something to look forward to. I thought it would be nice to get my feet wet in distance librarianship, surrounding myself with people who had similar interests and values.

We got to Cincinnati, OH on Tuesday April 16, 2002. My conference experience began the following morning. I found it rewarding when someone made the effort to come up and find out who I was and where I came from. At the Off-Campus Conference, since there were fewer people, one soon got to know others by face and kept encountering the same people with a smile of recognition. The fact that we stayed in the conference hotel, made it easier to mingle with other librarians. What appealed to me as a first timer attending this particular conference was that it was not overwhelming; everybody was friendly and congenial especially the organizers from CMU. This smaller, friendlier size allowed new librarians to get involved in DLS committees. You just need to be willing to immerse yourself, to be creative, and carve a niche for yourself and see where it leads.

I attended couple of discussion groups. Being new to distance librarianship, I wanted to attend the Distance Library Committee moderated by Ann Marie Casey entitled “Meet the Distance Learning Section of ACRL.” This was an eye opener for me as I got a feel for what committee work in distance librarianship entails. I also attended another discussion group called “Help! I’m the New Distance Ed Librarian—Where do I Begin?” This was a much bigger group and geared towards librarians with less than one year of experience. I had already been in the distance librarianship for longer than that. I didn’t learn many new things from this session, but I was pleased that I was able to contribute quite a bit in the discussion. What I liked best about the discussion sessions was the fact that the ambience was informal. The next day, with butterflies in my stomach I went to do my presentation. This was my very first paper presentation at a conference. My initial nervousness eased when I could feel the audi-

ence was with me and laughed at some of the jokes. I was very pleased that it was well received.

Continuing education leading to professional advancement is a key to successful librarianship and a conference is exactly the arena where this can be nurtured. Nowhere is this clearer than at a conference, where everyone is focused on absorbing much as possible and, equally importantly, sharing as much as possible. Being in the midst of people who believe in what they are doing for a living is rare; and more so when one is committed to public service. This conference was a place to explore new avenues in library services for distance learners. At this focused conference on distance librarianship, everyone genuinely believed in what they do and seemed to take pride in it. The conference was a proof of the vitality of our organization and of the contributions our members make to the advancement of distance librarianship. There is nothing more fun than meeting some of the speakers one-on-one. Meeting the other attendees is extremely rewarding, a nice way to learn (or help them learn) the tricks on how to get to get the most out of the conference. Aside from their dynamic presentations, there is a chance of getting into much more detail and maybe even bring back exactly what your institution is looking for that might not have been covered during the presentation.

As with any conference, Off-Campus conference was about learning and sharing, while also having fun. As we know, first impressions are lasting impressions; given a chance, I look forward to be able to attend future Off-Campus conferences.

Mou Chakraborty (Nova Southeastern University)



## **Crossing Our Own Borders : DLS Program in ALA Toronto 2003**

Although attendance seemed to be slightly lower, many librarians crossed the border to attend the 2003 ALA Annual Conference in Toronto. The Distance Learning Section sponsored a program entitled "Crossing Our Own Borders." Relating to the theme of crossing a border to the conference, the program focused on the borders that many of us working in the realm of distance library services must cross every day at our home institutions. The offerings in the distance education arena are growing almost exponentially and the library must form relationships or cross borders to be able to provide services and resources to those students and faculty members at a distance from the main campus. A very talented and knowledgeable group of speakers presented tips and their own real world experiences to illustrate how breaking down barriers and forming relationships could occur.

Starting the program was Howard Carter, Manager of Instructional Support Services at Southern Illinois University. His presentation focused on the need for librarians to work as liaisons and get out of the library to form relationships. He urged librarians to work with faculty and course designers. The liaison has many roles and Howard presented several including: collection development, library instruction, reference and research assistance, and instructional assistance. Howard mentioned that he had trouble getting librarians involved in the course design process. Librarians need to be involved in the development of online courses. This will ensure that links to the library, its resources and services are in the online environment.

Following Howard was Jeremy Mouat, Professor in the Centre for Global & Social Analysis at Athabasca University. As an instructor, Jeremy pointed out that a course design team needed to contain the faculty member, a librarian, and instructional designers. He asserted that library and research skills are necessary to succeed. Jeremy stated that in the emerging online world, students and faculty members need the assistance of librarians. He described a course that he transferred to the online environment. The presentation stressed the value of collaboration in creating online courses and the need for information seeking skills.

Two librarians from the OISE / University of

Toronto Library followed next in presenting. Marian Press is the Coordinator of Reference and Information Technology and Carol Calder the Coordinator of Library Instruction. They described a virtual library course designed in the library. The librarians created the course for faculty to integrate into subject courses. The course is a graduate level course with no credit and taught several times a term. They described the seven modules of the course. The presentation ended with the thought that the students had a positive response to the course.

The last speaker was also from Athabasca University. Steve Schafer is the Director Library Services at the university. He described the digital reading room developed at their institution. This room provides electronic copies of reserve or required readings for students to access. The digitized articles are in a database and able to be linked to any course. To facilitate the design of the program, the library engaged faculty and content builders in the design process.

Although they presented very different information, the core message presented was that of working together in a collaborative manner is essential in providing distance library services to faculty and students. Crossing the borders in our own institution is necessary. To provide effective services and relevant resources, librarians need to cross over the library border onto the rest of campus. Library professionals need to be involved in the course design process and work together with students, faculty, and course designers to provide a good product for the end users.

Terri Pedersen Summey (Emporia State University)



## **Growth of Docutek Reflective of Academic Librarians' Changing Needs in a Digital Age**

Before Docutek Information Systems, Inc. (<http://www.docutek.com>) became a technology company geared toward helping librarians meet the challenges of the Digital Age, it was Philip Kesten's and Slaven Zivkovic's labor of love that resulted in a software product for facilitating electronic study groups.

In the early 90s, Kesten, an associate professor of Physics and chairman of the Physics Department at Santa Clara University, and Zivkovic, who was Kesten's student at the time, discovered that libraries, in particular, were interested in the development of their software. "So, we took our software and pushed it away from the electronic study group and more in the direction of a document system that would allow library people and faculty to put material on electronic reserve for students," Kesten says.

Kesten still holds his academic positions at Santa Clara, along with adding the Docutek title of Vice President of Marketing to his resume. Zivkovic is now Docutek's Vice President of Business Development. The company has grown considerably and is now being led by Nathan Vince, president and CEO, who has a background as a senior executive for a leading manufacturer of power supplies. In addition to Kesten, Zivkovic and Vince, the company has another four senior executives on the management team and an impressive group of 11 advisors who are professionals in the field of librarianship or information services.

The company's ERes and VRL*plus* products have grown in popularity as libraries look to expand their services with the aid of technology.

Docutek's flagship product, ERes, is system software that gives libraries the ability to Web-enable their reserve operations. ERes includes copyright-management functions, Internet resource management tools, electronic document delivery services, and a patent-pending "DocuFax" tool that enables librarians to fax documents directly to electronic reserves, eliminating the need for scanning and pdf conversion.

"This is the stuff that librarians really care about these days," Kesten says. "We have set up a partnership with the Copyright Clearance Center. With a single click of a button on our system, a librarian can request electronic permission to use a document from OCC and get that permission back electronically. It goes directly into the

ERes system, where the document is turned on. The whole process is done electronically."

ERes is currently in use by more than 300 libraries worldwide. "Our largest school has over 70,000 students, and our smaller schools are in the range of under 1,000 students," Kesten adds.

Docutek's VRL*plus* product enables reference librarians to converse directly with patrons online in real time as they guide them through Web sites and other online resources. The system collects detailed statistics on system usage, such as number of logins, questions asked, and session duration.

VRL*plus* features full co-browsing, which enables the librarian and patron to share the same Web pages, including online databases and other services that require authentication.

At end of 2002, 25 libraries were using VRL*plus*. In less than nine months, the number of VRL*plus* installations has increased to 200 libraries today, approximately 150 in higher education and the remainder in public libraries.

"More and more the market was looking for something that would allow for real-time communications with some kind of co-browsing capability," says Vince. "I see it continuing to be adopted at a very fast pace."

What's in store for the future? According to Vince, with the growth of increased and cheaper bandwidth; improved hardware; more sophisticated software; and increased student computer access, particularly in higher education; librarians will see more full-live-chat features, more queuing in the software, and increased adoption of co-browsing. The addition of video-streaming and voice delivery using Internet protocol (VoIP) technologies are also coming onto the playing field.

"In our world, this [digital reference services with live communication functions] is definitely a hot topic," says Vince. "It started a couple of years ago and is actually at the point now where most of your academics and higher education institutions are involved with digital reference or virtual reference in some capacity."

**George Lorenzo (Educational Pathways <http://www.edpath.com>)**

## LivePerson Chat Software

As the Distance Education Librarian at the University of Tennessee, I used AOL Instant Messenger beginning in 1995 for several years as a way to let students talk to me while they were online. It was helpful at times, but I could not be sitting at my machine all day waiting for a message and I did not have any kind of assistance for the distance ed work.

In another example of how services for local and distance education students are merging, the reference department at UT has begun offering digital reference services to everyone, our local students and faculty, as well as our distance education students and faculty, and even people from around the world not affiliated with UT. Staffing is much less a problem when the entire department is delivering digital reference service.

We formed a committee of reference librarians to evaluate software and develop policies. After some research and testing, we decided to use LivePerson chat software. We went live with our chat reference service in August of 2001. We began with LivePerson because it is very affordable (we pay \$150 per month for the version we use) and because the learning curve is insignificant, practically flat with no curve to it.

A lesser learning curve, of course, means fewer features than some of the more sophisticated software programs available, but that was okay; we just wanted a starting point. As with any innovation, we had some individuals who were not convinced of the necessity of this tool or of its usefulness, so one of our strategies for winning over the hesitant was telling them it was easy to use.

And it is very easy to use. When you have installed the client (a painless operation), you click on the icon, and a window opens with buttons across the top that show you what you can do. When a visitor wants to ask a question, they simply click on the button you have placed on your Web site (another very easy operation – just install the script provided), and it opens a window on their machine that shows the chat session. The first message they receive is, “Please wait for a site operator to respond.” You can prepare canned messages, scripts that are stored and ready to use when appropriate, such as, “Welcome to AskUsNow (or whatever the name of your service is). How may I help you?” so that you do not have to type that every time you want to use it. That particular

welcome message is our canned greeting for visitors. They will see that message in their chat window next.

When a librarian is ready, she accepts the chat by clicking on the “Accept Chat” button, and the user receives a message that says, “You are now chatting with the Reference Desk.”

Then they can send their question, and the librarian responds by typing an answer or sending a canned message such as, “Please wait while I find that information”.

You can use any name you want to. We all have separate accounts, but we use “Reference Desk” as the generic name to answer questions.

The service runs on the LivePerson server. It stores all of the chat transcripts. You can get some basic statistics from this service, such as number of chats, length of each chat, and day and time of chat, but nothing sophisticated in the statistics area. There is no download on the user’s end before they ask a question.

One disadvantage with this system is that the text of the chat is not sent automatically to the users. To get a transcript of the chat, the librarian has to do a copy-and-paste routine to be able to mail it to the user.

Another disadvantage is the lack of a client for a Mac, so the librarian has to use a PC, but the user can use anything.

We have also experienced some compatibility problems with Netscape and so encourage everyone to use Internet Explorer, but we do not state that on the page.

Along with no download for the user, there is no co-browse feature. We can push pages; we type in a URL, and the corresponding window opens on the user’s desktop.

We have received many messages of gratitude for having this service, and even some of the librarians who were hesitant at first have been won over by the ease and convenience of this software. And we are delivering library services to an ever wider audience of users.





DLS Newsletter  
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### **Coming Soon: *Journal of Library & Information Services in Distance Learning***

The *Journal of Library & Information Services in Distance Learning* is the first commercially published journal to specifically address the issues and concerns of librarians and information specialists in the rapidly growing field of distance learning. The first issue was submitted to the publisher, Haworth Press, this summer and will appear in print in January 2004. The journal is a peer-reviewed quarterly publication, providing readers with substantive articles, essays, reviews, and research reports. The journal has a large and inclusive scope. It covers programs and innovations throughout the international community, and the content will include articles covering the vast array of subjects involved in library and information services in distance learning.

For many members of the Distance Learning Section, the journal's publication represents the culmination of a tremendous amount of work done by a large number of individuals. A few years ago, Harvey Gover, Jack Fritts, and other DLS members were instrumental in approaching Haworth Press about the idea, and Haworth, a publisher of over thirty-five journals related to library and information services, decided to take the idea and pursue publication. In June 2002, I was appointed editor of this new journal, and over the next few months, I worked to establish a broad editorial board that is international in scope and deep in experience.

A subscription to the *Journal of Library & Information Services in Distance Learning* costs \$48 per year for individuals and \$150 per year for libraries. To view the journal's Web page (where you can find subscription information, a link to request a free copy, a link to request a free table-of-contents e-mail service, and other information) go to: <http://www.haworthpress.com/store/product.asp?sku=j192>

Members of DLS and other interested librarians are highly encouraged to submit manuscripts to the journal. Please consider contributing to the profession through publication in the *Journal of Library & Information Services in Distance Learning*. To download a copy of author instructions, go to the following URL: <http://www.haworthpress.com/journals/IFApdfs/J192.pdf>. To receive a printed copy of author instructions or more information about the journal, please contact me at [stephen-dew@uiowa.edu](mailto:stephen-dew@uiowa.edu).