

OFFICE OF LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

PROJECT: Project #21021 **Remote Distance/Continuing Education - Information Support**
QUARTER: Q4 (January 2 - March 31, 2002)

1.01 PROJECT STATUS

.1 Deliverables:

a) Forecast Quarterly Deliverables:

- I. Literature Review (completed by January 31, 2002 with continuous updating)
- II. Three Surveys (January 2002)
- III. Develop a tentative Service Model in the form of a Discussion Paper (Feb.2002)
- IV. Stakeholders Forum (March 2002)
- V. Business Plan for Pilot Project (March -April 2002)

b) Actual Quarterly Deliverables:

I. Literature Review

The library community working in the area of distance education was blessed with the publication in 2000 of a comprehensive international bibliography and literature review by Alexander L. Slade and Marie A. Kascus, purchased in June 2001. This bibliography (*Slade, A. L. & M. A. Kascus. 2000. Library Services for Open and Distance Education, Libraries Unlimited, Englewood, CO*) is the third in a series and covers the literature world-wide between 1995 and 1999. In addition, an introduction identifies the trends and developments in the delivery of library services to a distance education clientele, first generally at the international level, and then more specifically for the United States, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, Canada, Africa and Asia. Since the late 1990's we have seen a shift from print to electronic resources within academic libraries. Now we are beginning also to see a shift to electronic support services as well and support for access to electronic collections from remote locations. Remote in the past has meant 'outside-the-library' but 'on-campus'. Work being done now will extend access to resources and services to other more remote locations, including the residences of those students who have access to the Internet and the World Wide Web.

The object of the committee's literature review is to continually update this bibliography with attention to developments in Canada and the United States related to consortia. We are particularly interested in library issues and services for which there was interest indicated in the student and faculty surveys described below.

Gwyn Pace, a member of the Novanet DE Working Group, has been coordinating the collection of bibliographical references. Gwyn is the document delivery librarian at Dalhousie University, which is currently on strike. A copy of the bibliography, which remains a work in progress, will be available when the Dalhousie labour dispute is resolved.

II. Three Surveys

Student Survey:

The development of the student survey took place in parallel with the preparation of the grant proposal to OLT and was finalized in the fall 2001. The Student and Faculty Surveys went through a thorough Research Ethics Board Review (following NSERC/SSHRC guidelines) by each of the eight post-secondary institutions participating in the project. The final approval was received in November. The survey methodology required the distribution of 1761 surveys to students randomly selected. The sample size was calculated for a $\pm 5\%$ margin of error (19 times out of 20). A return rate of 846 would provide a $\pm 3\%$ margin of error (19 times out of 20) for the survey as a whole. We received 817 student survey returns and surveys are still coming in at irregular intervals. Phase II, requiring a postcard reminder to be sent to each of those who received the original survey was

mailed one week following the first mailing.

Phase III required a duplicate survey to be mailed to every student/faculty member in the original survey who had not yet responded to the survey. The publication, collation of cover letters, purchase and franking of return envelopes etc. was completed in early January and the boxes of surveys distributed to participating libraries on January 11, 2002.

We allowed 3-4 weeks (participants at each university took approx. 1 week to address the surveys for mailing) as the preliminary response time during which the majority of the responses were expected. In fact, they were still coming in at a rate of about 20 per day until late February. During this time project staff investigated statistical packages available to social scientists and had an orientation on SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). After entering a sample batch of 100 survey responses, the structure of the data entry worksheets was tested and adjusted. On the advice of Dr. Ken Beesley, Professor of Sociology at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, it was decided that comments provided by respondents for open ended questions would be tabulated separately using Excel spreadsheet software. These would be analyzed separately from the statistical survey. It also was decided that Phase IV of the survey would be omitted, because our returns approximated our needs and because we had exhausted the budget allocated by Novanet for the printing and postage costs for the project. Data entry and analysis of statistical information continued until March 5th. Comments were entered during the month of March and continue to be analyzed. It is expected that a preliminary display of this data will be ready for the April 5, 2002 meeting of the Steering Committee. The writing and publication of a narrative (discussion paper) is expected to take all of the month of April and most of May as it must combine the results of the three surveys in a way that will provide guidance to Stakeholders.

Faculty Survey:

The Faculty Survey was done in parallel with the student survey, except that a survey was sent to every faculty member identified as responsible for at least one course using distance delivery methods. The total number of surveys distributed was 257. Data entry and analysis was done in parallel with the student survey. Summary statistical information was completed by March 5th and demographics and comments by March 15.

Library Survey:

The Library Survey methodology was different from the Student and Faculty Surveys. A staff member, often but not always a librarian, was interviewed at each institution during the month of November 2001. The survey document is a slightly modified version (with the author's permission) of the survey completed for the Canadian Library Association by Chris Adams of the University of Saskatchewan (*Adams, C. 2000. Third Off Campus Library Services Survey - 1999. Canadian Association of College and University Libraries. Occasional Paper Series No. 14. Canadian Library Association, Ottawa*) The spreadsheet for this survey is just being prepared. It is a fairly complex survey and will require most of the month of April and part of May to enter the data and complete an analysis of the results. We hope that the results can provide an interesting addendum to the survey conducted by Chris Adams, which had very low response rate from the Atlantic Provinces.

III. Develop Tentative Service Model in the form of a Discussion Paper

A. L. Slade & M. A. Kascus describe four service models reported in the literature for library or information support for distance education students. These are: First, regional or local learning centers established in remote (from the main campus) locations. This solution was discussed less frequently in the literature in the late 1990's as evolving communication technologies began to allow remote access to electronic resources. Second, use of local libraries unaffiliated with the institution offering the course, selected by the students themselves. Third, document delivery from the main campus library directly to the student via various mechanisms, sometimes called an outreach or extension service. Fourth, use of the Internet and World Wide Web enabled by the development Web-accessible online catalogues, bibliographic databases and peer-reviewed full-text material, sometimes called 'the virtual library'. At a given institution more than one model may be used.

There is no question that distance learners at the eight Novanet institutions prefer the fourth model mentioned last. The initial student survey summary (frequencies) has provided us with valuable information. Almost 96% of the distance education population for Novanet institutions has access to the World Wide Web. They overwhelmingly request improved delivery of electronic resources and services. They also indicated their priorities, which allows us to narrow down our efforts to those that will be most helpful: electronic reserves - 59.7%, full-text material (e-books, e-reserves, bibliographic databases) - 41.3%, electronic reference - 36.1% and online tutorials - 23.6%. The Stakeholders Forum is expected to clarify expectations further, in enough detail that we can develop a workable pilot project that should allow us to design the most appropriate improvements.

IV. Stakeholders Forum

It was felt by the Steering Committee that a Stakeholder's Forum in March, requiring the preparation and distribution of the Discussion Paper and detailed planning, was unrealistic. It was decided that the Stakeholders Forum will be scheduled for Monday, May 27 and Tuesday, May 28, 2002 and be limited to 50 invited representatives of stakeholder groups representing proportionally the relative sizes of the distance education programs at our respective institutions.

Stakeholder groups are identified as Novanet Distance Education (DE) Working Group, Library Staff involved in providing information support to distance learners, DE Coordinators at each institution/DE Faculty or Instructors, DE Students. These groups will be represented in roughly equal numbers. We also hope to include as consultants / resource people library professionals with experience in each of the priority areas identified in the survey. The actual program format is still under discussion, although we hope to have a preliminary program by April 5.

c) Variations from last quarter's stated objectives:

Unexpected Variations

A notice was circulated in December 2001 to the Nova Scotia Agricultural College for a work term placement for a student in business administration at the Success Business College. Our project team put together a proposal for a four week long Internship Program which was accepted as the most beneficial to both student and College. This provided one full-month of volunteer assistance to the Remote/ Distance Education - Information Support Project by a trained and experienced office manager. The internship proved to be an excellent probationary period, at the end of which this person was offered and accepted the position of half-time Administrative Assistant to the project.

In-kind contributions to date have exceeded our expectations. The project has generated enquiries from as far away as British Columbia.

Other Variations - Adjustments to Timeline

The Project Manager underestimated the amount of work that was involved in entering and analyzing the data from the surveys by one person (project manager) plus a half-time administrative assistant. This has required that the Stakeholders Forum be rescheduled forward and the time line adjusted by one month. The Stakeholders Forum & Consultation will take place in May, analysis of those discussions and preparation of the Business Plan for the Pilot Project in June, and selection of a suite of innovative information and learning technologies for testing, in July - August.

We believe that the additional time spent in this planning stage will ensure that the outcomes receive the commitment of the library community as well as the distance education community and that outcomes will have a better chance of satisfying all stakeholders. At this point in time we believe we are on track for accomplishing the rest of our objectives as originally scheduled.

d) Areas of concern regarding deliverables: None

e) Next quarter's forecast deliverables:

I. Stakeholder's Forum

Method / Strategy: by invitation / small conference / workshop format

Consultants: representatives of DE students, DE faculty/instructors, DE coordinators, Library staff, Novanet DE Working Group and Project Steering Committee

Timeline: Monday, May 27 and Tuesday, May 28, 2002

II. Business Plan for Pilot Project

Method / Strategy: based on outcomes of the Forum

Contributors: recruit student and faculty representatives for the Steering Committee (DE Working Group)

Timeline: June-July 2002

III. Select core suite of innovative information and learning technologies for testing

Method / Strategy: DE committee to attend one technology conference; update literature review with technical information

Contributors: Steering Committee / Consultants as needed

Timeline: June-August 2002

IV. Prepare to recruit Assistant Project Manager and library staff to participating in the pilot project.

Method / Strategy: Identify skills needed, benefits to be derived, publicity on project goals and objectives. Work with the Novanet Policy Board. Contact Dalhousie School of Library and Information Management. Formalize recruitment plan for Assistant Project Manager (ad, criteria, job description, interview questions etc.

Contributors: Library staff at Novanet institutions, Steering Committee, Faculty at Dal Library School.

Timeline: to have Assistant Project Manager in place by August 6, 2002

Novanet Working Group on

Distance Education

OLT ACTION PLAN 2002 Objectives and Time Table - Updated March 2002

Activities / Objective	Method / Strategy	Contributors	Time line	Comments
I. Literature Review	Online databases; final bibliography selected by the Steering Committee		Completed by January 31, 2002 with continuous updating	
II. Three Surveys	<u>Student Survey</u> (demographics and needs assessment) to be mailed <u>Faculty Survey</u> (Faculty, Instructors, Coordinators of distance/ continuing ed) <u>Library Survey</u> (participating Novanet libraries - existing and planned services and policies) by interview using survey previously mailed		March 2002	surveys distributed but returns still coming in throughout February data entry more time - consuming than expected
III. Develop a tentative Service Model in the form of a Discussion Paper	based on responses to the surveys	input from the DE Working Group and DE Liaisons at libraries at 8 universities and the community college	April-May 2002	data entry for library survey continues. Discussion paper to integrate findings of all three surveys (5 surveys if you count the comments as separate)
IV. Stake Holders Forum	by invitation small conference / workshop format	representatives of DE students, DE faculty / instructors / coordinators of programs and library staff	May 2002	more realistic for careful planning for 50 participants
V. Business Plan for Pilot Project	based on outcomes of the forum.	Recruit student and faculty representatives for the Steering Committee (DE Working Group)	June-July 2002	prepare proceedings or summary document; consultations in development of the business plan; it is required before (Aug.5, 2002)
VI. Select suite of innovative information and learning technologies for testing	Committee to attend one technology conference; update literature review	Steering Committee	June-July 2002	must research specs and possibly prepare tender documents or RFPs for a number of products

VII. Recruit: Assistant Project Manager and library staff	<p>Identify skills needed - benefits to be derived - publicity on project goals, objectives</p> <p>examples of complementary skills: teaching, reference, distance ed., info. technology, communications, Web Page design, educ.program design, etc.</p> <p>examine governance issues</p>	<p>contact all library staff of Novanet institutions</p> <p>Steering Committee</p> <p>contact Dalhousie School of Library and Information Management and professional contacts.</p>	June-July 2002	<p>will need lead time to prepare recruitment papers for proper personnel management</p> <p>lobbying and publicity for the project among library staff</p>
VIII. Lease equipment & set up office and meeting space		Steering Committee Subcommittees as needed	August 2002 -	Upgrade environment for Asst Project Manager & test teams (subcommittees)
IX. Test and implement selected information technologies	Web site development and technologies related to communication of digital information	Steering Committee Pilot Project Manager Consultants	Plan implementation Fall 2002 -	pilot starts January 2003
X. Test and implement online reference support services, and begin developing user profiles	One working group or team toll free phone line interactive reference chat service database development security issues	Pilot Project Manager Consultants Participating library staff DE students and faculty	Plan implementation Fall 2002 -	pilot starts January 2003
XI. Test and implement information literacy program	One working group or team		Plan implementation Fall 2002 -	pilot starts January 2003
XII. Run the Pilot Project for one year	Three working groups		January - December 2003	pilot starts January 2003
XIII. Evaluation of Project	Methodologies established the first year Statistics Journal Keeping by participants		January 2004	pilot starts January 2003

1.2 Budget

a) Forecast quarterly expenditures:

Direct salaries and benefits:	\$ 1,560
Consultants fees:	\$
Direct materials & supplies:	\$
Printing & dissemination:	\$
Evaluation:	\$
Other: digital collection	\$ 17,500

b) Actual quarterly expenditures:*

Direct salaries and benefits	\$ 915.66
Consultants fees:	\$
Direct materials & supplies	\$ 74.26
Printing & dissemination	\$ 166.44
Evaluation:	\$
Other:	\$

c) Variations in expenditures:

Direct salaries and benefits	\$ 644.33
Consultants fees:	\$
Direct materials & supplies	\$ 74.26
Printing & dissemination	\$ 166.44
Evaluation:	\$
Other: digital collection	\$ 17,500

* March salary figures not available until April. Digital collection will not be purchased until July after discussions at the Stakeholders Forum (May 27-28, 2002) are summarized and evaluated (June). Other items relate to misc. office supplies and survey expenses in January.

d) Budgetary concerns: None

e) Next quarter's forecast expenditures:

Direct salaries and benefits:	\$ 1,560
Consultants fees:	\$ 5,000 [stakeholders forum]
Direct materials & supplies:	\$
Printing & dissemination:	\$ 500 [discussion paper]
Evaluation:	\$
Other: Digital Collection	\$

1.01 OVERVIEW

1.1 Changes Affecting the Project: None that I am aware of. The labour dispute and strike at Dalhousie University is a slight temporary inconvenience as we are missing a valued steering committee member.

1.2 Dissemination and Promotion Plan:

The Project Manager was invited to plan a session, including the presentation of a paper reporting on the results of the needs assessments for the Novanet project, at the Canadian Library Association Annual Conference in Halifax on Friday, June 21st. Of ten proposals submitted, only two from Atlantic Canada were accepted, of which ours was one.

The Library Survey Summary and Analysis will be submitted to the Canadian Association of College and University Libraries as an addendum to the Occasional Paper No. 14 - *Third Off Campus Library Services Survey - 1999*. The Occasional Papers are published in print and also in pdf format on the Canadian Library Association web site.

Discussion paper and Stakeholders Forum Proceedings will be published, with copies distributed to Stakeholders and deposited in the Nova Scotia Legislative Library and the National Library of Canada. Two copies will be catalogued for the Novanet online library catalogue, which is accessible by anyone with access to the Internet and the World Wide Web.

3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION [unchanged]

This project will develop a new service model in the context of the most recent and innovative developments in information technology, with participation of students, faculty, and those library staff who work with a distance/ continuing education clientele. This model will be such that individual differences (skill level, disability, stage of life, experience, work scheduling), geographic location, and level of access to technology are evaluated and accommodated in a customized support program, by library specialists dispersed throughout the consortium, working as a team.

This project will develop and support library specializations in a collaborative program among member libraries of the Novanet consortium. The team will be instrumental in developing an online information literacy program and maintaining a distance education Web gateway for Novanet. It will provide employment opportunities through an internship program. The model will be implemented as a pilot project over a two year period and its effectiveness assessed by the client group (adult learners and faculty) and by librarians.

This project will identify and assess new information and learning technologies, testing their suitability and effectiveness for the library setting in the provision of online reference, user instruction and other information support services.

4.0 AUTHOR

Bonnie R. Waddell
Project Manager
Tel: (902) 893-6670
E-mail: bwaddell@nsac.ns.ca
Fax: (902) 895-0934