

**Utah State University Libraries**  
**Services for Regional Campuses & Distance Education**  
**Annual Report**  
**2010-2011**

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**Summary**

Initiatives within Regional Campuses and Distance Education library services over the 2010-2011 academic year revolved around the areas of library instruction, access to library resources, and outreach to students and faculty. Library instruction focused on the core English composition courses, ENGL 1010 and 2010, along with a selection of subject-specific courses. Regarding library resources, in addition to adding several major electronic collections, the library continued to streamline off-campus access to e-resources as well as access to print materials in the Merrill-Cazier library. During the upcoming academic year, several assessment efforts will be undertaken to further augment the library's understanding of the needs of regional campus and distance education students and faculty.

**Library Instruction**

One of the major projects for Regional Campus and Distance Education library services this year has been working with individual regional campus and distance education classes, either by creating course-specific online research guides, holding discussions in Blackboard, or by a librarian meeting with the class via interactive broadcast. The focus of the Merrill-Cazier Library's instruction program is helping students develop skills in information literacy, which involves the critical thinking skills of recognizing when information is needed and the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information<sup>1</sup>. A recent national study showed that many students find research challenging in the current electronic environment due to the sheer volume of information and the difficulty of identifying the most useful or relevant information.<sup>2</sup> A companion study also found that many students develop a research strategy reliant on a small collection of information sources which they turn to regardless of their information need.<sup>3</sup> For all students, whether on the Logan campus or studying via distance education or at regional campuses, access to resources is only one piece of the research puzzle; effectively finding and using information is another challenge.

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<sup>1</sup> American Library Association. (1989). Presidential Committee on Information Literacy. Final Report. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/publications/whitepapers/presidential.cfm>.

<sup>2</sup> Head, A and Eisenberg, M. (2009, February). Finding Context: What Today's College Students Say about Conducting Research in the Digital Age. Retrieved from [http://projectinfolit.org/pdfs/PIL\\_ProgressReport\\_2\\_2009.pdf](http://projectinfolit.org/pdfs/PIL_ProgressReport_2_2009.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Head, A and Eisenberg, M. (2009, December). How College Students Seek Information in the Digital Age. Retrieved from [http://projectinfolit.org/pdfs/PIL\\_Fall2009\\_finalv\\_YR1\\_12\\_2009v2.pdf](http://projectinfolit.org/pdfs/PIL_Fall2009_finalv_YR1_12_2009v2.pdf)

Instruction efforts over the past years have been focused on the ENGL 1010 and 2010 courses. This mirrors the instruction efforts on the Logan campus, where library research sessions are closely integrated into the ENGL 1010 curriculum and librarians typically hold multiple instruction sessions with their assigned ENGL 2010 classes. For the regional campus and distance education classes, library involvement typically takes one of several forms: a specialized research guide geared toward the class research project, a research guide accompanied by an instruction session over IVC, librarians posting to discussion boards or lectures within Blackboard, or a librarian responding individually to each student’s research proposal or research questions, suggesting ways to focus the topic, find background information or find relevant sources. Kim Davis in RCDE has been instrumental in scheduling broadcast rooms for the IVC sessions. During the past fiscal year, librarians worked with the following RCDE English composition classes:

	Fall 2010 Classes	Spring 2011 Classes
ENGL 2010	9	6
ENGL 1010	4	6

*LibGuides*

Librarians also created specialized library research guides, called LibGuides, for multiple RCDE classes and programs. These are created at the faculty member or instructor’s request, and include resources specific to an assignment or course of study, and often include research tips and strategies plus information about accessing library resources and services for distance education students. In addition to ENGL 1010 and 2010, the library currently has active guides for Regional Campus and Distance Education classes in the following programs:

Undergraduate:

- Business
- Education
- Environment and Society
- Family, Consumer, and Human Development
- Psychology
- Wildlife Sciences

Graduate:

- Agricultural Systems Technology Education
- Education
- Instructional Technology and Learning Science
- Master of Dietetics Administration
- Professional and Technical Communication Program
- Social Work

I attempt to meet with each new RCDE faculty member, introduce them to the resources and services available through the library, and put them in contact with their subject librarian. The faculty member can work with their subject librarian to develop library research guides, create a

program of library instruction for their courses if relevant, request library materials such as videos, e-journal subscriptions, and books, and make recommendations for new databases.

In addition to the English composition courses, subject librarians are also continuing to work with the regional campus or distance education classes in their academic departments. Throughout fall 2010 and spring 2011, librarians met with classes via IVC or face to face during a Logan campus session for the following departments:

Department	Number	Level
Education	6	Graduate
Agricultural Systems Technology Education	1	Graduate
Engineering	1	Undergraduate
Anthropology	1	Graduate
Special Education	1	Graduate
Masters of Science in Human Resources	1	Graduate

#### *Assessment*

Anecdotal evidence from students and instructors showed that the broadcast sessions and the individual responses to students' research proposals are particularly effective. Responding individually to each student's research topic, which involves giving each student specific recommendations for their research topic and providing suggestions for searching, is very time-intensive. I hope to produce more task-focused help guides and videos that can be included with suggestions for specific databases in order to reduce the time involved with providing explanations to each student.

Students have reported that meeting with their assigned librarian over interactive broadcast alleviates their anxiety about conducting academic research. One ENGL 2010 student whose class met with a reference librarian over IVC reported: "I am so stoked to find out I have a librarian! All of a sudden my fear of the "big campus"- library has switched to excitement." To augment this anecdotal information, we will be including a link to an online library evaluation form for each English 1010 and 2010 course that a librarian works with, which will help us gather more data specific to RCDE students.

The library is currently undertaking an assessment project based on the Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) project, using an information literacy rubric developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities. The rubric addresses issues such as whether students are defining the scope of the research question or thesis, communicating information from sources effectively and synthesizing and integrating information, identifying relevant contexts when presenting a position, and accessing and using information ethically and legally, such as correctly citing all sources. Librarians will be including papers from spring ENGL 2010 regional campus and distance education classes in this assessment, which will analyze whether students in English 2010 classes are meeting milestone criteria described in the rubric. Data should be available in Fall 2011.

## **Online Tutorials and Research Help**

In addition to direct library instruction, a major initiative of the past year has been to expand the collection of online research guides and library help guides available from the library. The goal is to provide distance education students with help guides available at their point of need for conducting secondary research using library resources (<http://libguides.usu.edu>, see “Research Tips” category). These help guides typically include a short video demonstration followed by step-by-step or additional instructions. Many of the current help guides focus on discrete tasks, such as finding the full text of an article, identifying a databases in which to search for scholarly articles, or determining whether the library subscribes to a particular e-journals. Students can also find several database search guides, such Academic Search Premier and Web of Science. The library Reference department is also working on more process-oriented tutorials, such as Getting Started with a Research Project, and Developing Research Questions. These will be of particular help to online students who do not participate in any synchronous library instruction. A selection of these tutorials will be included within Canvas and integrated into other courses.

## **Consultations**

While the contact information for the RCDE librarian is listed on all the library materials related to regional campuses and distance education, the librarians at the reference desk field many questions from RCDE students as well. In our tracking program, LibStats, a total of 67 questions were identified from RCDE during the past fiscal year:

- 5 faculty
- 8 graduate
- 54 undergraduate

It is likely that many more questions came from RCDE but students did not identify themselves as such. These questions came via phone, email, text and instant message/live chat. We will continue to advertise these contact methods to regional campus and distance education students, to ensure they have ready access to a librarian in a similar manner as students on the Logan campus.

One offering that appears to be particularly useful to distance education and regional campus students is the library instant message option, which enables patrons to have a synchronous chat conversation with the librarian at the reference desk. This chat box has been located within most LibGuides, and the library Systems department and the Electronic Resources Librarian recently added the online chat box to the library home page and on the search pages of the popular EbscoHost databases. This has increased the traffic via chat, and while we cannot determine if the patron using the chat option is located in Logan or taking courses via RCDE outside of Cache Valley, this could be a useful and easily accessible point of contact for RCDE students and faculty.

## **Library Collections**

The library continues to increase its electronic holdings, providing additional resources for students and faculty working at a distance from the physical library. Currently, approximately 70% of the library’s collections budget is devoted to electronic materials. Major recent additions to the library e-resources or new memberships to digital initiatives include:

- Membership in the Hathi Trust: The Hathi Trust is a collaborative initiative headquartered at the University of Michigan to preserve the collections of research

libraries in digital form. With access to 1.6 million electronic items, students and faculty at USU can both view and print all or a portion of each available resource.

- Academic Complete Collection, from ebrary: Includes more than 52,000 e-books from over 200 publishers. All academic subject areas are included.
- Membership in the Center for Research Libraries: Membership provides access to approximately five million print publications, archives and collections and one million digital resources.

Additional resources added to the electronic collections over the past year:

- Acta Sanctorum: The principal source for research into the lives of the saints and the societies and cultures from the beginning of the Christian era to the end of the 16th century.
- American Periodical Series: Includes the digitized images from over 1,100 American magazines and journals published between 1741 and 1940.
- British State Papers Online, Part Two
- Ethnographic Videos: Includes more than 750 hours and 1,000 streaming documentary films for the global study of human culture and behavior.
- IBISWorld : a comprehensive collection of high-quality industry/market research reports.
- Journal Backfile Collections:
  - Elsevier Environmental Science Collection (92 titles)
  - Elsevier Psychology Collection (71 titles)
  - Wiley Microbiology Collection (7 titles)
  - Wiley Earth and the Environment Collection (69 titles)
  - American Society of Agronomy Collection (7 titles)
  - American Speech-Language-Hearing Collection (4 titles)
- Slavery Anti-Slavery Digital Collection: Part one of a transnational archive including books, pamphlets, court records, and manuscript materials.
- Web of Science Backfile Collection to 1975

The library's Systems department, the Electronic Resources Librarian, the Cataloging department and others in the library continue to work on streamlining the process by which students, staff and faculty access electronic resources off-campus. Currently, students must authenticate using their A number and banner password in order to use library databases and e-journals. This authentication is required once per browser session and is made possible through the EZ proxy, run by the library Systems department and maintained by the Electronic Resources librarian. Through the fall, the library will be discontinuing use of the University VPN for off-campus access to library resources in favor of the EZ proxy system.

The library has also changed the borrowing policies for the print reference materials so that these reference materials now circulate both to patrons in Logan as well as throughout the regional campuses and distance education. While most of the current funds for the reference collection are dedicated to online materials such as electronic encyclopedias, the library holds many useful print specialized encyclopedias, and some of these valuable reference materials are not currently available electronically. These materials now typically circulate for two weeks to distance education students.

We are also continuing the Purchase On Demand/Interlibrary Loan program for RCDE graduate students and faculty. Through this program, when the library receives a request for a print item that we do not own, we will attempt to purchase the item via Amazon.com's expedited service, rush the cataloging and send the item to the patron within eight business days. The graduate student or faculty member can then keep the item for the USU borrowing period of 16 weeks. If we are not able to purchase the item, we will attempt to borrow it from another institution through traditional Interlibrary Loan. This service is in addition to document delivery, whereby print books in Merrill-Cazier library are mailed free of charge to distance education students, staff, and faculty and print journal articles in the library are scanned upon request. The requests for print books and electronic journal articles from RCDE students, faculty and staff are listed below:

	2010-2011
Requests Rec'd	
Books	260
Articles	203
Total Requests	463

Regarding access to print materials, the Coordinator of Interlibrary Loan and the Systems department successfully modified the Interlibrary Services (ILS) software, enabling all RCDE requests to be made through ILS. This means that RCDE students and faculty have one system through which to request all materials not available electronically, whether they need a print article to be scanned from the Merrill-Cazier Library, an electronic article obtained via Interlibrary Loan, or a print book from the Merrill-Cazier Library or Interlibrary Loan/Purchase on Demand. Distance students and faculty also no longer need to re-enter their shipping information each time they place a request, since this information is recorded when they initially create their ILS account.

Finally, members of the USU Copyright Committee are developing a policy for access to streaming video. The library has purchased several collections of streaming videos, in addition to working with College Media at UEN to license additional videos for use by RCDE faculty. The goal is to streamline the process for faculty and instructors to find useful streaming media, and for the library and Faculty Assistance Center for Teaching to more quickly determine streaming rights and funding sources for streaming videos.

### **Outreach**

Communicating with RCDE students about library resources and services is an ongoing challenge. Students in online and regional campus classes report that they are not aware of the library services available or the options for getting research assistance. Including librarians in individual classes is one method for introducing students to the library resources. I also plan to work with Christopher Dayley to provide information about library resources and services within the RCDE orientation materials. Other outreach efforts that I undertook over the past year and plan to continue, with help from RCDE administrators, are:

- Periodic spotlight about library services on the RCDE website
- Attend new student orientation sessions

- Distribute print materials at the regional campuses, advertising library resources and services
- Meet with writing center tutors and advisors at the regional campuses and centers, who are in direct contact with students working on research projects.

Since faculty are often the first place that students turn with questions about conducting course-related research, it is vital that RCDE faculty be aware of the resources available to their students and know where to direct the students for help with library research. I plan to continue offering interactive broadcast sessions and attend regional campus faculty meetings, when available, to advocate for library services among teaching faculty and instructors. Meetings with faculty members also provides an opportunity for faculty to learn about the resources available from the library to assist them with their own research, and just as importantly, to communicate their research needs to the library and inform us of any gaps in our materials or services.

The interactive broadcast sessions offered to faculty and instructors over the past year were:

- Integrating Library Resources in Blackboard
- Dealing with Copyright Issues in Distance Education
- Organizing Your Citations: EndNote and Zotero

### **Regional Campus/Center Visits**

Throughout the past academic year, I continued to travel to the regional campuses and centers to meet with faculty and students. I have also been working with the library staff and with faculty at the USU-Eastern Blanding campus. Most recently, in April I met with eight faculty members in Blanding to discuss the new library resources they and their students have access to and talk about ways the librarians at the Merrill-Cazier library can help their students with research projects.

### **Academic Year 2011-2012**

Moving into the next academic year, the library will be conducting an environmental scan of the technology use and research practices of regional campus and distance education students. We will assess what technology distance education/regional campus students use and for what purposes as well as how they currently conduct research and what library resources they use or do not use. This process will begin with a survey sent to all students taking classes at regional campuses, via IVC, or online. The survey will be followed up with focus group and potentially individual interviews at the regional campuses or via Wimba. Our objective is to learn about the specific needs and habits of the RCDE student population and use this information to develop web services, instructional systems, and purchase library resources to support RCDE students.

A second initiative involves integrating library materials into the Canvas course management system. While this will benefit all students, it will be of particular use to students away from the Logan campus who might not have as much experience with the library's resources. Currently, everyone logged into Canvas has a link on the main menu bar titled Research Help. This link provides a drop-down menu of five general library help guides, such as Finding Scholarly Articles and Getting Started with Research. Over the upcoming year, we will be creating additional tutorials within Canvas which can be imported into a specific course. All library research guides can also be linked within a course to build a toolbox of specialized research guides relevant to a particular research project.

In addition, the library will be initiating a major re-design of the library website with the arrival of the new Digital Services Librarian at the end of the summer. Access to library resources, tutorials and help guides for regional campus and distance education faculty, students and staff will be a key factor guiding the re-design of the website and initiatives for new methods of access into the future.