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E-Sources: Challenges for Librarians, Students, and Teachers

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Presentation at USU Instructional Technology,
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Purpose

- Identify the challenges librarians face in the e-sources world
- Promote and facilitate a discussion about potential solutions that are based in the IT world

Points Addressed

- Where we were and where we are
- Challenges facing the Library
- Challenges facing the Library End-user
- Conclusions, questions & answers

The background is a dark blue gradient. It features several overlapping, concentric circles of varying sizes, some solid and some dashed. A large, thin-lined rectangle is centered on the page, partially overlapping the circles. The text is centered within this rectangle.

**E-Sources:
Where Are We Today?**

E-journals at USU

- **Spring, 1997**
 - USU starts linking to e-journals
- **December, 1997**
 - Project MUSE with 40+ e-journals
 - 48 e-journals, free with a paid print subscription
- **April, 2002**
 - Library introduces E-journals Database
 - 15,000+ e-journal records
 - E-journals via paid subscription
 - E-journals free with a paid print subscription
 - Free e-journals
 - E-journals via aggregators, i.e., EBSCOHost

Journal Indexes

- 95% of USU journal indexes now online
 - Print indexes:
 - Article citations
 - Citations and abstracts
 - Physically located in library
 - Online Indexes:
 - Combination of citations, abstracts, and full-text
 - Links to full-text journal articles
 - Links to freely accessible Web Sites/Pages

E-books

- **USU Subscriptions:**
 - *NetLibrary*
 - Over 2,500 titles available via a UALC
 - *Early English Books Online*
 - 125,000 titles covering everything published in English from 1475 to 1700
- **Free on the Internet:**
 - *National Academic Press*
 - *National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, Institute of Medicine, and the National Research Council*
 - *Project Gutenberg*
 - Books published pre-1923

Fiscal Challenges

- **New Subscription Model:**
 - American Geophysical Union
 - E-journal is the version of record
 - Print is by-product and lags in production
 - AGU uses Digital Object Identifier (DOI)
 - New Pricing Model
 - Academic subscription based on top diploma issued
 - USU subscription goes from \$6,400 to \$13,444
 - Increased production costs associated with e-journal
 - Decrease in number of personal subscriptions
 - Decrease in number of institutional subscriptions

Fiscal Challenges

- **New Subscription Model:**
 - *Journal of Biological Chemistry*
 - Print subscription = \$1,900/yr.
 - Online subscription = \$1,500/yr.
 - Print and online = \$3,400
 - *Wiley Publishing*
 - Print or online cost the same
 - Print and online cost extra

Design Challenges

- **Journal Indexes:**
 - Providers develop own search interface
 - SilverPlatter, Ovid, Cambridge Scientific Abstracts
 - Arcane names for indexes
 - Current Contents, ERIC, Professional Development Collection, PsycINFO, Web of Science
 - Library Home Page is usurping librarian's role in assisting users to locate *best* resources

Navigational Challenges

- **Quality Control**
 - Library subscriptions
 - Access by USU IP range
 - Appears to be “free on the Internet”
 - JSTOR
 - Full-text linking
- **Branding**
 - Database providers begin using subscriber logos, name, or acknowledgement on resource
 - “Your access to JSTOR is provided by Utah State University Libraries”
 - UTAH STATE UNIV

Library Portal

- Multiplicity of information resources presents organizational challenges
- Confounding navigation with seemingly seamless avenue of access
- Confusing jargon complicates choices
- End-user evaluation is a necessity as Internet resources continue to proliferate

Conclusion

- Increased expectation for online resources
- Increased costs resulting in fewer resources
- Jargon makes identifying *best* resource difficult
- Confusing array of access points for online resources
- Not clear which online resource is most appropriate and when
 - Online Catalog
 - Journal Index
 - E-journal
 - E-book
 - Free on the Internet

The background is a dark blue gradient with a complex geometric pattern. It features several overlapping circles of varying sizes and a large, thin-lined rectangle that frames the central text. The circles are drawn with thin, light blue lines, and some have dashed lines extending from their centers. The overall effect is a technical or architectural aesthetic.

E-Sources: Challenges for the Library End-user

Librarians' Observations

- Complexity of information sources
- Current students are familiar with the 'Net, adept with search engines (Google, Yahoo) and e-mail
- Less familiar with libraries' terminology, organization, resources
- Student self-assessment of ability to locate and access quality e-sources may be unrealistic

Librarians' Observations

- Students may assume that their Web search skills apply automatically to library databases
- They can get frustrated, may think that the library does not have sufficient, quality resources
- Librarians must do a better job teaching students to recognize differences among information sources

Librarians' Role Today

- Explain the nature of information
- Foster sophisticated search skills
 - value of creating a search strategy
 - carefully considering which type of database to choose based on info need

Sophisticated Search Skills

- Interpreting search results
- Employing creative approaches to refining search statements
- Critically evaluating sources
 - Which search results to choose?
 - Define need and desired qualities
 - How to detect and assess authority, accuracy?

Librarians' New Role

- Most e-sources lack effective ways for students to get immediate, efficient assistance
- Need ways to “push” information to users to help with failed searches
- Aim to offer help at point of need....
Libraries are beginning to offer 24/7, chat communication for reference service

Librarians' New Role

- OCLC study indicates that most students prefer to ask for help from a live person at their side
- Impossible to be by every users' side, so we need effective online education tools

Librarians' New Role

- Acknowledge that we miss opportunities to teach at the point of library users' need – both local and distant library users
- Must also evaluate effectiveness of any mechanisms we develop to provide help

Librarian / IT Partnership

- Librarians need to make e-sources & databases more like Google, Amazon.com to meet “market” expectations
- Problems...
 - Few librarians have developed skills to create such tools
 - Ineffective communication with vendors who create products libraries buy

Librarian/IT Partnership...

- Strengthen ties between library resources and course management software (CMS) systems
- Librarians should participate in their institutional CMS and portal software purchase decisions (or development)
- Librarians and instructors should collaborate to feature library's collections of databases and web sites

Librarian/IT Partnership

- “Do Course Management Systems and library digital collections contribute substantially to improvement of education and efficiency of course administration?”
 - David Cohen, Chair, Academic Library Advisory Committee of Council on Library and Information Resources, EduCause review, May/June 2002, p. 13

Conclusion

- Not unique challenges
- Technology changes not only the way we produce, store and access information, but also . . .
- . . . the role of the library professional

Role of Librarian

- Intermediary vs. gatekeeper
- Intermediary role more prominent, if not urgent
 - To keep us from drowning in information
 - To help us navigate uncharted waters
 - To help us read the river
 - To chart the waters
 - To help us choose the appropriate course



Where is the intersection between library
and information science and
instructional technology?