

Text Answers Submitted

ACRL Distance Learning Section

Membership Survey, 2005

5. What are the major challenges you face in your job?

All answers were manually typed as text by the respondents. The following chart is a summary of those responses, grouped into categories.

Response Category	Number responding	% of respondents
Outreach/Marketing to Students	54	23%
Time & Time Management	44	19%
Budget/Funding	42	18%
Outreach/Marketing to Faculty	40	17%
Instruction and Information Literacy	32	14%
Cooperation with Non-Library Offices (IT, Distance Learning, Administration)	27	11%
Staffing	24	10%
Information Technology Support (including authentication issues, database problems)	23	10%
Managing Technological Change (keeping up with new products, maintaining sites)	21	9%
Lack of Recognition and Support for Distance Learning	18	8%
Other	99	42%
<i>Total # responding to this question</i>	<i>237</i>	

Answers submitted for Question 5

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordinating with the registrar's office and IT department so that students can have proper identification & account information to access our services 2. Copyright!!!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keeping up with database infrastructure changes; 2. Time management- working with students on their time and dealing with Librarian/management issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. not enough staff 2. institutional admin that characterizes the library as 'anachronistic' 3. not enough staff 4. lack of information literacy standards 5. not enough staff

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding what library services make a difference for distance learners. 2. Wondering how best to reach distance learners to inform them about services. 3. Wondering how the library can receive 'credit' for its contribution to the university's distance education program. 4. Finding effective ways to work with faculty who are instructing in distance education programs. 5. Capturing the imagination of librarians to be innovative and creative in developing a distance education program. 6. Developing approaches and delivering actual services when mostly people want to talk about budget and how many librarians are working in distance education librarianship -- delivering library education is not the key service the distance learner wants.
<p>A chancellor who says he is a futurist and had told my immediate superior that libraries are a thing of the past and concomitant budget cuts. A first generation college student body, many of whom do not have computers-- increased need for hands-on help and coaching being done by the library staff. Need for more staff as a result.</p>
<p>Adequate support for technology</p>
<p>An administration that is more concerned about the bottom line than about students' needs and sees nothing wrong with sending them off to other libraries.</p>
<p>An ever increasing off campus program and the financial resources are not there to provide all of the materials we need.</p>
<p>Assessing needs and service gaps. Communicating effectively with students and faculty</p>
<p>Assessing needs of students and faculty, marketing library services to former, providing instruction and networking with distance education students and faculty while dealing with diverse schedules and distance.</p>
<p>At my 'campus center', I serve students from four different universities within the university 'system'. Because the university libraries do not purchase electronic resources together, I deal with four different sets of electronic resources. Almost everything I do for or with students depends on their 'home institution' -- and they all do EVERYTHING differently.</p>
<p>Balancing a mix of responsibilities</p>
<p>Balancing the demands of different 'hats' - Web design, reference/instruction on Main Campus, and service to Distance students.</p>
<p>Balancing the needs and sometimes divergent philosophies of two library services serving on-campus and off-campus within the same institution.</p>
<p>Balancing the needs of 4 extended sites with the needs of Internet students.</p>
<p>Being everywhere needed.</p>
<p>Being informed of the new programs that are begun within campus academic units; Deans tend to forget that the Library needs to be involved or has a role in supporting distance learners</p>
<p>Being the only professional librarian employed by the college.</p>
<p>Being visible to distant students and faculty</p>
<p>Bibliographic Instruction for those distance students.</p>
<p>Boredom</p>
<p>Budget concerns- our university treats distance students as a free income and doesn't see a need to increase the library funds accordingly to supply resources/staff.</p>
<p>Budget cuts. Communicating library services to distant students and faculty</p>
<p>Budget cuts. Communicating our library services to faculty, staff and students. Delivering materials on time to our students</p>

Challenges related to distance education? Funding occurs on an ad hoc (or as available) basis rather than systematically through operations budget.
Communicating effectively with DL students all over the world, some of whom are in war zones.
Communicating with part-time faculty; lack of computer facilities off campus; technical problems with library-licensed databases
Communication with adjunct professors; funding
Communication with distance learners; being able to reach them and get them to respond in a timely fashion. Providing access to an adequate book resources. We are trying to increase the amount of e-books. Providing articles and dealing with copyright clearance to distribute an article to 100+ distance ed students.
communication with distance program administrator.
Communication with students and faculty.
Communication with students. Getting materials to them. Orientations.
Communications. Delivery of materials.
Competition / non-cooperation from IT department. Unrealistic expectations from end-users. Vendors who do not support their products appropriately.
connecting with faculty that change each semester, making sure they know library services & instruction are available at the off-campus sites
Connecting.
Constrained resources - financial, staff
Continuous updating of resources. Maintaining all web postings. Being the sole librarian at a distance ed only institution.
Convincing administration that service to distance students should be a priority.
Convincing administrators of the value of face-to-face instruction
Cooperation of distance learning units outside the library
Coordinating the need for the resources with the supply, and authenticating distance students
Dealing with copyright issues, especially for electronic reserve marketing library resources and services (especially instruction)
Dealing with decreasing funding and staffing for reference services.
declining budgets;
Delivering library instruction and information literacy instruction for distance students.
designing an information literacy course for distance learners. Fall 05 will be the first time this is done. We will be offering one class as a learning community with English 1A and another stand-alone IL class.
Designing curricula & assignments that integrate interactions between professor & students (and among students) but also allow students to work at own pace/style.
Developing consortia-based services for distance ed. (Live Help reference, e-collections, e-reserves, o-tutorials)
Distance has many meanings (remote access from dorms to students in other countries). It is difficult to determine how to parse these populations in terms of the services needed and the delivery options.
Educating administration about an academic library in the 21st century. And funding.
Educating distance learning students about library services.
Educating faculty, staff, students and administrators about the pros and cons of distance learning. Why it is not for everyone.
Educating our students (and faculty) how our online databases differ from Google and encouraging them to use them. Getting the word out to full & part-time

faculty about library resources.
Encouraging students to look beyond the first page of Google for searches
Encouraging the library administration to be proactive in developing library programs
Enhancing outreach librarianship, collections and library services
Enough resources
Enough time to complete activities. Making distance learning faculty aware of library services and that they are available outside of the 4 walls of the library.
Establishing electronic access to resources - making sure things are available for all students. Getting material to students in a timely fashion when it is not available online.
Explaining to students which unit to contact for which services. Rising to the occasion with long staffing hours, workshops, etc. when the distance education students come to campus once a semester, and during the summer 'boot camp' orientation week. Getting librarians in other units to remember the needs of distance ed students and faculty (since distance ed is not very big here).
Faculty who don't feel that library services are necessary in Independent Study courses. Open entry, open exit courses, making instruction and communication difficult.
Finding a convenient way to deliver and to have returned books.
Finding enough time to answer all the incoming requests with the current staffing level
Finding enough time to get everything done, especially research.
Finding resources (i.e. personnel, budget) to support distance learning activities.
Finding the time to get everything done. In the days of doing more with less, we are always asked to do more with no additional staff. The illusion is that with technology, you will have more time for additional projects. The problem is that keeping the technology up and running smoothly does takes time.
Finding time to dedicate to DL job functions, like creating portfolios and planning synchronous online class sessions. I'm looking at Macromedia Breeze, hoping that it can support real-time meetings with use of voice-over IP and video. Don't know if the library will fund it, though. Maybe the larger university technology committee will recommend it for overall DL. I also find it frustrating that DL courses do not seem to be offered from a centralized office. Another challenge ensues when I'm asked to drive to satellite campuses vs. teaching online. It gets a bit confusing, because I'm technically an ed tech librarian, not an outreach librarian. Looking into getting on board with e-portfolios and embedding more library features into online courses, but time is short. Overall, it's enjoyable.
Finding time to devote to distance ed projects. Lack of support from other librarians for new projects.
Finding time to do everything well
Funding
Funding and technology
Funding for resources. Disconnect between library resources and course websites. Librarian not being part of instructional design team for online courses.
Funding for services that I think we need such as virtual reference, or direct to the doorstep delivery of materials for students as disadvantaged by time as by distance. Funding / staff shortfalls also meant that we were slow getting things like authentication in place, but many of the technological fixes either have been implemented or are about to be implemented.
Funding, administrative procedures (outside of the library)
Funding, Determining new and innovative services, Information Literacy, Instruction,

Developing tutorials
Get students signed up through regular campus channels so they can access library services.
Getting accurate timely feedback from distance learners.
Getting all the players to talk to one another. Communications.
Getting cooperation from the academic centers.
Getting distance students to use our resources-- so marketing, teaching, etc. Also, getting buy-in to add library information to DE classes and in WebCT.
Getting everything done and trying to improve services
Getting faculty to use library instruction via distance learning like they do for on-campus courses. Getting librarians to try videoconference library instruction.
Getting faculty, staff, and my fellow administrators to realize that higher education is not the same model it was when they came through and that it will change even more radically in the future
Getting in touch with distance students.
Getting information to students and letting them know we are here
Getting more students to realize that the library can help them with their research
Getting my library to realize we need to publicize our DE services
Getting students to know about our e books and virtual reference.
Getting the best possible data about our DE students.
Getting the separate distance ed faculty to acknowledge that their students need information about the services available to remote students.
Getting the word out to distance learners that they can use our services. Getting the faculty who teach to distance learners to mention the library in class. Getting the public library in other areas to help our distance learners.
Having DL be one of many responsibilities that I have. I don't feel I have enough time to focus on this aspect, also we don't have additional funds to carry out any ideas we do have.
Having several areas that I am 'in charge' of; working in a non-collaborative environment; limited budget; no clerical support staff
Having so many varied duties and not having a focus. I am a reference librarian, an instruction librarian and the distance education liaison.
Having too many passwords for your distance students to use. We need a proxy server.
Helping faculty members understand the value of integrating library resources and services into their instruction.
Helping some library employees to recognize that library services must change as needs and expectations of students, faculty change; anticipating new skills needed by library employees, defining competencies, finding training as appropriate
How best to deliver library instruction to users who may never set foot in our library.
How to integrate electronic resources into the collection without short changing the printed collection.
I have just recently started in this position. I haven't even met the distance librarian yet. However, I will be responsible for ensuring instruction needs are met for the distance learning students (primarily at another site about 30 miles away).
I have to travel to several off-campus sites to deliver bibliographic instructions (BIs), and some of them are hard to find. The Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) School forgets to tell the library or me that a new site opened. Sometimes, I have 2 requests of BIs on the same day and time. Distance students are frustrated that there is no librarian in the site to help them, and the academic

advisors and professors are not able to help them.
I teach online, so it's a challenge to provide an atmosphere of interaction among the members of the class.
I think the biggest challenge is making sure faculty and students know about our services and know what we can do for them. Marketing is part of it but relationship building is, I think, more important.
I think the major one is finding something that works for our students. They don't seem to retain what they learn from asynchronous tutorials so I've been working on online synchronous orientations and workshops, with accompanying assignments called Sources Consulted, but these are very labor intensive. They seem to work much better than tutorials though, although my data is rudimentary. And then there is finding enough time in my day to do everything, the distance learning support is on top of my other duties, and seems to have just happened rather than being planned for.
I think they are organizational. We do not have a distance learning unit. The responsibilities are spread across various administrative units. I think we need at least a Distance Education Committee to deal with this area effectively.
I work with an adult population that is not computer literate.
Identifying DL participates on a very large campus
Identifying patrons who have never been, and will never be, on our campus.
Identifying who my distance learning constituents are is the greatest challenge I face. Distance education students on my campus are not identified by a unique code or indicator in their student records, so we often don't know someone isn't a local patron until we either 1) hear from the patron that they are unable to pick up the document from our library since they live outside of town/county/state or 2) an administrative assistant in the academic department notifies us that some of their students won't be taking classes locally and need distance ed support. Not know who qualifies for distance learning support also makes it difficult to design learning modules, to communicate what services are available to them, and to plan for budget needs to make these services work.
In relation to distance learning, doing an adequate job of communicating how the library should be included in all syllabi and in training for all students. When opportunities follow, organizing the right resources (people, systems) to ensure student learning and support.
In the context of distance learning, helping make sure students and faculty can connect to our resources, making sure they can find what we have, and assuring them that we are available to help at any point.
Increasing complexity of providing resources and services in the face of decreasing budgets.
Increasing materials costs; budgetary pressures on staffing; institution-created conflict between library and instructional technology services.
Increasing the number of options for delivering instruction
Infrastructure problems, face time with distance learners
Insufficient time to do all I would like to do in my job.
Insuring equal service and resources to distance learning students as on campus students
Integrating resource learning/library services into the distance learning curricula.
Integrating technology to users' needs.
Keeping resources working for remote users. IP's etc.
keeping students aware of new resources that are available to them as Distance Education students. Working out technology kinks.

Keeping the attention of DL people
keeping the materials relevant to a diverse audience with different skill levels; engaging attendees in discussions during the web seminars
Keeping up with changes in technology
Keeping up with changes in technology and student information needs
Keeping up with technological changes and having time to implement improvements of services
Keeping up with technology and change. Administering the Voyager on-line catalog. Keeping the Library web page updated. Electronic Resources, including online course reserve.
Keeping up with technology; reading professional literature
Lack of an organized university-wide distance learning program. Not getting paid anywhere near enough. Not enough time, not enough people, too much to do. No time to keep up on professional reading.
Lack of cohesion among distance programs, lack of interest among faculty, lack of basic skills among students.
Lack of direct supervision of satellite library staff. Lack of leadership from Academics. Lack of Administrative insight into support faculty needs for professional development for assessment and online learning
Lack of electronic resources (both already purchased and available at all). Institutional inertia regarding distance education.
Lack of instructional opportunities & contact with the distance students. No method to determine what they need in terms of instruction in the location & use of library resources online.
Lack of recognition and financial support.
Lack of resources/staffing
Learning all online databases and teaching these techniques to the students.
Library does not have control of its own server. Tough to keep up with latest technology.
Library is set up to provide resources to distant learners, but there is not clear integration of library's role in college's general online learning efforts.
Making faculty aware of our resources and services. Teaching faculty to use our resources and services, before they make their student assignments.
Making students and faculty aware of the great online resources available to them through the library.
Making sure that our distance learners are properly identified in our patron database.
Making sure that the services we provide are meeting the actual needs of our users
Managing/leading in times of 'break-neck change; recruitment and retention of librarians; managing partnerships/cooperation; managing/leading four generations
Marketing of services, patron awareness
marketing the library resources to all students and adjunct faculty
Marketing the Library Services to students. Making sure that they are using the Off-Campus Library Service instead of Google or local libraries. Stressing the importance of the Off-Campus Library Service to the new Director of Finance.
Meeting the needs of the web-based students -- coordinating with faculty so the students have knowledge of our services. So, a marketing issue.
Most of the Distance Learners never come to campus, so communicating with them usually involves numerous e-mail messages or phone calls to help them find the materials needed for research.

My biggest challenge related to DL is working with the faculty, and convincing them to incorporate library resources in their courses.
My biggest challenge right now is designing a credit bearing library instruction course with the qualification that I don't ask the students to come into the library!
My job is fabulous. I have a home office . . . and online co-browsing - conference room - a long distance phone. I am included as part of the faculty of the distance unit. I attend every residency where I teach and have appointments. My biggest challenge is boundaries so I am not online all the time . . . although I often have evening and late hour appointments to accommodate all time zones.
My library faculty faces the challenge of trying to cover a growing number of online courses and work collaboratively with the subject faculty to provide information literacy instruction to these students.
My primary challenges are time-related; having several 'hats,' I am often swamped trying to deal with the responsibilities of one or two of my roles, to the detriment of the others.
n/a
network not always stable; don't have an 800 # for students to call; most students don't have DSL/high speed connections, so any library tutorials must be developed accordingly.
No policy by which DLS students can access books and journal articles housed in the library.
No students have requested any items (ILL for articles) or document delivery of articles, or books from our circulating collection since the web pages I created for our Distance learning library services were posted in Fall 2003. It makes me think that there is no need for my position. Very disappointing since all of the hurdles I had to overcome to even make the distance learning website a reality.
No support staff and not enough time to do everything that needs to be done.
None
None
None
None really. I have noticed that even though we pay for shipping (FedEx) for all items we sent and include an envelop for the return of the materials (this is charged to the library account), few students use that service.
Not enough funding.
Not enough funding. Lack of awareness by the teaching faculty members. Lack of respect from the institution as a whole. Misguided impression that the Library is not needed.
Not enough staff or monetary resources.
Not enough staff, not enough money, not enough time to put distance education courses together.
Not enough time to develop and maintain all the resources and services that could benefit our distance learners.
Not enough time, not enough money
Not know whether patrons are seeing resources the same way that I am
Not knowing the population I'm serving. . . what are their real needs? Also, marketing library services to students and faculty.
One librarian for 4,000 students and all their faculty, mostly adjuncts. No centralized means to contact the adjuncts.
Our program is nascent. We have so few distance learners on campus that it is hard

to catch them in our workflow so that adequate services can be provided.
Personnel, Budget issues and reductions, Staffing
print delivery of resources
Promoting library resources and services. Getting to know what resources and services users need.
Promoting service to patrons
Providing equitable access to distance learners who don't use the university email system; providing sufficient training opportunities; marketing our services effectively.
providing initial library instruction to all new distance students, getting faculty buy-in for library services, having enough time to work on online tutorials, etc. due to high reference workload
Providing online library instruction; working with faculty to provide an information literacy component in their online courses
Providing services and resources for a varied clientele (at a public library).
Reaching adjunct faculty.
Recently - a rather large library materials budget reduction
Recruiting students!
related to distance learning? remote access, adequate bibliographic instruction in general?: time management of multiple priorities is sometimes a challenge
reliable access to library services for students - when the Microsoft upgraded the XP operating system, the default settings conflicted with some of our periodical databases. funding - need I say more?
remembering where all the free technical reports and documents are available on the web.
Right now, our distance learning library services for our students are provided by one of our system community college libraries; students can also make use of their home college libraries and their local public library. One problem with this is the inability to provide consistent library resources. The Colorado Community College system is in the process of consolidating all online learning under our umbrella, and it would be very helpful to be able to offer our own library services instead of relying on what students are using now. Funding is a major issue, as is the need for a portal. We are in the process of upgrading to the newer Banner system, so the portal will be there in a year or so, but it doesn't seem that a system wide distance learning library service is something reachable in the near future.
Setting up a one Librarian library within a larger educational system w/o funding for services.
Staffing distance sites, and coordinating four different campus administrations
Staffing, funding
Staying abreast of all the newest technology and information sources available.
Staying current with all the technological changes of our profession.
Students lack of evaluation of sources and resistance to using online databases vs. the Web.
Students thinking they 'know it all' after a paucity of introductory instruction
Teaching students to critically evaluate resources found on the web; teaching faculty to critically evaluate resources found on the web; making the librarians 'real' to students at a distance or working electronically; teaching and assessing skills; helping faculty to teach and assess skills.
Technical assistance, communication with faculty
Technology quirks and varied expertise of distance students.

Technology, scheduling, traveling to the regional centers
The fact that our student population is undereducated, many are ESL and low-income, from a culture that has little tradition of library use.
The main challenge is educating off-campus students and faculty about the services available. Other challenges include coordinating BI, delivering materials, and working with the administration to make sure they understand the importance of providing library services to distance students.
The major challenges in serving distance learners revolve around overcoming a lack of clear communication from various student support services on campus. Students call us with non-library questions.
The time it takes to explain certain procedures or limitations to distance users. At this time we're also understaffed and budget is uncertain (state university) so there's a limit to how much we can offer. Helping distance learners still involves making exceptions, and that affects workflow.
There are connectivity issues with IT Dept. over access to library online databases.
There are no major challenges.
There's not enough time in the day to do all the work. There aren't enough librarians to share the work load.
This subject is relatively a new. Not much discussion has occurred yet. A new library committee was just formed during the spring semester 2005.
Time constraints
Time devoted to discussion boards in multiple online sessions. Coordinating schedules for visiting extension campuses for instruction and service. Limitations in college technology infrastructure (i.e., server problems and multiple user names and passwords for students, library registration that requires student to come to campus)
Time limits.
Time management - so much to do, so little time.
Time to acquire new web design skills and attend conferences for networking with other dl librarians
Time to ensure distance learning gets the attention it needs
Time to get everything done!
Time, funding, resistance to serving distance learners
Too many hats to wear. I have many different roles as a librarian. It is difficult to spend all of your time in one area only.
Too many sites, students and faculty with diverse and difficult needs to fill at a distance, not enough librarians to support a 7-day-a-week service, unwillingness of other librarians on the staff to assist our users in positive and service oriented ways
Too much work and too little staff.
Training and funding
transition from volunteer work to a job as an academic librarian
Trying to ensure equitable access to resources and to information literacy instruction for off-campus students.
Trying to figure out how to incorporate library instruction into DL courses.
Trying to get funding to implement the kind of d. e. library program that I feel the University should have.
Trying to keep abreast of changes at the System level that affect distance learning library services. Many aspects of distance education/learning are in flux here.
Trying to keep up with the changing technologies. Funding.

Trying to stay current with information
Under-staffed, budgeting problems which affect services
Understanding disparate client concerns and translating those into management and planning goals
University does not have definition of distance learner, so have to use my own. Courses (and learners) are becoming more of a grey area. . . i.e. franchised courses, blended learning
We are 100% distance. All communication is at a distance. I have never met a student face-to-face. Information literacy is the biggest challenge. How to incorporate library instruction at a distance and getting buy-in from the faculty.
We are not doing that much. We have been understaffed and a new Assistant Dean for Public Services begins June 20. We plan to address distance education at that time.
We need more online help guides. Every time we get something up, an interface changes and we have to revise. We don't have online reserves.
when I was involved, making sure students had access to materials needed.
When students taking a distance ed. course have difficulty receiving a session of a class, they go directly to our central unit, instead of checking with me on the local end, first.
Who supervises me? Continuing Education pays my salary but the University Librarian wants to supervise me.
With regard to our distance learning program, which is still new and going through growing pains of sort . . . a lot of administrative changes in the program since it began several years ago, I feel I am just now getting heard with regard to library support for the program.
Working with online course faculty to include assignments that require the use of remote access library resources and making sure that faculty and students are aware of and can use remote access resources.
Working with other parts of the University to facilitate services.