

Complementarity in Distributed Learning

The Roles of Cornell Information Technologies and the Cornell University Library

The Provost has charged the Dean for Continuing Education and Summer Sessions and the Vice President for Information Technologies with coordinating non-profit distributed learning at Cornell. One of the partners in implementing distributed learning will be the Cornell University Library (CUL). Polley McClure, Glenn Altschuler, and Sarah Thomas, University Librarian, met on May 1, 2001 to review where Cornell Information Technologies (CIT) and CUL expected to place their efforts and to clarify grey areas where there were potential overlapping interests.

Vice President McClure and Dean Altschuler have developed a proposal for a new program of support for distributed learning. They hope that this program can build on the already existing strengths of CUL, CIT and other providers of teaching and digital support services on campus.

In the area of distributed learning, CIT offers a program of support for instruction that concentrates on support for faculty pedagogy, on-line course development, classroom and communications infrastructure, and overall campus support for technology-based instruction, in addition to direct support for students through computer labs and services.

The Cornell University Library has proposed a quartet of digital initiatives, of which one relates specifically to distributed learning, and the others (scholarly communication, digitization, and extending the capability of the Cornell Institute for Digital Collections) refer to other Library activities not directly linked to distributed learning. These other initiatives are not addressed in this memo. The Cornell University Library's key areas of interest in distributed learning focus on the development of content of enduring value and on the provision of a suite of library services for faculty and students that take advantage of a technology-rich environment.

The above proposals are complementary and present an opportunity for fruitful collaboration in teams comprised of faculty, graduate assistants, technology and instructional design professionals, librarians, and subject and information literacy specialists drawn from the colleges, CIT, other support units on campus, and the Library.

In this context, CIT and CUL each have leadership roles, and these are outlined below. The notion of "leadership role" does not imply exclusive responsibility for or control over an area. Rather, it highlights the fact that each organization has focal points of expertise, while still collaborating with each other, and with additional campus partners, in the achievement of specific goals. In this regard, the last section of the document notes areas in which partnership activities are especially desirable.

May 21, 2001

Overview of Leadership Areas Within the Cornell Distance/Distributed Learning Partnership

The Dean for Continuing Education and Summer Sessions and the Vice President for Information Technologies have leadership responsibility for:

- ✧ Administering programs such as faculty fellowships and student assistantships to advance the adoption of technology based instruction.

Cornell Information Technologies has the leadership responsibility for:

Instructional Design Services

- ✧ CIT is a primary provider of instructional design and the development of technologies relevant to integrating content and producing technology-mediated courses, hybrid courses and on-line courses.
- ✧ Helping faculty to assess the effectiveness of technology-based instruction. CIT will partner with the Library and other campus entities such as the Human Computer Interaction Group and the Center for Learning and Teaching to evaluate current programs and services and to undertake faculty and user needs assessment.
- ✧ Supporting faculty to identify instructional goals, various approaches to distributed learning and applicable technologies for technology-mediated instruction.

Infrastructure

- ✧ Maintaining the Course Management System (CourseInfo) and other systems on which the courses reside.
- ✧ Planning and implementing the technological infrastructure necessary to support distributed learning.
- ✧ Developing common standards and best practices for organizing and managing course objects.
- ✧ Coordinating, operating, and maintaining distance-learning enabled classrooms.
- ✧ Establishing a system of user authentication to ensure controlled access to distributed-learning courses and other resources.
- ✧ Monitoring the market for distributed learning tools and technological developments.

General Support

- ✧ Coordinating course production.
- ✧ Providing necessary support and resources for faculty and students engaged in distributed learning.

- ☞ CIT workshops will demonstrate the relationship of these technologies to instructional goals, educational challenges and learning outcomes. (e.g. strategies for active discussion boards; technologies that promote community building in large classes, etc.)
- ☞ Training student assistants to support faculty.
- ☞ Coordinating Cornell-wide collaboration and communication about capacities and services that support distributed and distance learning. The Academic Technology Center will serve as The University's principal point of contact for information about distributed learning, referring queries, as appropriate, to other campus resources, such as the Library. The ATC will do so with the objective of presenting a seamless and integrated array of services and working closely with other campus units as partners in providing these services.
- ☞ Disseminating information about distributed learning at Cornell and referring queries to appropriate experts.

The Cornell University Library has the lead responsibility for:

Library Resources

- ☞ The Library is a primary provider of content and services that are delivered through the course development resources.
- ☞ Identifying, selecting, acquiring, customizing, and delivering digital and print information sources.
- ☞ Supporting access to materials through electronic reserves.
- ☞ Providing reference and referral services about information resources from various sources (the Library collection, other libraries and institutions, and Web resources) through voice, email, chat services, and other means.
- ☞ Providing instruction in the identification, evaluation, and use of digital and print information sources.

Content Development

- ☞ Developing digital content (collections, materials of research value, etc.) with enduring value.
- ☞ Organizing the library's digital content so that it is readily accessible by a global audience.
- ☞ Providing consultation and training in structuring digital products that faculty and the library will create that will become library resources.
- ☞ Working with faculty in identifying required or supplementary content for students to enrich their e-learning process.

- ☞ Offering interpretation of copyright as it applies to distributed learning, in conjunction with the Office of the General Counsel and the OIT Policy Advisor and other appropriate legal experts.
- ☞ Researching copyright ownership and securing permissions for materials to be incorporated in distributed learning materials.
- ☞ Facilitating the creation of digital collections (image, audio, and video) that the Library will be responsible for maintaining and making accessible over time.
- ☞ Facilitating the development of common metadata definitions and standards for instructional and other digital collections that will be managed by the libraries and other entities within the University .

General Support

- ☞ Identifying new information resources for the enhancement of content that is being transformed into a digital format (e.g., locating articles and other information sources to assist faculty in updating and augmenting his/her lecture notes; verification of various information elements such as statistical data; identification of additional illustrations such as images, tables, graphics).
- ☞ Where appropriate the Library will assist faculty in incorporating information to teach students how to find and evaluate information. The Library will also assist faculty in identifying necessary library resources in support of various assignments and projects including providing e-reserve services.
- ☞ Providing reference services and instruction to support students' research projects and assignments that require the use of information sources.

CIT and CUL—Ongoing and future partnership activities:
--

Course Content

- ☞ Jointly participate in the design of courses including the identification of new resources to enhance and transform course content and the provision of services such as e-reserves.
- ☞ Team with faculty, and student assistants to integrate content into specific courses. Combine expertise for the preservation and management of content and the course management systems.

Training

- ☞ Offer joint workshops to help students and faculty acquire core information technology skills that are necessary for learning and teaching in a technology-mediated instruction environment (e.g., CourseInfo, DreamWeaver, presentation software, HTML, JavaScripts, EndNote to manage bibliographic references, etc.).
- ☞ Work together to develop the information discovery and retrieval proficiency of students who are providing support to faculty members.

- ☞ Offer joint technology literacy workshops (e.g., HTML, JavaScript, etc.) to support students engaged in technology–mediated instruction.

Collections/Storage

- ☞ Work together in the formulation of strategies for digital storage and retrieval of information
- ☞ Collaborate closely to assist faculty in decision–making—to identify whether a collection should be digitized just to support a certain course (targeting the fulfillment of immediate needs), or whether it should be transformed into a digital collection that can be accessed broadly by public and support multiple purposes (reusable). The Library will assume the preservation role for the collections created through the CIT/CUL/faculty partnerships.

Service Integration

- ☞ Collaborate closely in the development of a distributed learning resource center since both organizations have frequent and routine contact with faculty and students in the fulfillment of their mission to serve the teaching and research needs of the University.

Prepared under the direction of:

Sarah E. Thomas
University Librarian

Polley Ann McClure
Vice President, Information Technologies