

The Eighth Off-Campus Library Services Conference

A look at one of the major growth areas in academic libraries

by Cheryl LaGuardia

The Eighth Off-Campus Library Services Conference was held April 22–24, 1998, at the Biltmore Hotel in Providence, Rhode Island. Sponsored by the Central Michigan University (CMU) Libraries and CMU College of Extended Learning, the conference attracted approximately 220 participants from throughout the United States and Canada, as well as South Africa and the United Kingdom. The program addressed a host of issues related to off-campus services, including remote service program planning, partnering with individuals and institutions, copyright and licensing, telelearning, electronic reserves, staffing implications, outcomes assessment, and marketing services.

Featured speakers were Kay J. Kohl, executive director of the University Continuing Education Association and Kurt Slobodzian, university librarian and dean of Instructional Technology at the University of Phoenix. Kohl's talk, "Trends in Continuing Education," examined the changing demographics of higher education, noting that shifts in work and educational patterns and demands among the general population will raise the ages of both new and returning students in academe, and that these shifts will affect the ways in which large segments of the population choose to pursue continuing educational opportunities. Slobodzian's talk, entitled "Libraries at a Distance: Past, Present, and Future," explored library ser-

vices in support of adult education from within a corporate learning environment, noting that the online learning market will grow 900 percent by 2001, and that there is only "1 percent market penetration of adult education."

Off-campus services

A wide range of off-campus services were discussed by library practitioners in the concurrent paper sessions. Topics included course-specific Web pages, Web tutorials and handbooks for research, Picture-Tel-based instruction, partnerships among distantly located libraries to serve remote clientele, collaborations between librarians and classroom faculty for information literacy programs, library instruction courses taught both on-site and via the Web, and off-campus library programs in which librarians do research for "customers" and deliver it directly to them rather than instruct in the ways of research.

As the aforementioned presentations illustrate, conference presentations addressed an interesting combination of educational and economic issues.

In several talks, continuing education markets and marketing strategies were the strongly highlighted themes: the economic possibilities presented by Web-based degree programs offer many colleges and universities

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About the author

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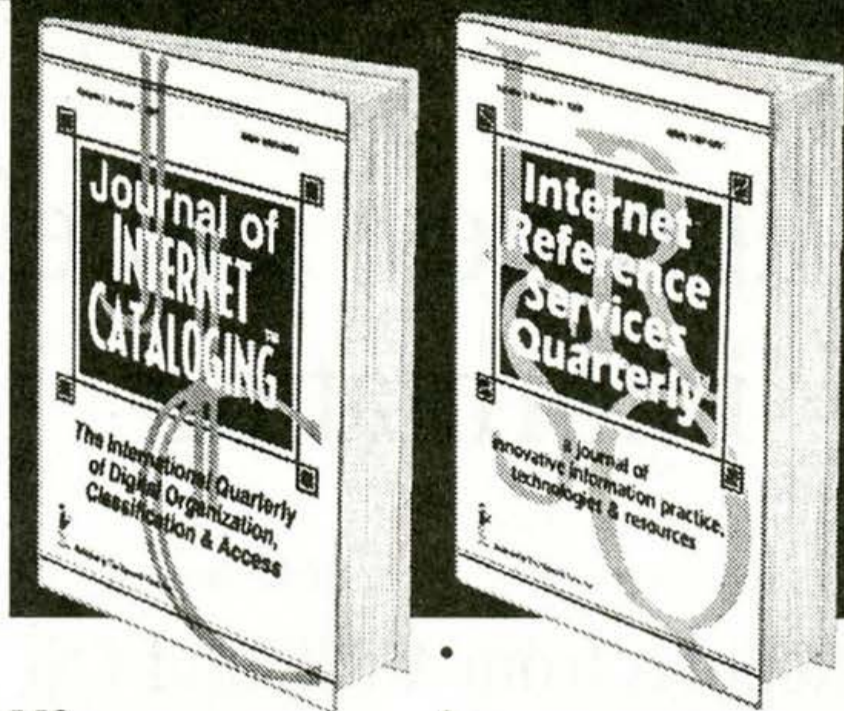
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Notes

1. "Tourism Growth Slows Due to Asian Financial Crisis." WTO News (March–April 1998): 1. *Access:* <http://www.world-tourism.org/newslett/maraapr98/1997RES.htm>. ■

(Eighth Off-Campus . . . cont. from page 418)

access to a new student population that will increase dramatically within the decade. The expectations of these students for online delivery of instruction, information, and service are high, and the off-campus library programs devised in response to these demands are very high tech, built mostly around Web-based systems. Other presentations focused on the challenges remote learning situations present for learning and research.

They accentuated the need for a highly personalized approach to providing off-campus services, using online chat rooms, e-mail, and often telephone consultations in reaching and teaching remote library users.

Off-campus and remote services promise to be major growth areas in the academic library community over the next decade. It will be useful for more academic librarians to become involved in discussions about these library services, given the improvement and expansion of educational technology and its applications for learning.

Note

Proceedings of this and several past Off-Campus Library Services Conferences are available. Contact Central Michigan University Dean of Libraries' Office, Park Library 207, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859, (517) 774-3500 or fax: (517) 774-2179. ■

