The Role of Academic Libraries in Distance Education:
An Annotated Bibliography

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INFO 522: Information Access & Resources
March 16, 2012
Introduction and Scope

The following bibliography compiles recent studies and documented experiences of academic librarians in their mission to provide distance library services equal in accessibility and quality to those offered on-campus. All of these articles explore the library and information needs of distance learners, and several of them review and assess current programs. Considering both the increasing rate at which universities are offering distance courses and at which digital library technology is advancing, only contemporary scholarship on the role of academic libraries in distance education was selected. These articles were all published within the last two years, from 2010 to 2012. In addition, all of them were published in either the U. S. or the U. K. and directly relate to university students in these regions.

Description

Although the popularity of online courses and programs has increased dramatically in the U. S. since the 1990s (Bartnik, 2010, p. 43), the concept of distance education librarianship, or the role of the “embedded” librarian has not yet been clearly defined and has been only recently received scholarly attention. According to Edwards, Kumar, & Ochoa (2010), this term, which has been broadly used “to describe librarians involved with online courses, face-to-face courses, programs, departments, and colleges,” has most likely “been borrowed from the practice of embedding journalists in combat zones during recent military conflicts and refers to complete integration” (p. 273). However, it seems library science scholars cannot agree on any standardized description of distance library services. “Such claims that a particular usage [of the phrase “embedded librarian”] is the most widespread are unsubstantiated and would require a thorough systematic review to support them,” write Edwards et al. (2010), “Barring this type of rigorous examination and quantitative analysis of the literature, it is preferable to avoid concrete claims supporting a particular usage as most common or valid” (p. 273).

Generally, distance education librarianship is described as either “an intense integration of the users’ environment at various levels” or, vaguely, “a type of extreme liaison embedded into colleges or departments” (p. 273). This disagreement reflects that there are just as many kinds of distance library services as there are distance education programs. “Distance education programs have different focuses, mission, and vision,” Brumfield (2010) writes, “There is no ‘one size fits all’ library service for distance learners” (p. 69). It is through the documented research of academic librarians that discussion of their role in distance education is ongoing.
Summary of Findings

Whether as dictated by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) or any individual library administration, there are some prescribed expectations for the role of academic libraries in distance education, and fairness to student patrons is at the top of the list. According to Lockerby & Stillwell (2010), *The Standards for Distance Learning Library Services*, which were set by the ACRL less than four years ago, “are core to the concept that all students are entitled to library services and resources wherever they may be” (p. 780). These standards state that every student in “the distance learning community, including those with disabilities, must be provided effective and appropriate library services and resources, which may differ from, but must be equivalent to those provided for students and faculty in traditional campus settings” (p. 780). As simply put by Cannady (2011) in her published report on Filar-Williams and Steiner’s panel session at the 2011 ACRL conference in Philadelphia, “This standard means librarians must provide equal services for all students” (p. 287). Thankfully, equity, rather than the American political standard of equality and equality alone, in library services to all students seems to be the goal in academic libraries serving distance learners. That being said, once considering all levels of information literacy that may exist in any distance learning community, the expectations of distance academic librarians suddenly become much more complicated.

As strongly insisted by Brumfield (2010), “Libraries hold a place in society as democratic agents for the dissemination of information and education” (p. 64). As ideal as this principle sounds, and as consistent it is with the American Library Association’s core values and ethics for the library profession, it in no way “translate[s] into democratizing of information” (p. 64). “Access entitlement suggests that all students and faculty must have equitable access to library resources,” Brumfield further comments, “however, economically many universities find this requirement challenging” (p. 66). These days, this dilemma is not at all uncommon or extraordinary, but by simply acknowledging it, the academic library community can easily deduct that any sort of standard for distance library services must reflect diversity.

Surely, the first step in equitable library services for all students must be gathering as much information about the distance learning community as ethically possible. It has been suggested that the most important aspect of the academic library’s responsibility to distance education is, perhaps, its consideration of the educational needs of distance learners during “selection, acquisition and adoption of technology” (Brumfield, 2010, p. 65). In short, the only surefire way to discover the library and information needs of distance learners is to ask them.
It is no surprise that what distance learners want sometimes has everything to do with what sort of course they are studying. Through a Web-based survey, Hensley & Miller (2010) discovered which distance library services University of Illinois students typically use and where, during their experience with the library, they saw room for improvement (p. 674). As it turns out, most of the students surveyed are extremely comfortable finding and obtaining electronic articles; however, they were almost completely unaware of or disinterested in “Online workshops” (p. 675). Also, the students surveyed indicated that they would prefer to have more convenient access and better knowledge of the services offered by their library. In other words, better communication is key, and it would appear that online learners would prefer to keep their learning online. Seventy-one percent of those who responded to the survey said they would prefer this information to be sent to them via email, and 59 percent said that they want it clearly displayed for them on the library’s Web site (p. 676). While the disciplines involved in Hensley & Miller’s survey were certainly of a wide variety, it seems that transferring all on-campus, in-person library services to even a comparable off-campus, electronic format may not always work out for all types of distance learners. When Hallyburton & John (2010) surveyed the nursing faculty and staff that participated in the liaison librarian program in place at various satellite campuses of Western Carolina University, they found that, “The addition of a face-to-face component to online library service fits well with the philosophy of most online programs in the school of nursing” (p. 166). “Differing professional practice, expectations, and culture sometimes make nurse educators and librarians feel as though they do not speak the same language,” Hallyburton & John explain in their conclusion, “That chasm expands when educators are no longer physically close to the library building” (p. 167). Meanwhile, Gannon-Leary, Fontainha, & Bent (2011) argue in their discussion of academic library-hosted online research communities, or communities of writers (CoWs), that “the library is cross-disciplinary and has worked successfully in conjunction with other support services such as writing center and IT services” (p. 466). Based on all three of these case studies, it seems the best any distance academic librarian can do is try to understand the needs of each group of students to which he or she is assigned responsibility.

Once the distance learner’s library and information needs are realized and the format in which to best meet them is decided, accessibility is the goal. In their aforementioned panel session at the 2011 ACRL conference, Beth Filar-Williams, Coordinator of Library Service for Distance & Online Learning (University of North Carolina-Greensboro) and Heidi Steiner,
Distance Learning Librarian (Norwich University) offered both “practical and technical solutions” to the common problems involved in meeting the needs of distance learners (Cannady, 2011, p. 287). According to Filar-Williams and Steiner, “Communication, geography, technology, and resources all must be contemplated when considering how to serve an online community,” but the distance learning librarian can easily overcome these obstacles by focusing on “access, environment, resources, point of need, instruction, and being real” (p. 287). During their session, Steiner said that she was “on a crusade to convince students that we are not robots … we are real, based in physical library, and are here to help you” (p. 289). Based on their own study on the best practices of distance librarians, Hoffman and Ramin (2010) seem to agree that “personal interaction with a librarian builds a stronger relationship between online students or instructors and the library, perhaps even with the institution itself” (p. 298). Still, in the minds of some, it is questionable as to how strong that librarian-student relationship can be for distance learners who are still uncomfortable with the types of technology being used to assist them. Cannady (2011) writes that after discussing the importance of appearing “real” to distance learners, Steiner went on to explain all of the many ways you can allow live research consultations with distance learners, however, very many scholars have written about how technology is still a barrier for many distance students. As Holloway (2011) points out, “Distance students may span the age range, be English as a Second Language Learners, disabled, proficient with technology or have only very basic computer skills” (p. 31). In other words, not every distance learner may be familiar with technology more advanced than email. For this very reason, Holloway insists, “It is important to note that offering instruction on how to use services must be provided in order to achieve equity” (p. 32). While Holloway (2011) does seem to agree with Filar-Williams and Steiner that “[d]istance librarians and those serving distance population must establish multiple channels of communication (p.32), trying to understand students’ background when providing distance library service is still the best way to achieve equity in both access and quality of service.

Still, there are a few existing trends that my help ease non-technical students into distance library service. Hartnett & Thompson (2010) suggest screencasting (or screencapturing) as a relatively painless solution to the problem of troubleshooting off-campus access to various electronic resources. “By capturing additional details missed by written and verbal communication, screencasts can reduce or prevent delay in problem resolution,” Hartnett & Thompson briefly explain in their conclusion, “They can also be used to discover small
variances in a procedure that may lead to wildly different results [and] are an excellent way to quickly acquaint someone with a resource with which they are unfamiliar” (p. 111). Another trend that is slowly becoming a best practice of distance library services is research guided created with the content management system (CMS) LibGuides. According to Roberts & Hunter (2011), the growing popularity of LibGuides has nothing to do with the level of technological capability held by today’s distance learners, but the CMS certainly allows for the type of assistance a librarian might give to be available to distance learners at any time of day or night. “The virtual student is changing,” Roberts & Hunter write, “In the past, many may have thought the virtual student was an older, employed student who had little time to devote to class work” (p. 68). This stereotype simply holds no ground these days, and CMSs like LibGuides may be the unified answer to the question of 24-hour distance library service. That is, unless the massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) Second Life takes off. There has been much discussion in recent years about the potential in MMORPG) in distance library services. According to Ralph & Stahr (2010), “In order to provide cutting-edge service, librarians must stay alert, initiate discussion, and ask the vital questions about all new technologies as they appear on the horizon” (p. 921). Ralph & Stahr do admit, however, that there are a few heavy disadvantages to Second Life including the hardware, “learning curve,” the time, and the effort that goes into developing a virtual library space (p. 919-920). Surely, anticipating all trends in the library world to completely revolutionize the profession can sometimes set you back. It seems distance librarians typically keep many pokes in the fire.

No matter how efficient and thorough any distance education, or embedded, librarian tries to be in his or her preparation for the library and information needs of distance learners, administrative support will make or break a program. However, as Shell, Duvernay, Ewbank, Konomos, Leaming & Slyvester (2010) deduct in discussion of their comprehensive plan to extend distance library services, cross-departmental collaboration and open lines of communication with both distance students and instructors is probably the single best practice librarians must follow. “From our interviews and meetings with online program coordinators and instructional designers, we discovered avenues for communication with online programs, instructors, and students” (p. 959). As explained by Shell et al., “Online learning is growing rapidly as university become ‘edgeless’ and are defined primarily by their functions of teaching and research rather than by their physical campuses” (950-951). Therefore, the role of academic libraries in distance education will continue to grow.
Entry 1:


**Abstract:** “Murray State University (Kentucky) has been experimenting with various means of document delivery and research instruction for its online only and satellite campuses. These include ILLiad-based document delivery, Camtasia-to-UTube tutorials, a discipline-based service called Library on Blackboard, Eluminate and other virtual instructional methods.”

**Annotation:** This article is unique in that it addresses the complications involved in marketing distance library services to both on and off-campus students and faculty. In addition to discussing both the traditional and more innovative methods of outreach, Bartnik comments on the conflict that new and emerging technologies (the distance education librarian’s best friend) sometimes cause for older library staff members who are unwilling to adapt to new ways of doing things.

**Search Strategy:** At first, I thought to search Dialog’s OneSearch group INFOSCI, but after reviewing the databases included in the group via the bluesheets, it seemed more effective to browse only Library Lit. & Info. Science (File 438) and ERIC (File 1). After all, I wanted just scholarly works (sans dissertations), and I felt a bit more confident searching Social SciSearch (File 7) while using the Web of Knowledge interface. Honestly, I really just wanted to get Dialog out of the way while I was feeling most confident in my command-line skills. The few search terms I choose were admittedly rather basic, but since I was searching two databases simultaneously, I worried that controlling my vocabulary too tightly might turn out to be counter-productive. However, I did specifically search the title, abstract, and descriptor fields in attempt to limit my results. Also, I limited the publication date to the last five years and indicated I was interested in English language articles only. Once I sorted third set of results by descending publication date, I took a sneak peek at the first 30 articles by using Format 3, KWIC (bibliographic citation, “keyword in context”). I saved my session into a Word document and, then, attempted to find the full-text PDF by doing a quick title search in ERIC (the EBSCOhost platform). As it turned out, I had to order it via ILLiad.

**Database:**
- ERIC [File 1, Dialog]
- ERIC [EBSCOhost]

**Method of Searching:** Controlled vocabulary/Title searching

**Search String:**

```
s (distance()education or distance()learning)/ti,ab,de and (academic()librar? or university()librar?)/ti,ab,de and py=2007:2012 rd
s s2/eng
sort s3/all/py,d
t s4/3,k/1-30
```

**Scholarly Status:** According to Ulrich’s Web Global Serials Directory, *Journal of Library & Information Services in Distance Learning* is categorized as “Academic/Scholarly.” Also, according
to the publisher’s website, “Manuscripts submitted to this journal undergo editorial screening and peer review by anonymous reviewers.”

Entry 2:


Abstract: “The re-envisioning of libraries as information leaders in higher education requires an examination of the decisions made in the acquisition and adoption of library technology. The Critical Theory of Library Technology offers a framework for viewing technology decisions through a social, economic and political perspective …”

Annotation: This article discusses the values and ethics tied to distance learning library services standards (as prescribed by the Association for College and Research Libraries). Dr. Ajit Pyati is cited in the literature to explain the critical theory behind the selection, acquisition, and dissemination of library and information technology. Brumfield explains that both technical and social factors are important when constructing standards for distance education librarianship.

Search Strategy: See Entry 1.

Database: ERIC [File 1, Dialog]
ERIC [EBSCOhost]

Method of Searching: Controlled vocabulary/Title searching

Search String: s (distance()education or distance()learning)/ti,ab,de and (academic()librar? or university()librar?)/ti,ab,de and py=2007:2012 rd s s2/eng sort s3/all/py,d t s4/3,k/1-30

Scholarly Status: According to Ulrich’s Web Global Serials Directory, Journal of Library & Information Services in Distance Learning is categorized as “Academic/Scholarly.” Also, according to the publisher’s website, “Manuscripts submitted to this journal undergo editorial screening and peer review by anonymous reviewers.”

Entry 3:


Abstract: “The article discusses the highlights of the panel session "Fostering Library as Place for Distance Students: Best Practices from Two Universities," at the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Conference held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from March 29 to April 2, 2011. Practical and technical solutions to provide distance education are discussed by Heidi Steiner, a distance learning librarian at the Norwich University …”
**Annotation:** As a report on a presentation the 2011 ACRL conference in Philadelphia, this article is up-to-date and unique in its approach of the role of academic libraries in distance education. Cannady provides in-depth coverage of the main points made by Coordinator of Library Service for Distance & Online Learning Beth Filar-Williams (University of North Carolina-Greensboro) and Distance Learning Librarian Heidi Steiner (Norwich University). The presenters discussed their technical reinforcement of the idea that distance education librarians are real people.

**Search Strategy:** *See Entry 1.*

**Database:**
- ERIC [File 1, Dialog]
- ERIC [EBSCOhost]

**Method of Searching:** Controlled vocabulary/Title searching

**Search String:**
s (distance()education or distance()learning)/ti,ab,de and (academic()librar? or university()librar?)/ti,ab,de and py=2007:2012 rd s s2/eng sort s3/all/py,d t s4/3,k/1-30

**Scholarly Status:** According to Ulrich’s Web Global Serials Directory *Journal of Electronic Resources Librarianship* is categorized as “Academic/Scholarly.” Also, according to the publisher’s website, “All research articles in *Journal of Electronic Resources Librarianship* have undergone anonymous double-blind review.”

**Entry 4:**


**Abstract:** “The increase in online programs has been accompanied by the need for library instruction and support for online students. Students enrolled in off-campus programs have to be able to successfully access and use digital library resources to complete course requirements. An embedded librarian project in an online graduate educational technology course resulted in several benefits for students …”

**Annotation:** In addition to providing insight into the levels at which the academic librarian may be involved in distance education, this article explains the many meanings of the reoccurring term “embedded librarian.” Specifically, Edwards et al. assess the benefit of an embedded librarian program to the information literacy of graduate students in an educational technology course.

**Search Strategy:** *See Entry 1.*

**Database:**
- ERIC [File 1, Dialog]
- ERIC [EBSCOhost]
Method of Searching: Controlled vocabulary/Title searching

Search String: s (distance()education or distance()learning)/ti,ab,de and (academic()librar? or university()librar?)/ti,ab,de and py=2007:2012 rd
s s2/eng
sort s3/all/py,d
t s4/3,k/1-30

Scholarly Status: According to Ulrich’s Web Global Serials Directory Public Services Quarterly is categorized as “Academic/Scholarly.” Also, according to the publisher’s website, “All articles in regular issues of Public Services Quarterly have undergone anonymous double-blind review.”

Entry 5:


Abstract: “Purpose - Prior research has highlighted the isolation felt by some researchers engaged in academic writing. This article aims to examine whether such isolation might be partially overcome by membership of an online community of writers (CoW), hosted by higher education (HE) library services …”

Annotation: Gannon-Leary et al. explore the potential for academic libraries to host, or at least become more involved in, online research communities. This is article is unique in that it presents a totally different approach than scholarship written primarily about embedded librarian programs in undergraduate and graduate courses. It is the only article in this bibliography that discusses distance library services in the U. K.

Search Strategy: In contrast to my Dialog experience, while searching the Web of Science platform, I decided to go broad from the start and casually browse my results after each limiter placed. I did, of course, restrict my initial results to records found in the Social Sciences Citation Index database and, in order to maintain a level of consistency, limit the publication year field to the 2007 to 2012 range. After looking through my results, I decided I was only interested in certain “Web of Science Categories.” These were: “Information Science Library Science,” “Education Educational Research,” “Education Scientific Disciplines,” and, oddly enough, “Nursing.” The nursing category was, admittedly, a bit of wildcard, but during informal (and unrecorded) browsing I did early on, I noticed that a lot was being written about online nursing programs and library services. I also indicated that I was only interested in articles. By clicking Drexel’s “Get It” link resolver, I was able to get the full-text PDF from the publisher’s website.

Database: Social Sciences Citation Index [Web of Science]

Method of Searching: Keyword searching

Search String: Topic=(distance education) AND Topic=(librar*)
Refined by: Document Type=( ARTICLE )
Scholarly Status: According to Ulrich’s Web Global Serials Directory, *Library Hi Tech* is categorized as “Academic/Scholarly.” Also, according to the publisher’s website, the journal subscribes to the principles of the Committee on Publication Ethics, “a forum for editors and publishers of peer-reviewed journals to discuss all aspects of publication ethics.”

Entry 6:


Abstract: “Nurses must know how to locate and evaluate health information to optimize their professional practice. However, much of the information available online and in print lacks credibility, and navigating professional research databases can prove complex. As more nursing students and nurse educators move from centralized, brick-and-mortar campuses to satellite locations and online courses, the need for adaptable library services becomes pronounced …”

Annotation: This article discusses the indisputable benefit of academic library services to students enrolled in online nursing programs. Written from the perspective of a health sciences librarian and an assistant professor of nursing rather than strictly reference and instruction librarians, this article is unique. Hallyburton and St. John explain that it is not just the services librarians can provide to distance students once a relationship is established but the development of the relationship that encompasses the required skill set in the nursing profession.

Search Strategy: See Entry 5. After clicking Drexel’s “Get It” link resolver, I was able to find and save the full-text PDF by doing an author search in the Education Research Complete database (the EBSCOhost platform).

Database: Social Sciences Citation Index [Web of Science]
Educational Research Complete [EBSCOhost]

Method of Searching: Keyword searching/Author searching

Search String: Topic=(distance education) AND Topic=(librar*)
Refined by: Document Type=( ARTICLE )
Web of Science Categories=( INFORMATION SCIENCE LIBRARY SCIENCE OR EDUCATION EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH OR EDUCATION SCIENTIFIC DISCIPLINES OR NURSING )
Timespan=2007-2012. Databases=SSCI.

Scholarly Status: According to Ulrich’s Web Global Serials Directory, *Journal of Nursing Education* is categorized as “Academic/Scholarly.” Also, according to the publisher’s website, the journal “provides a forum for peer-reviewed original articles and new ideas for nurse
educators in various types and levels of nursing programs …”

Entry 7:


**Abstract:** “The shift from traditional print materials to electronic resources, in conjunction with the rise in the number of distance education programs, has left many electronic resource librarians scrambling to keep up with the resulting inundation of electronic resource problems. When it comes to diagnosing these problems, words do not always convey all the necessary details. Therefore, it is up to the electronic resource librarian to find alternative ways to communicate the problem …”

**Annotation:** This article is considered with the use of screencasting (using video tutorials or demonstrations during which the instructor or librarian’s computer screen “captured”) in order to reach out to distance learners and, specifically, assist them in their sometimes-problematic attempts to access electronic library resources. Hartnett & Thompson provide several scenarios.

**Search Strategy:** See Entry 1. I saved the full-text PDF after finding the publisher’s website through Drexel’s e-journal finder. While I on the publisher’s website, I browsed more recent volumes just to be sure I had the most up-to-date article directly related to academic libraries and distance education. I was worried because the article was almost two-years-old and screencasting seemed like old news.

**Database:** ERIC [File 1, Dialog]
ERIC [EBSCOhost]

**Method of Searching:** Controlled vocabulary/Title searching/Browsing

**Search String:**
s (distance()education or distance()learning)/ti,ab,de and (academic()librar? or university()librar?)/ti,ab,de and py=2007:2012 rd
s s2/eng
sort s3/all/py,d
t s4/3,k/1-30

**Scholarly Status:** According to Ulrich’s Web Global Serials Directory *Journal of Electronic Resources Librarianship* is categorized as “Academic/Scholarly.” Also, according to the publisher’s website, “All research articles in *Journal of Electronic Resources Librarianship* have undergone anonymous double-blind review.”

Entry 8:

Abstract: “In spring 2009, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library conducted a significant new survey of distance learners enrolled in off-campus or online graduate programs. Exploring distance learners’ perceptions about and use of library services, the survey of 146 students reveals opportunities to better meet the research needs of distance learners whose graduate work may demand extensive use of library resources …”

Annotation: This article is, of course, highly relevant and important in understanding the needs of distance learners as it provides their surveyed experiences. The work is unique in that it looks at the distance learner’s access to and expectations of an academic library course reserves as well as reference, instruction, and ILL services.

Search Strategy: I choose to mine the Library and Information Science Abstracts database (LISA) because I find the Proquest interface pretty use-friendly and, after extensively searching on Dialog, I was interested to see what might show up with a bit less effort. I did get some of the same results. I considered this to be a good sign, since I tried to use similar search terms and select the same limiters as I did in Dialog. However, a few new articles popped up. By clicking Drexel’s “Get It” link resolver, I was able to get the full-text PDF from the publisher’s website.

Database: Library and Information Science Abstracts [Proquest]

Method of Searching: Keyword searching

Search String: all(“academic libraries”) AND all(“distance education” OR “distance learning”) OR all(“online programs” OR “online universities”) Additional limits: Date: Last 3 years; Source type: Scholarly Journals Sorted by: “publication date (most recent first)”

Scholarly Status: According to Ulrich’s Web Global Serials Directory, Journal of Library Administration is categorized as “Academic/Scholarly.” Also, according to the publisher’s website, “All papers in Journal of Library Administration have undergone editorial screening and peer review.”

Entry 9:


Abstract: “Academic librarians interested in collaborating with faculty in online courses often express questions about their role, level of involvement, and activities. This article provides a list of best practices to guide those developing embedded librarian services. The practices are drawn from a review of the literature, a case study of one embedded librarian’s experiences, and a mixed methods study of embedded librarianship at six institutions …”

Annotation: This article offers professional solidarity to academic librarians who are confused about their role in distance education as well as some tips-of-the-trade content. Hoffman &
Ramon provide a clear outline of practices that may prevent over-commitment and general disaster. The article also addresses “non-academic” benefits of an embedded librarian program.

**Search Strategy:** See Entry 1.

**Database:** ERIC [File 1, Dialog]
ERIC [EBSCOhost]

**Method of Searching:** Controlled vocabulary/Title searching

**Search String:**
s (distance()education or electronic()learning)/ti,ab,de and (virtual()universit? or virtual()classroom? or online(2n)course? or web()based()instruction) and (academic()librar? or college()librar? or learning()resource?(2n)center?)/ti,ab and (librar?(2n)teacher? (cooperation or electronic()librar?)
s s1 and py=2007:2012
t s2/5/all

**Scholarly Status:** According to Ulrich’s Web Global Serials Directory *Public Services Quarterly* is categorized as “Academic/Scholarly.” Also, according to the publisher’s website, “All articles in regular issues of *Public Services Quarterly* have undergone anonymous double-blind review.”

**Entry 10:**


**Abstract:** “This paper looks at the author’s outreach efforts as a distance librarian to encourage library use among a distance student population that comprises satellite locations, students attending online, students attending courses through instructional television, and students attending hybrid courses. Outcomes of the author's outreach attempts and research demonstrating what other librarians have done to reach out to their distance population are discussed. Examples of outreach methods include: collaborating with faculty to blend information literacy instruction into a face-to-face subject specific distance classroom, embedding the librarian into a subject specific class via course management software, and using the reference interview to provide electronic research help to a class …”

**Annotation:** Published less than one year ago, this is another, more up-to-date article on academic library marketing and outreach to distance learners. Holloway discusses the assessment of the needs of the student population at-length, clearly differentiates, between reference services embedded within a course management system such as WebCT and those at the point-of-need, and explains how outreach is closely tied to both face-to-face and distance library instruction.

**Search Strategy:** See Entry 1.

**Database:** ERIC [File 1, Dialog]
ERIC [EBSCOhost]
Method of Searching: Controlled vocabulary/Title searching

Search String: 

s (distance()education or distance()learning)/ti,ab,de and 
(academic()librar? or university()librar?)/ti,ab,de and py=2007:2012 
rd 
s s2/eng 
sort s3/all/py,d 
t s4/3,k/1-30

Scholarly Status: According to Ulrich’s Web Global Serials Directory, Journal of Library & Information Services in Distance Learning is categorized as “Academic/Scholarly.” Also, according to the publisher’s website, “Manuscripts submitted to this journal undergo editorial screening and peer review by anonymous reviewers.”

Entry 11:


Abstract: “At a time in our economy when library budgets are strained and staffing is under the microscope, librarians need to reassess and retool their library services for online students to provide quality, depth, and community without causing meltdown. The authors analyze some of the retooling undergone at their library to meet the shifting demographics of students who in 10 years have grown from 1,000 online students to 14,500 and increased to 65% of the students now taking online classes ...”

Annotation: Finally, from an administrative and strategic planning perspective, this article discusses the trend of students not only enrolling in online programs but also students switching from on-campus learning to distance education. The article also addresses the necessary reorganizing of academic library departments due to the evolving needs of its student patrons.

Search Strategy: See Entry 8. After clicking Drexel’s “Get It” link resolver, I was able to find and save the full-text PDF by doing an author search in the Education Research Complete database (the EBSCOhost platform).

Database: Library and Information Science Abstracts [Proquest] 
Educational Research Complete [EBSCOhost]

Method of Searching: Keyword searching/Title searching

Search String: all(“academic libraries”) AND 
all(”distance education" OR "distance learning") OR 
all(”online programs" OR "online universities") 

Additional limits: 
Date: Last 3 years; Source type: Scholarly Journals 
Sorted by: “publication date (most recent first)”
**Scholarly Status:** According to Ulrich’s Web Global Serials Directory, *Journal of Library Administration* is categorized as “Academic/Scholarly.” Also, according to the publisher’s website, “All papers in *Journal of Library Administration* have undergone editorial screening and peer review.”

**Entry 12:**


**Abstract:** “This article discusses how a library's consistent policy of accessibility and foresight positioned itself to serve its students, faculty and staff in the virtual world of Second Life. Always ahead of the technological curve, this library has been the front-runner in providing services to distance learners via text messaging, “chat,” e-mail, and telephone services and via its laptop librarian project across the campus …”

**Annotation:** Much has been written about the increasing presence of libraries in the popular MMORP (massively multiplayer online role-playing game) Second Life; however, Ralph & Stahr specifically address its potential benefit to distance learners, specifically, as well as its limitations.

**Search Strategy:** See Entry 1. I saved my session into a Word document and, afterward, was able to find the full-text PDF by use of a title search on the Library Lit. & Info. Science Full Text database (once again, on the EBSCOhost platform).

**Database:**

Library Literature and Information Science [File 438, Dialog]
Library Lit. & Info. Science Full Text [EBSCOhost]

**Method of Searching:** Controlled vocabulary/Title searching

**Search String:**

s (distance()education or distance()learning)/ti,ab,de and
(academic()librar? or university()librar?)/ti,ab,de and py=2007:2012
rd
s s2/eng
sort s3/all/py,d
t s4/3,k/1-30

**Scholarly Status:** According to Ulrich’s Web Global Serials Directory, *Journal of Library Administration* is categorized as “Academic/Scholarly.” Also, according to the publisher’s website, “All papers in *Journal of Library Administration* have undergone editorial screening and peer review.”

**Entry 13:**

Abstract: “This article examines the virtual pathfinder and its relationship with distance education students. Various topics are addressed in relation to virtual students, LibGuides and collaborative efforts between librarians and teaching faculty. A brief history of the subject guide is presented, advantages and disadvantages of LibGuides are discussed and a unique collaboration at Chattanooga State Community College is described …”

Annotation: This article, published less than one year ago, looks closely at the advantages and disadvantages of using LibGuides for distance learners. It is unique in that it discusses library use of content management systems exclusively and at-length.

Search Strategy: See Entry 8. After eagerly clicking Drexel’s “Get It” link resolver, I ended up having to place an ILLiad request.

Database: Library and Information Science Abstracts [Proquest]

Method of Searching: Keyword searching

Search String: all("academic libraries") AND all("distance education" OR "distance learning") OR all("online programs" OR "online universities")

Additional limits:
Date: Last 3 years; Source type: Scholarly Journals
Sorted by: “publication date (most recent first)”

Scholarly Status: According to Ulrich’s Web Global Serials Directory, Journal of Library & Information Services in Distance Learning is categorized as “Academic/Scholarly.” Also, according to the publisher’s website, “Manuscripts submitted to this journal undergo editorial screening and peer review by anonymous reviewers.”

Entry 14:


Abstract: “Acknowledging Arizona State University’s (ASU) long-term goal of 100,000 students in online degree programs and recognizing the 8 new 100% online undergraduate programs slated to come online in 2010, ASU Libraries is planning for the continued integration and relevance of the library to online students and programs …”

Annotation: This article is unique in that provides a detailed plan of action toward improving distance library services that is fully supported by library administration. While other libraries seem to leave the development and implementation of embedded librarian and other distance library services programs entirely up to reference and instruction librarians, Shell et al. tackle strategic planning by use of a cross-departmental task force.

Search Strategy: See Entry 8. After clicking Drexel’s “Get It” link resolver, I was able to find and
save the full-text PDF by doing an author search in the Education Research Complete database (the EBSCOhost platform).

Database: Library and Information Science Abstracts [Proquest]  
Educational Research Complete [EBSCOhost]

Method of Searching:  Keyword searching/Title searching

Search String:  all(“academic libraries”) AND  
all(“distance education” OR “distance learning”) OR  
all(“online programs” OR “online universities”)  
Additional limits:  Date: Last 3 years; Source type: Scholarly Journals  
Sorted by: “publication date (most recent first)”

Scholarly Status: According to Ulrich’s Web Global Serials Directory, Journal of Library Administration is categorized as “Academic/Scholarly.” Also, according to the publisher’s website, “All papers in Journal of Library Administration have undergone editorial screening and peer review.”

Conclusion and Personal Statement

As I stated in my description, the role of academic libraries in distance education is still very much an ongoing discussion. Solutions to the problem of reaching distance learners are becoming more and more obvious as time goes on and with each scholarly article that offers their objective insight. Because of the regular publication of these documented experiences and studies by official and impromptu distance education librarians, standards are slowly being set and trends are becoming best practices.

When I began drafting my Summary of Findings, I had 20 articles from which I was confident I would be able to compile a thorough literature review. I thought that I had a great assortment of scholarly work that covered as aspects of my topic. However, as I started to draft an outline and compose some of my paragraphs, I lost a good bit of that aforementioned confidence. Specifically, I felt like a lot of my articles, while published in journals technically classified as scholarly/academic, were very subjective and more about practical application of distance library services rather than research on the topic. While I most certainly took heed of all the warnings from Professor Harvey to avoid trade publications, I was still disappointed when I had to narrow down my list several times and build it back up with articles that focused on actual studies done. Now looking over my finished work, I believe some of my cited works are still questionable; however, I think it may be necessary to have one or two of those kinds of
articles in order to get a feel for what is actually happening in distance library service programs. In the end, I believe that I not only sharpened my academic database searching skills but also learned to critically evaluate all that I may find in them.

I certify that:

- This assignment is entirely my own work.
- I have not quoted the words of any other person from a printed source or website without indicating what has been quoted and providing an appropriate citation.
- I have not submitted this assignment to satisfy the requirements of any other course.

Signature Amanda Kraft
Date March 16, 2012