The Library Place

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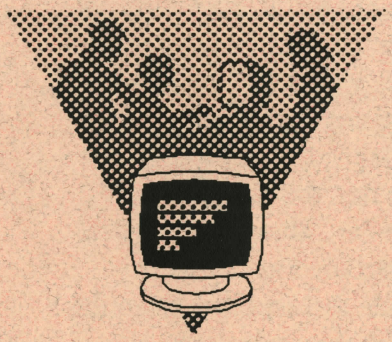
The University College of the Cariboo

The Virtual Library



The virtual library provides access to information beyond the library building walls. Recent advances in computer technology and telecommunications have helped remove the barriers of place and time, making it possible to access information across campus or across the world.

A virtual library can consist of electronic journals, document delivery, full-text databases, end-user search and retrieval capabilities, network access, and enhanced library catalogues.

The developments of distributed computing systems and fibre optic data communication networks have enabled libraries to handle, store, retrieve and transmit large amounts of data, and provide users with better access and service.

The ability of users to initiate a search and obtain just the information they need is both cost-effective and efficient, especially as libraries continue to be challenged by the growing volume of information and its increasing cost.

Library users want information quickly, cheaply and without too much difficulty to retrieve. Using technology helps increase the value of existing resources as they are made known and available through networks of library computers. No longer is needed information in the traditional wrapping of a book or journal. Access is just as important as ownership as libraries rely more on digital information.

Universities such a Carnegie-Mellon and Cal State are experimenting with interactive multimedia technology to expand the capacities of institutions for teaching and learning. The emerging technologies have the potential to transform traditional patterns of education, permeating all aspects of instruction.

The possibilities are great for increased collaboration among faculties, libraries and computer centres to use technologies to offer relevant programs on campus, and at a distance, in a lab, or a library.

For libraries, this is a time to test and learn, to work with others to develop networks that apply technology and respond to user needs.

All these opportunities still require a library place where librarians and staff, faculty and students meet and study. Librarians must ensure that systems are built and maintained that link resources and users.

The benefits of direct access to the world of information and timely delivery of full-text

The Virtual Library (continued)

articles are significant, but issues remain to be resolved:

- training, access, retrieval, acquisition, printing, storage, licensing, copyright, publication of scholarly activity, and evaluation of new technologies.

To be effective, a virtual library requires institutional funding and support, successful collaboration with computing departments and teaching faculty, sufficient training on electronic sources and services, and accepted library policies and structures to enable the development of access services.

Much work remains to be done on digitizing data and producing/distributing electronic journals. It requires coordination and support between and among libraries and vendors as information providers to create the links between information sources, to make connections among libraries and networks, to deliver information quickly and at a reasonable cost.

Information is becoming more distributed and scattered, requiring more sophistication to access. The Internet is a gigantic network, but not well-organized, integrated, or indexed. Library users need to be taught navigational skills in order to manipulate and assess data.

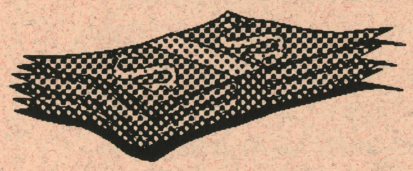
This, for us as library workers, is the crucial point in the development of a virtual library. Our focus has always been on our users, and helping them search for information.

Where, what and how are vital questions for us as the link, the gateway, the guides to information. To be successful, technology must be enabling.

The challenge and the promise of the virtual library are at the interface – the point where the system meets the user.

Here at UCC Library, we continue to work to improve Libcat as a central database of resources held at and accessible by the library. We hope that the BC post-secondary library system can be upgraded next year to include features that bring the virtual library closer to reality.

Nancy Levesque



Journal Pricing Predictions for 1996

Readmore Inc., UCC Library's periodical subscription agent, predicts a 10% increase for titles published in the U.S. and a 16% to 19% increase for foreign (mainly European) titles. Other companies are making similar predictions. Paper makes up 15% to 25% of total cost for periodicals. Publishers received a big break on paper prices in the early 1990s. However, paper prices in the eastern U.S. have risen 33% since November 1993, and further increases of about 20% are expected before the middle of 1995.

Journal Pricing Predictions for 1996 *(continued)*

Even the cost of ink is on the rise for the first time in three years! As always, postal rates continue upward.

What does this mean for UCC? We have a wide mix of programs; we buy most of our journals from the U.S., some here in Canada and some from Europe. Readmore's predictions are for U.S. libraries. We have to take into account our weakening Canadian dollar and therefore should expect increases somewhat higher than 10%. For 1995, the increase in our journals invoice was 12%.

Penny Haggarty

PCensus and PSearch Canadian Desktop Demographics

The Library now has the following census data located on one of its microcomputers in the Reference area:

- Canada 1991 2A (short questionnaire)
- Canada 1991 2B (long questionnaire)
- British Columbia 1991 2A and 2B
- British Columbia 1991 FSA (Postal Forward Sorting Area)

This database is called PCensus. The search software is user-friendly and includes a tutorial. Study areas can be pre-defined (province, metropolitan areas, census subdivisions), or user-defined (circles or polygons around a geographic reference point). There are six columns to display or print.

A second product, called PSearch-Canada, enables the user to target population segments. First, a "lifestyle" or demographic profile is defined, then the PCensus database is searched to find areas matching those criteria. A tutorial is available.

Penny Haggarty

New Information Technology

In October the Williams Lake Campus Library installed a new CD-ROM Periodical Index. The InfoTrac Academic Index ASAP, like the InfoTrac system installed in the Main Library, (Kamloops), allows users to search for citations to periodical articles. However, the ASAP Index has an added feature. The four CD-ROM discs that make up the index also store the full text of articles from 220 academic and general interest journals. The user is able, in many cases, to locate an article, view it on the computer screen, and print or download the text without leaving the workstation.

This CD-ROM based, full text system seems to work well for the Williams Lake Library and has become a useful research tool for our students. Space for books, periodicals and other resources is always a consideration in this small library and the compact nature of a database of electronically stored journals is an advantage. The system is relatively easy to use and the integration of the periodical index with the text of the articles allows users to select, evaluate and retrieve information very quickly.

Michael Coyne

Many organizations send items to the Serials Department. Unfortunately we can not put everything we get on our shelves. We get newsletters from associations, and various other groups. The following items could be of use to faculty or staff. If anyone wishes to get any of these items please let us know. Phone Shannon or Jim at 5311. Sorry we can not route items, but we will let people know if others would like the item after they are finished with it. If you would like to receive any of these items, please give us a call.

- Asia-Pacific Business Report by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu International
- British Institute of International and Comparative Law Newsletter
- Canadian Anthropology Society Bulletin
- Canadian Society for the Study of Higher Education
- Child Abuse Newsletter
- Council Chronicle: National Council of Teachers of English
- CUSO Forum
- Federalism Report
- Fraser Basin Management Program Current News
- GSA Today: a publication of the Geological Society of America
- Home Builders Guide of British Columbia
- Human Rights Forum: Canadian Human Rights Commission
- NAEA News: a publication of the National Art Education Association
- National Council of Teachers of Mathematics News Bulletin
- Nature Alert: Canadian Nature Federation
- Organization of American Historians Newsletter
- Outdoor Report
- Society for American Archaeology Bulletin
- Society of Special Needs Adoptive Parents Newsletter.

Jim Dupuis

To receive your copy of Libcat instructions phone Jane Holmberg 5300

Expansion of Online Journal Article Ordering

UCC students and faculty now have the ability to directly order articles from six of the online databases at SFU. Our library is charged $6 per article ordered, but students pay only $1. To connect to this service select LIBCAT menu item #7. The databases are:

- ABI/Inform (business index)
- ARTS (H.W. Wilson Art Index)
- CBCA (Canadian Business and Current Affairs)
- EDUC (H.W. Wilson Education Index)
- HSSI (combination of H.W. Wilson Humanities Index and Social Sciences Index)
- SCIE (combination of H.W. Wilson Agricultural and Biological Index, Applied Science & Technology Index and General Science Index)

Directly ordering from these databases is faster than traditional interlibrary loan. The only drawback to the present system is that it does not allow you to place an order for an article in a journal held at UCC even if we do not have the particular issue. We are working with the Electronic Library Network to have this feature overridden. For any questions regarding this service please contact the Reference Desk at 5301.

Peter Peller

Editor: Nancy Levesque
Typing and lay-out: Jane Holmberg