

DISTANCE LEARNING

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his special issue of *INDIANA LIBRARIES* has a twofold purpose. First, it seeks to introduce distance learning to those individuals not familiar with it, especially in library settings. Secondly, for those librarians currently providing distance learning services in their institutions, it will broaden their horizons and stimulate ideas to investigate and expand their current application.

I think our contributing authors have done a masterful job of meeting these goals and readers of this issue will indeed come away more informed and stimulated by the ideas and enthusiasm expressed in each article. As you will see, not all the applications are without their challenges, but where these have occurred opportunities are noted and methods to address them are presented. Also, you will see that there are a multiplicity of approaches to using distance learning services in a library and not everyone follows the same pattern. This is as it should be and every library obviously must design their services to meet the needs and requirements of their own patrons and community. Nevertheless, it is important to have advocates for different approaches and the articles that follow allow the authors an opportunity to share their perspective and explain why they feel as they do.

You will also note that our contributors come from a variety of settings, representing different types of libraries (academic, public, and school) as well as networks within our state. This helps, I believe, to show the widespread application of distance learning in our various institutions and to demonstrate that it is not restricted to any one kind of setting or type of library. At the same time, each author has focused upon a specific area and it is hoped readers will be able to identify their institution with one of the examples provided.

It is our desire that after reading this issue you will be stimulated to learn more about this wonderful and exciting area of service. To assist you, two of our authors have provided extensive bibliographies that provide additional sources of information and contact sites. Rita Barsun, one of our contributors, has created a mailing list that allows subscribers to share information, ask questions, and pass on helpful hints. If you are interested in subscribing:

Send an e-mail message to majordomo@indiana.edu
Leave the subject line blank
In the body of the message type: `subscribe de_indiana`
(And be sure to delete your signature file)

I hope you enjoy your reading and I look forward to hearing in the not too distant future about your experiences with distance learning.