4-1-2008

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Benefits of Integrating the Library Reserve Function With Blackboard

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Background
When the University of Vermont College of Medicine moved their curriculum to the Blackboard Course Management System, no provisions were made to integrate electronic reserve materials with Blackboard. Knowing intuitively that...

Goals
College of Medicine faculty requested help from Office of Medical Education (OME) staff in adding materials to Blackboard, work that involved obtaining copyright permission. OME staff turned to the library for advice in navigating copyright laws and practices. As OME displayed existing Blackboard links and described the help they needed, library staff concluded that they could be more helpful than they had realized. Library and OME staff developed six major objectives for library staff and OME staff.

1. Control copyright costs.
2. Make compliance with federal copyright law easy.
3. Remove barriers that students encounter when trying to do the required readings.
4. Encourage use of the University’s electronic journal and book collection.
5. Centralize a single point of instruction and communication.
6. Improve communication.

Results
Control copyright costs
Most “reserve readings” are actually direct links to online journal articles. Faculty change the readings often enough that fair use still saves a significant amount of money.

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©Copyright costs for AY 06 were due to the use of a particular book chapter at $2,037 per year. AY 06 costs also include copyright for many PDFs that, in AY 07, became links to articles on publishers’ servers.

Make copyright compliance easy
©2002-2006. Materials processed for College of Medicine by Dana Medical Library. For physical reserve delivery, Voyagers’ E-Reserves module declined.
©2005-present. Increasing number of College of Medicine materials processed by Dana.

Remove barriers for students
• Links to electronic journals and books appear within the course on the day the reading is due, in line with lecture notes, PowerPoint presentations, and learning modules for that day.
• Most links go directly to the document.
• The proxy server allows off-campus access to online articles and books with a single login to Blackboard.

Encourage use of the collection
• In cases where Blackboard contained recommended textbooks that the library owned electronically, links to those books were added to Blackboard.
• Eight new electronic books have been added to the library collection based on their use in Blackboard.

Model the citation of references
• Make copyright compliance easier.

Discussion
Many of these goals were met through the use of direct linking to articles, embedding linking articles and putting them on local servers. Direct links to articles on the publishers’ servers don’t require copyright permission. On the other hand, since some of the library’s electronic journals are accessed through aggregators, it wasn’t always obvious to faculty that an article was available online. In addition, absence of permanent links is sometimes more complicated than copying and pasting a URL.

The decision by the College of Medicine Office of Medical Education (OME) to give the Library responsibility, access, and authority for linking from courses to electronic journals, books, and databases (while continuing to pay copyright fees out of the OME budget) was important to the success of the project. As course management systems allow for, and sometimes force, more centralization, libraries and universities can benefit from the opportunity to offer this revenue service.

Centralization allows one or a group of people to serve as experts in creating stable links to links, communicating with publishers, navigating fair use, and citing references. Since library staff already possess much of this capability, it’s relatively easy to get the library to continue to provide course-related readings.

Future plans include a survey of faculty satisfaction with the program, development of easier tracking methods, and scaling up the service to meet the needs of other colleges on campus.

Bibliography

Acknowledgments
Thank you to Brenda Nelson, Dana Medical Library reserves, and to Sheri Youngberg and the UVM COM Office of Medical Education.

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April 2008