

Education libraries can have the greatest collections, but if they are not physically and intellectually accessible, they do little good. Increasingly, academic librarians are focusing on the intellectual access to information, thankfully. As universities lean towards an instructional specialty model, their professional staff can develop collaborative relationships with their associated teaching faculty, creating meaningful learning information literacy activities for university students.

This issue tackles some of the other concerns of access to resources and services, focusing on the needs of the user. Yunfei Du addresses the new versions of distance learning: web-based courses. He examines the satisfaction level of users relative to their computer competency. As universities increasingly mount courses online, they may make assumptions about their students' technological skills. Regardless of the fact that today's millennial-generation students have grown up in an Internet world, they were not born with technology genes or had computer chips implanted into their brains. Distance learning, while often geographically convenient, can be an isolating experience for students. If their technological expertise is also in question, they are likely to be frustrated and prone to drop out. Du's study looks at the contributing factors in this scenario. Particularly as education libraries are obligated to provide the same level of service and resources to distance learners, Du's conclusions warrant attention.

Catherine Carter addresses library access for students with disabilities. She identifies three areas of concentration: bibliographic instruction, web page design, and staff training. Because the term "disability" can refer to so many different issues: how students perceive information, how they process it internally, and how they communicate it, a one-size-fits-all approach is an injustice to these often gifted students. To be fair, though, trying to figure out the appropriate approach for each student's accommodations can be daunting. Carter wisely suggests that creating universally-accessible web sites and instructional delivery systems benefits all students.

Nancy O'Brien's discussion of bibliographic access to historical children's textbooks and other print materials may sound traditional. She notes traditional access tools, mentioning both high-profile and little-known sources. She rounds out the issue of access by discussing the impact of the world wide web.

In a fascinating way, access to early Americana primers links to access to electronic resources for distance learning. The key point is that access issues endure, and that attention needs to be paid to users as well as to the resources themselves. Librarians' roles include linking those two entities in meaningful ways. Not far from John Cotton Dana.