

THE PLACE OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN AN ONLINE EDUCATION (TEACHING AND LEARNING)

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Abstract *Online education is a technique in which users may use different technologies, internet, computer technology and multimedia, and it may be replacing the conventional educational system to some extent. Online Education gives new dimensions to higher education as well as other areas of education. Academic libraries give the support by providing access to a wide range of resources and services that enhance the teaching and learning. This article highlights the basic concept of online education/e-learning, the place of library, library tools for online education/e-learning and also further discuss the participation of academic libraries in the online education/e-learning which remain a vital component of online education, providing essential support for students, faculty and researchers in their pursuit of knowledge and academic success. Therefore, it is concluded that a good library is the heart of every campus, is a symbolic structure of scholarship and service, the physical entity that is an academic library in no way limits the ability to reach beyond their walls. "While our patrons were once expected to come to the library, we now ask how we can better reach the patron, with distance no longer a barrier". Therefore, this study is having an understanding that a library is driven by service; whether that service is face-to-face or online is extraneous to the ideal of reaching all patrons adequately and equally.*

Keywords: *Library Tools/Resources, Online Education, Academic Libraries, Information, Online Library*

INTRODUCTION

"It is a truth not yet universally acknowledged that a venture based on information must be in want of a librarian" (Mahraj, 2012, p. 360). As the cornerstone of higher education, academic libraries have long supported the instructional endeavours on college and university campuses across the nation. Academic libraries carry a philosophical mission to provide access to educational resources and services, as well as instruction on locating, accessing, evaluating and using resources successfully to all its users. "Libraries exist because they add value to teaching, learning and the production and dissemination of knowledge" (Munde & Marks, 2009, p. 111). Today's institutions of higher education are expanding their learners' educational experiences by removing physical barriers and delivering courses and academic programs online. The online learning environment offers a unique platform for the delivery and access of academic content gathered for educational instruction to anyone, anytime, anywhere. Education is far removed from the traditional brick and mortar classroom of days past, "online learning has become a great catalyst for change in American higher education" (McCluskey & Winter, 2012, p. 163).

The expansion into distance education has significantly contributed to how academic libraries are reshaping their resources and services to meet the needs of online, distance

learners. Several authors (Nielsen, 2014; Primus, 2009; Watson, 1999) make note towards the changing nature of library services to distance learners. Watson (1999) describes new professional paradigms for librarians arising from distance education by stating, "distance education has led to the development of specialized library and information services that can appropriately be called distance librarianship" (p. 1). Primus (2009) emphasises, "the rise in the number of institutions participating in distance education reflects an increasing demand for distance library services" (p. 22). Nielsen (2014) affirms, "new challenges and opportunities have arisen for academic libraries as they work to support these expansions" (p. 6).

Academic library support for distance learning is where my research interests and concerns lie. In this research study, I examined academic library resources and services provided to online, distance learners by member institutions of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), a non-profit organisation comprising 124 research libraries in the United States and Canada was selected for the breadth and quality of their collections and services. Membership in ARL is by invitation, based on the research nature of the library's and the parent institution's aspirations and achievements as a research institution. The ARL operates as a forum for the exchange of ideas and as an agent for collective action across the broader research library community. Through an

exploratory study, I sought not only to identify the types of distance learning library services being provided, but also to gain insight into the perceptions, challenges and opportunities library personnel at ARL member institutions experienced in delivering library resources and services to their distance learning library patrons.

Due to the growth of the Internet and its budding potential for online communications, institutions of higher education have been witnessing a rising momentum in the movement from traditional face-to-face education to online, distance education. Starting with one single course moving online, higher education has transitioned to an entity where entire college programs and degrees are being delivered online. Without the constraints of time and space, today's learners are engaged in unique educational opportunities through online learning environments. Having the affordance of placing educational units into these online learning environments, colleges and universities are able to stretch their reach towards new and diverse bodies of learners.

Growth of Online Learning and Student Enrollments

Literature published in the early 2000s provided evidence of beliefs in growing student demand for life-long, just-in-time learning via online learning environments. In explaining how “one never really completes an education” (“The Market,” para. 4), Witherspoon and Johnstone (2001) believed the future growth of distance learning programs would be a response to education becoming a routine part of day-to-day environments at work or at home. They clarified this belief with the notion that “education must be available when it's needed, under conditions that don't make learning, work, and home mutually exclusive factors” (Witherspoon & Johnstone, 2001, “The Market,” para. 5). McLoughlin and Luca (2001) mentioned an increase in distance learning opportunities by stating, “judging by present trend, there is no doubt that Web-based learning and training will continue to expand, with the growth in markets, the trend towards life-long learning and the need for universities to offer flexible, on demand educational services” (p. 425). And in 2002, Baird and Wilson described the impact of distance learning on higher education learners by noting that “learners today want to be linked to global resources and learning opportunities anytime/anyplace/anywhere – without the inhibitions of physical structures such as classrooms, libraries or even technology-centered sites” (Baird & Wilson, 2002, p. 56). Since 2003, the Babson Survey Research Group has conducted research on the state of online learning across higher education institutions in the United States. Each year, the number of enrolments in higher education online courses have increased. In Babson's 2016 report, Online Report Card: Tracking Online education

in the United States, Allen and Seaman acknowledge that despite overall enrolments decreasing, “distance education enrollments continue to grow at a healthy rate” (Allen & Seaman, 2016). In fall 2014, 5.8 million students took at least one distance education course, which is more than 28.4% of all enrolled students. These numbers reveal how distance education courses have “become a common part of the course delivery modality for many students” (Allen & Seaman, 2016). The expansion into online learning coupled with the continued growth of student enrolments in distance learning courses and programs have been key catalysts in setting the stage for the changing landscape of today's higher education institutions. Not only has this expansion changed and impacted the face of the classroom, but also “every aspect of the university has been impacted” (McCluskey & Winter, 2012, p. 11). Years ago, college libraries attracted professors and scholars from afar simply for their rare and vast print collections. Now, with the ability to make collections available digitally: users no longer need to visit the physical library. One must not think that the growth of online learning and student enrolments have caused a decline in library usage. Rather, we must think of these changes as an increasing demand for library services at a user's point of need—online and from a distance.

Academic Library Resources and Services

From organising and managing information to supporting teaching and learning needs, to enhancing information literacy skills, academic libraries function to connect educators and learners with essential resources and services. Historically, “librarians have always played a role in life-long learning as they have stored, classified, circulated materials, and provided reference assistance to patrons” (Hartsell-Gundy & Tumbleson, 2012, p. 53). “Twenty years ago the work of a librarian was generally centered on a specific task (cataloging, reference, circulation)” (Groeling & Boyd, 2009, p. 39-40). However, amid the current day's changing nature of information access, communication technologies, and the demand for quality, equitable and 24/7 on-demand services, academic libraries and librarians are rethinking and reshaping their roles, resources and services to meet the needs of their online, distance learners (Corbett & Brown, 2015; Groeling & Boyd, 2009; Nielsen, 2014; Primus, 2009; Watson, 1999). “Distance education has impacted not only on the discipline of education, but it has also fundamentally affected services and professions that support distance learning and distance education” (Watson, 1999, p. 1). Working as change agents, today's academic libraries, and librarians are not only facing the reality of ensuring their relevance, but also sustaining the prosperity of academic libraries in the digital, connected age.

General Library Resources and Services Offered to Distance Learners

Providing resources and helping expand the learners' skills and knowledge has always been the focus of libraries and librarians (Corbett & Brown, 2015). However, serving the needs of today's students learning at a distance has become an increasingly challenging matter for academic libraries to address (Diaz, 2012; Gandhi, 2003; Lillard, 2003; Yang, 2005; Watson, 1999). Cassner and Adams (2004) surveyed distance librarian administrators at the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) member libraries to identify library resources and services being offered to distance learners. Of the 112 member libraries surveyed, 73 libraries participated in answering questions pertaining to "access and delivery options, models of staffing, and collaboration of libraries with distance teaching faculty" (Cassner & Adams, 2004, p. 87). Sixty-nine per cent of the respondents do offer distance learning library services. These services included a dedicated web page to distance learners, delivery of electronic resources, interlibrary loan, online reference assistance such as e-mail and virtual chat, and library instruction via online tutorials. Additionally, the majority of respondents indicated their library staff members, as a whole unit, serve the needs of both on-campus, and distance learners.

In a literature review on improving library services for distance learners, Raraigh-Hopper (2009) found that the most common library services offered to distance learners include remote access to online library catalogue; electronic databases; electronic books and journals; online information literacy tutorials; electronic research guides on academic and special interest topics; electronic general library guides; ask-a-librarian (chat, e-mail, or telephone); interlibrary loan; electronic reserves; and document delivery services (Raraigh-Hopper, 2009, p. 73).

This list is evidence towards an almost exclusive electronic delivery of library services. In a more recent study, Hill, Li and Macheak (2013) surveyed 65 member libraries within the United States and Canada Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU). Hill, Li and Macheak were interested in identifying "services, activities and policies that urban and metropolitan libraries have developed" (p. 315) in support of their distance library learners. Twenty-four libraries of varying scope and size responded for a response rate of 37%. Similar to Cassner and Adam's findings, online reference via virtual chat and e-mail was the most prevalent service offered as 96% reported these offerings. Additional services included document delivery (86%), appointment-based reference (91%), online guides and tutorials (~80%) and embedded librarians in online course delivery software (55%). Two-

thirds of the respondents reported having either a designated distance learning librarian or a combination of library staff members serving distance learners.

In 2014, Nielsen conducted a study to analyse library resources and services offered by 19 national universities to their distance education population. One aspect of Nielsen's study was to highlight new or innovative means for service to distance education populations. Nielsen documented interesting service and support approaches which included online games to introduce users to library websites and available electronic resources, the creation and utilisation of new professional distance education librarian positions, and research portals connecting users to other academic units on campus. Despite the narrow approach and findings of this study, Nielsen did indicate the potential that librarians are considering new ideas for services rather than relying on the convenient provision of electronically accessible materials.

Distance learning library resources and services offered by an academic library are unique to the institution. The types and levels of such provisions reflect the institutional need to provide seamless service to its specific learning community. In addition, library services must be responsive to the specific teaching, learning and research needs in accordance with the institutional mission.

Integration of Library Resources and Services into Course Management Systems

Course management systems (CMSs), also called learning management systems or courseware, are software applications that allow faculty to create and manage self-contained online environments for learning. Initially designed for and associated with distance learners, CMSs are also being used to supplement the traditional classroom environment. While there are numerous courseware packages available, both commercial and open-source, they all share a certain core set of basic features, including resource sharing, communication and assessment tools (Shank & Dewald, 2003). CMSs provide students with hands-on opportunities to improve their proficiency in becoming technologically literate. Librarians instruct students in best practice research methods for evaluating diverse sources of information. Together, these facets of education work to develop and enhance a user's information literacy skills. The American Library Association's Presidential Committee on Information Literacy defines information literacy as a set of abilities requiring individuals to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information" (American Library Association, 1989, para. 3).

Across higher education institutions, academic librarians are encouraged to integrate library resources and services into systems their students are using most. Considering that today's students are increasing enrolment in online courseware environments, it makes sense to have curriculum and research support embedded in these locations. The professional literature indicated that researchers are in agreement regarding the nature of academic libraries and librarians inserting their presence and services into course management systems. The library is a missing element in the course management systems. Bell and Shank (2004a) described the failure to include the library in a CMS as depriving "faculty and students of a convenient access path to valuable library content and services" (p. 1). In discussing rationales pointing to the marginalisation of the academic library, Bell and Shank (2004b) indicate "courseware systems allow faculty to create information silos that serve as gateways to all course-related information, including research sources that may or may not include the campus library" (p. 372). Buehler (2004) called attention to the fact that "courseware products are deficient overall in developing a built-in academic library component for student and faculty use" (p. 76). Gibbons (2005b) believes that even if learning is occurring within a virtual environment, such as a CMS, libraries need to be present at the point of learning. CMSs have been cited as avenues to offer library instruction, to help faculty develop better research assignments, and to provide higher quality class readings (Buehler, 2004; Shank & Dewald, 2003). Gibbons (2005b) argues that "course management systems should be viewed as another means for academic libraries to become more engaged in the learning and teaching missions of their institutions" (p. 12). Cohen (2002) asserts that the integration of the libraries' digital resources into a CMS is "essential for getting the maximum value from the institutional investments of both money and expertise" (p. 12). These notions are pedagogical in nature, as they do not refer to commercial gains of the CMS developer. The expertise of academic librarians sifting through vast amounts of electronic resources such as digital books, e-journals and research databases, results in high quality research material integrated directly into students' online courses rather than students relying on the open web to find adequate materials. Offering appropriate and relevant resources to students, making access to resource links more convenient and the time and effort saved by faculty in developing research guides are additional recognisable benefits (Gibbons, 2005c; Kearly & Phillips, 2004).

Shank and Dewald (2003) report that if libraries successfully establish a presence in courseware, the gain will be an increased relevance with students, and relationships and collaborative ties with faculty would be strengthened. For libraries to remain relevant in the online course environment, Dygert and Moeller (2007) assert that librarians not only need to understand how CMSs are utilised on their campuses,

but also generate awareness of library resources that can be integrated into the CMS. Solis and Hampton (2009) presented a case study demonstrating the way the University of North Carolina (UNC) Libraries brought their resources into the campus CMS. Course-specific web pages were created and incorporated into online course sites to facilitate the use of the library and to promote a comprehensive view of library resources and services at the UNC at Chapel Hill. The study began in spring 2006 with 10 course pages being utilised across one department. The study concluded in spring 2008 with 100 course pages being utilised in over 30 departments. General findings of this study indicated overall student appreciation of course specific web pages as they were not only directly related to course assignments, but also provided a new way to help students understand the libraries' resources and services. Several authors (Dygert & Moeller, 2007; Gibbons, 2005a; Shank & Dewald, 2003) also expressed a concern regarding the challenges libraries faced with competing information providers if they didn't integrate themselves into the CMS. Gibbons (2005a) emphasised that in order to avoid marginalisation by Google, libraries "must go into the online-learning environment with offerings that fit into the students' expectations and course context" (p. 5). Dygert and Moeller (2007) affirm, "publishers are developing course cartridges that compete with and/or duplicate library resources" (p. 306). Shank and Dewald (2003) state the claim that "commercial information distributors, who have already gained a foothold in some courseware environments, may successfully eclipse the library as the primary information provider" (p. 42). Expanding the library beyond the walls of the physical building, allowing access to its resources and services independent of time or location, and enhancing students' information literacy skills are clear reasons for integrating library resources and services into course management systems. One final, and crucial, benefit of integrating the library into the courseware domain is the simultaneous preservation and reinvention of the library's symbolic place in higher academic institutions (Lawrence, 2006). Further research in this area is needed, however, to evaluate the overall integration process and to investigate whether or not integration is impacting student learning.

Collaboration Efforts with Department and Faculty

After discussing the nature of library integration within a CMS, a shift in the literature was detected. The focus now resided in efforts to determine whether or not campus members are willing to collaborate to make library integration happen. Non-research materials such as discussion groups, conference presentations and professional literature indicate that librarians have already adopted various methods for integrating resources and services into the campus curriculum. However, several

research authors agree that partnering is essential to create optimal learning environments that benefit students and to successfully incorporate information literacy; i.e., the ability of individuals to locate, evaluate and use information effectively, into online courses (Buehler, 2004; Jackson, 2007; Oldham & Skorina, 2009). Jackson (2007) surveyed 171 librarians throughout the California State University System. The study's objective was to assess librarians' understanding of using the blackboard learning management system as a teaching and learning tool for information literacy. Jackson's survey results revealed several barriers to collaboration and integration. Respondents indicated that faculty buy-in, cooperation, time, staffing, funding and the technology learning curve were evidence of the lack of librarian involvement in online courses. Surprisingly, 47 of 56 (84%) respondents who completed their university's training session on the learning management systems reported infrequently or never collaborating with faculty to include information literacy. Hightower, Rawl and Schutt (2008) conducted a similar study at Auburn University at Montgomery. Limiting their scope to a single university campus, the researchers used an online survey, follow-up interviews and an examination of the library's server log to assess current faculty practices of delivering the library to students using Web CT. Of the 102 surveys distributed, only 29 faculties (28%) responded. Twenty-two of the 29 respondents did not integrate library resources. Seventy-seven per cent (17 out of 22) of these non-integrators indicated a willingness to do so. Faculty argued that the librarians must be proactive in their efforts to encourage and educate faculty about their library and the ways in which the library's resources and services can be integrated into Web CT courses. As use of CMSs spreads across higher education institutions, librarians find themselves questioning their roles in these educational venues. Today's academic librarians are no longer identified as "keepers of the books". Rather, they are identified as a multi-role educational player encompassing the responsibilities of "educator, information specialist, instructional designer and information technologist" (Hartsell-Gundy & Tumbleson, 2012, p. 53).

In order to truly be where their users are, and to manage the aforementioned multi-role position, it is essential for academic librarians to engage in high levels of collaboration between themselves and faculty members. Owens and Bozeman (2009) affirm, "librarians cannot fulfill the mission of providing equivalent levels of services to online students without cooperation from the online faculty" (p. 33). A well-documented concept known as embedded librarianship has been a significant collaborative effort between these professional groups (Edwards, Kumar & Ochoa, 2010; Kesselman & Watstein, 2009; York & Vance, 2009). Kesselman and Watstein (2009) describe embedded librarianship as "bringing the library and the librarian to

the user" (p. 385) regardless of the user's physical location. By embedding a librarian into an online, graduate-level educational technology course, Edwards and Black (2012) were able to study the impact of the embedded librarian's presence on student learning at The University of Florida. Focusing on four specific characteristics, self-efficacy related to information literacy skills, library skill performance, graduate-level research measured by bibliographic citations, and personal reflections on the embedded librarian presence, Edwards, and Black used pre- and post-tests, written artefacts, descriptive analyses of bibliographic citations and online surveys in their case study. While the findings of this study revealed the efficacy of embedding librarians into online courses, the need for careful considerations in several areas, such as understanding course and learner needs, course curriculum, and design of appropriately related embedded content were identified. At The University of Rhode Island, Kinnie (2006), a humanities reference librarian, offered his services to faculty using asynchronous courses with assigned research projects. In essence, Kinnie promoted himself and became embedded into several online courses. His involvement ranged from providing contact information to posting just-in-time resources to providing individual reference help. The outcome of Kinnie's efforts to bring the library into the online learning environment at his institution resulted in the following lessons learnt: "the more collaboration there is between a librarian and an instructor, the better the relationships with their students resulting in better research; providing appropriate material at the student's point of need is an effective way to reach distance students who cannot make it to a library; and librarian involvement at the institutional level legitimizes the library's role in instruction" (Kinnie, 2006, p. 3-4). Kinnie's efforts influenced the notion that in order to retain visibility and viability as an instructional component in academic curriculums, librarians must be creative and proactive in securing involvement in these online learning environments. The research experiences and concluding results from these studies demonstrated both the lack of and the willingness to forge collaborative relationships. Librarians have realised that through collaboration efforts with faculty members, the campus course management system is a valued vehicle for the delivery of library resources and services to distance learning students (Bell & Shank, 2007; Hightower, Rawl, & Schutt, 2008). Despite these institution-specific case studies, partnerships should be built across all higher education institutions. "Librarians, instructional technologists, faculty, and students should not plod onwards to isolation" (Oldham & Skorina, 2009, p. 637). Raraigh-Hopper (2009) affirms the importance in understanding "that any quality distance learning library services program will have a high level of cooperation occurring among those individuals providing the services; this is where the relationship between librarians and faculty needs to be recognized" (p. 74). Given the

professional and complementary expertise of these campus members, it would be obvious they partner to enrich the educational experiences of distance learners.

Library Websites and Web-Based Research Guides Serving Distance Learners

A crucial element to a library's success is its online web presence (Burke, 2013). As a gathering point for patrons to locate information, a library's web space provides an arena in which the library can "share its services and tell its story to the community it serves" (Burke, 2013, p. 155). In academia, a library's web space is a gateway towards meeting the informational and instructional needs of on-campus and off-campus communities of users. There is not a one-size-fits-all model for what a library's website contains. Even though the design, content and usability of academic libraries websites vary; there may be common services and features included such as interaction with the library catalogue, electronic resources, library databases, how-to guides or tutorials, virtual reference and blogs. In 2002, Adams and Cassner conducted a research study on member institutions of the Association of Research Libraries helps to identify the content and design of library websites serving distance learners. Knowing that, "distance students expect to remotely access multiple resources and services from their academic institution's library" (p. 3), Adams and Cassner specifically focused their study on libraries' distance education home pages (Adams & Cassner, 2002). Selection of member institutions analysed was based on two criteria: the institution is an academic library and the library web site has links to distance education services for library users. In total, 48 of 123 ARL member institutions' library web sites were studied in depth. Adams and Cassner (2002) analysed two aspects of data collection: "design characteristics of the distance education home page and content of the distance education and main library home pages as reflected by hyperlinks" (p. 6). Design elements were reflected by the form and structure of the website, whereas, content elements reflected the subjects or topics. After providing in-depth numerical results for design elements such as presence of a distance education home page (100%), presence of graphics (90%) and number of screen levels from home page to distance education page (range varied from 1 to 4), the researchers provided results for content elements such as contact information for library distance education services (83%), mission statement or explanation of services offered to distance students and/or distance faculty (87%) and specific library resources and services available to distance students. Resources and services available on the library's home pages included "electronic reference assistance (98%); interlibrary loan forms (96%); library instruction (96%); lists of subject specialist librarians (92%); guides

to using the Internet (87%); guides to conducting library research (81%); list of reciprocal borrowing institutions (73%); and electronic reserves (71%)" (p. 9). Additionally, links to subject guides or pathfinders were found on 96% of ARL libraries with distance services (Adams & Cassner, 2002). "Distance education home pages are a primary venue in reaching distance learners" (Adams & Cassner, 2002, p. 11). The researchers offered the following suggestions and strategies in conclusion: collaboration between librarians and web developers needs to happen in order to make distance education pages more accessible, or findable; services specific to distance faculty should be further developed; library terminology needs clarification for the non-traditional distance learner; and page content should be reviewed for inclusion of links useful to distance learners. Having these strategies in place could help to ensure navigation to resources and services available for distance learners. A web site alone is not enough to assist patrons in finding the information they need. "Libraries must be focused on building and offering interactive services through the site;" services that "engage, connect, and communicate with the community of users that it serves" (Burke, 2013, p. 155). One such service is that known as library subject guides. Library subject guides were initially called Pathfinders. Defined as "lists of recommended readings," pathfinders were a static product "created to aid researchers in the initial stages of the research process" (Roberts & Hunter, 2011, p. 68). From the first Pathfinder documentation in the 1950s, to the advent of electronic research guides in the mid-1990s, the format and content of library guides has shifted over time. Today's library subject guides are dynamic – easily created and instantly updated (Arvin, 2009; Gonzalez & Westbrook, 2010; McMullin & Hutton, 2010; Roberts & Hunter, 2011), responsive to changes in resources or curricula (Roberts & Hunter, 2011), interactive with social learning and Web 2.0 components (Roberts & Hunter, 2011; Robinson & Kim, 2010), and can be embedded or linked in a course management system, putting the resource "where the student is" (Gonzalez & Westbrook, 2010; McMullin & Hutton, 2010; Robinson & Kim, 2010) – and serve as a centralised collection of course-specific or subject based resources for traditional and distance learners.

In 2012, Ghaphery and White examined two sets of research data, 99 American university ARL libraries' web-based research guides and 198 survey responses from 188 libraries participating in professional discussion lists, to identify how libraries are currently implementing and managing web-based research guides. Their findings, 75 out of 99 (~ 76%) library websites visited, and 129 out of 188 (69%) libraries, reinforced a common theme found within the literature review, that "subject-based research guides are a core component of academic library web services" (Ghaphery & White, 2012, p. 22). As an always available, online content

resource, library guides have the capability of reaching distance learners at their point of need (Grabowsky, 2013; McMullin & Hutton, 2010; Robinson & Kim, 2010).

Experiences and Perspectives Delivering Library Resources and Services at a Distance

A reality in today's academic libraries is "that both the on campus user and the distance user are all requesting the same information and usually in the same format" (Graham, 2009, p. 46). Literature has evidenced that when it comes to providing library resources and services, there is no longer a distinction between serving traditional students versus distance students (Burich, 2004; Graham, 2009). Listed below are a few representative examples of experiences and perspectives from academic librarians in their efforts to provide distance learning library services:

- Efforts of "being real" (Coonin, Williams & Steiner, 2011);
- Despite being embedded in an online course there exists an issue of building rapport with students from a distance (Coltrain, 2014);
- Understanding and identifying distance learners' needs (Holloway, 2011; Tang, 2009; Yang, 2005);
- Identifying online teaching faculty and understanding their needs (Yang, 2005);
- Not enough time to devote to distance learning library services due to multitude of responsibilities (Tang, 2009);
- Rising service expectations (Li, 2013);
- Those providing services are forced to be creative in outreach efforts; and
- Staffing and financial considerations.

Academic libraries and librarians "cannot be all things to everybody" (Graham, 2009, p. 46), however, Gibbons (2007) believes "the Internet and Web cannot replace the academic library because, although technology can be a better information provider, it cannot substitute for the essential role of humans in the creation, transmission and dissemination of knowledge" (p. 11).

CONCLUSION

"A good library is the heart of every campus. That is neither dreamy romanticism nor metaphor; it is a simple statement of fact" (Crawford, 1999). As a symbolic structure of scholarship and service, the physical entity that is an academic library in no way limits the ability to reach beyond their walls. "While our patrons were once expected to come to the library, we now ask how we can better reach the patron, with distance no longer a barrier" (Snyder, Logue &

Preece, 1997). The message coming out of this study is one of understanding that a library is driven by service, whether that service is face-to-face or online is extraneous to the ideal of reaching all patrons adequately and equally.

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