Not So Extreme Makeover: Online Edition

The Library's online appearance is changing. Some things are already in place and some are on the way.

First of all, we upgraded our library management system (Aleph) to a newer version over the summer. Part of that upgrade is a new look and some new features for our online catalog. For those who login to the catalog system in order to renew items or see what you have out, you now need to click on "User Information" to get to the login screen. Your login information remains the same. Your user name is your normal Cobleskill user name that you use to get on the computer every day and your password is your 800#, no dashes.

The online catalog also has a new feature on the advanced search screen. In the older version, you could narrow a search by a given year, such as 2004, but you couldn't really do a range of years. Now you can. This is useful for those times when you only want the most recent five years of material. Or, when you need to find something published during a particular historical time period such as World War I.

Another big change took place with one of the Library's most popular research databases. EBSCOhost Academic Search (along with the other EBSCO databases such as Hospitality & Tourism Index, Education Research Complete, and MasterFILE) debuted a new interface in late-July. This was the first major redesign of their interface since 2002. It's easier to use now and has some cool new features. One particularly nice feature is the ability to preview an article by hovering on it in the results list. It saves clicking back and forth so much. Popular search limits such as full-text and publication date are now available right from the results screen. It makes tweaking your searches quicker and more straightforward. The slider for publication dates is especially good.

The last major online change is still to come. The Library's website (www.cobleskill.edu/library) will soon have a new layout as part of the College's efforts to have all the Cobleskill pages look the same. Systems Librarian, Peter Barvoets, spent a good deal of the summer moving all of our web content, reorganizing things to work with the College templates, and making adjustments to the site's functionality. These changes should go live within a few weeks. Once we make the switch, please contact Pete if you spot any problems (barvoepd@cobleskill.edu or x5894). And feel free to contact any of the librarians if you have questions about these changes.

Budget Cuts

The Library was notified in mid-August that our 2008-09 acquisitions budget is being cut by 28%, or approximately $38,000. Much of our available funds will be needed to maintain access to our online resources and core journal subscriptions. This means that the book and video portions of our budget will be the hardest hit. Also, some journal subscriptions will probably have to be eliminated.

These are hard decisions. We are not happy but we will cope. Faculty requesting materials are strongly encouraged to be sure that what they request is what is truly needed. Checking availability in the SUNY Union Catalog (see our website for the link: www.cobleskill.edu/library) is the best way to start. SUNY libraries are collaborating to ensure that the widest possible array of materials is available to all users.

Good Morning, Library!

So maybe "good" wasn't the word to use on Monday, June 9th when Library staff arrived to find fallen shelves in the Periodicals area on the main floor. It seems the toggle-bolts that secured the shelves to the wall were pulled right through the drywall! This was most likely due to the weight of the shelving unit and its contents.

Amazingly, the materials housed on these shelves were undamaged. The steel shelves were badly bent in several places and some of the shelves that the unit fell onto were also bent. The cross-bracing on those shelves kept them from going over and starting a domino effect. The most fortunate part of this incident is that it happened while the Library was closed so no one was around to get hurt.

Once the bent and broken shelves were moved out and the area deemed safe to work in, we transferred the materials to carts and study tables for temporary storage.

The wall has now been reinforced, repaired, and repainted. The leftover orange carpet that the old shelving unit was hiding has even been replaced. New shelves are on order and will be installed ASAP. While this isn't the way we prefer to make improvements, we think it's safe to say that this area will soon be better than ever.

Early Orientation Program

The Center for Academic Support and Excellence (CASE) implemented a new early orientation program this semester. Approximately 148 new students in the MERITS program or who utilize disAbility Support Services came to campus for extended orientation Aug. 20-21.

The goal of early orientation is to provide incoming students with a smooth transition from high school to college. Along with completing the StrengthsQuest assessment, students participated in workshops to strengthen their study skills and habits. MERITS students were given a complete and detailed overview of the program including the requirements of the OSEM class. Students with disabilities got a clear understanding of what services and technology are available to them.

This extended time on campus gave the new students a strong start to their college careers, and should help to assure they are fully committed to their academic and support programs from the very start.

ANGEL is Coming to Cobleskill

No, not the TV show about vampires. This ANGEL is a Course Management System (the company calls it the Learning Management Suite or ANGEL Learning) and it will be replacing Blackboard over the coming academic year. Instructional Technologies Coordinator, Jiang Tan, will be looking for a few volunteers to use ANGEL for their courses during the fall semester. This pilot project will help Dr. Tan and ITS test the system and make adjustments as necessary. For example, ANGEL needs to work smoothly with Banner and TurnItIn.

Speaking of TurnItIn, it will now be a part of ANGEL rather than a separate system. We originally got this plagiarism prevention software in spring 2007. However, it's lack of integration with our various systems made it difficult to implement. This change will make it much easier to use.

Hopefully, ANGEL will be up and working on our network by the end of September at which point Dr. Tan will be able to start training faculty in its use. The official move from Blackboard to ANGEL will happen in spring 2009 (next semester). If you have any questions about ANGEL (or other Instructional Technologies issues) please contact Jiang Tan (x5869 or tanj@cobleskill.edu).

Recommended Reading

Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy, and the West
by Benazir Bhutto

Another Thing to Fall
by Laura Lippman

Debt Cures "They" Don't Want You to Know About
by Kevin Trudeau

Compulsion
by Jonathan Kellerman

Don't Let the Lipstick Fool You
by Lisa Leslie

The Snow Queen
by Mercedes Lackey

The Monster of Florence
by Douglas Preston

The Secret Between Us
by Barbara Delinsky

Bottomfeeder: How to Eat Ethically in a World of Vanishing Seafood
by Taras Grescoe

The Assassin
by Stephen Coonts

Red Colored Elegy
by Seiichi Hayashi

The Chris Farley Show: a Biography in Three Acts
by Tom Farley & Tanner Colby

Who Do I Call?

Every academic department is assigned a Library liaison and, this summer, we changed those assignments. Fran Apollo is now Library liaison to all departments in the School of Business and Pete Barvoets to all departments in the School of Agriculture & Natural Resources. Departments in the School of Liberal Arts & Sciences are now split between Katherine Brent (Natural Sciences, Mathematics, Physical Education) and April Davies (Social Sciences, Humanities, Early Childhood, Exploratory Studies).

Library liaisons help with selecting Library resources (books, journals, etc.) in their liaison subject areas. They also facilitate communication between their departments and the Library. In order to fulfill these duties, liaisons attend school and department meetings, meet individually with faculty, and do pretty much anything else that serves to foster a positive working relationship with their liaison areas.

If you want to make sure the Library acquires a particular resource in *your* area— you know who to call.

IDS Delivers for Library Users

Two years ago, the Library joined the Information Delivery Services (IDS) Project, a cooperative undertaking of (then) 18 SUNY libraries committed to providing easier access to our combined collections through enhanced borrowing and delivery services. We hoped to achieve turnaround times of 48 hours for electronic desktop delivery of articles and 72 hours for books and other physical items.

Participation in the IDS Project has grown since 2006 to 34 libraries. It's also expanded beyond SUNY; libraries at private schools such as Clarkson University and St. John Fisher College are also participating. One of the newest IDS members is the New York State Research Library. Its 20 million item collection is a welcome addition to the collective pool of available materials.

Our participation in IDS has been of great benefit to Library users. In the 2007-2008 school year, students and faculty at Cobleskill received 1,227 items through interlibrary loan. Of these, 566 items were sent to us by libraries in the IDS Project. By spring 2007, 58% of the books in the Project met their 72 hour delivery goal and 88% of the articles met their 48 hour goal. Of that 88% of the articles, 25% of those arrived within 6-12 hours! Pretty good turnaround time if we do say so ourselves.

As the IDS Project rolls into the future, the Library will be working with the other members on ways to further shorten delivery times. For example, automated processing of article requests is due to be tested this winter. Also, IDS will continue pursuing expansion of the membership in order to increase the pool of available materials and improve fill-rates.

E-Resource Spotlight: Project MUSE

The Library added a new social sciences and humanities database to our electronic offerings in June— Project MUSE. This is an outstanding resource for these areas. It offers 100% full-text articles from high quality peer-reviewed journals.

Journals accessible in MUSE include *World Politics*, *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, *Journal of Higher Education*, *Technology and Culture*, *Journal of Women's History*, *Early American Literature*, *American Journal of Mathematics*, and many more.

What can you find in Project MUSE? Well, let's say you're looking for articles on urban development. A quick search in MUSE using that term nets over 10,000 results! That's a lot to go through so, if you narrow your search to bring out the sustainable angle with the "search within results" feature, you'll find yourself with 714 hits. A more manageable number but still quite large. If you change your strategy, you can make that search more focused. For example, put urban development in quotes ("urban development") on that initial search so that MUSE looks for the exact phrase and you get just over 400 results. That's a number you can work with. Or, you can narrow the search by adding terms such as sustainable or housing or planning— whatever works to bring out the angle you're interested in.

Project MUSE is available from the Library's website (www.cobleskill.edu/library) anytime you need it. Simply go to the electronic databases section of the site and choose Project MUSE from the list. As always, contact a Reference Librarian if you have any questions.

Fall Book Sale

It's time to give us your books! And then buy others to replace them!! The Library's big annual book sale officially starts Sept. 27th (Homecoming Weekend) and runs through the end of October.

Please, clean out your bookshelves and CD/DVD racks to help us stock the sale carts. Simply drop items off at the Circulation Desk and we'll take it from there. Try to get stuff to us by Sept. 24th so we have time to sort through things.

Book sale prices will be the same as always: $1 for hardcovers, 50¢ for paperbacks. Multi-volume sets, non-book items, and other special items will have their prices posted.

The sale went really well last year; we sold around 700 books. Let's see if can beat that this year! Please contact April Davies (x5887 or daviesac@cobleskill.edu) if you have any questions.

Library Workshop Series

A limited number of our popular Library workshops will be offered this semester. Watch for the schedule on Sharepoint in mid- to late-September.

A new feature is in the works— Instruction Librarian Fran Apollo is planning to record these workshops! Video clips could then be placed on the Library's website or in Blackboard courses (or ANGEL once it's up and running) for the convenience of our community. Many students commented last year that the times the workshops were offered (though they were varied) were not convenient and we are doing our best to respond to that assessment.

Once these online videos are available, instructors can assign students to view and discuss, and then evaluate how students incorporated the instruction into their various assignments.

> *If there is a bedrock principle underlying the First Amendment, it is that the government may not prohibit the expression of an idea simply because society finds the idea itself offensive or disagreeable.*
>
> — Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan, Jr.

E-Reserves & Online Course Readings

The Library has been offering electronic course reserves (e-reserves) for a few years now and they continue to be useful and popular. Having that article you use for your intro class every year online instead of in a file drawer means students can access it 24/7. The Library is open a lot of hours but not that many.

An extension of this service is online course readings. We all know that textbooks can be terribly expensive. Sets of online course readings can be a viable alternative. Instead of a pricey textbook (that the publisher will probably replace with a "new edition" in a year), consider using a collection of articles, book chapters (within copyright limitations), lecture notes, etc.

Remember that putting course materials online is not a way around the copyright laws. The Library will take care of securing clearance to use copyrighted materials for electronic access as necessary.

Faculty interested in trying this for their classes should contact Katherine Brent (brentke@cobleskill.edu or x5851) to get started.

2008 Presidential Election

The primaries and caucuses are finally over! The presidential candidates are set: Barack Obama for the Democrats and John McCain for the Republicans. Either way, it's going to be an historic election.

Who will *you* choose on November 4th? Not sure yet? If you need to learn more about the candidates and their issues, we suggest the following websites:

OnTheIssues	www.ontheissues.org
YouChoose'08	www.youtube.com/youchoose
Annenberg Political Fact Check	www.factcheck.org
John McCain's site	www.johnmccain.com
Barack Obama's site	www.barackobama.com

Are you eligible to vote but not yet registered? The registration deadline here in New York is Oct. 10, 2008. Visit www.elections.state.ny.us/Voting.html for registration forms and instructions.

We can't, and won't, tell you how to vote, but we want to encourage you to participate in the electoral process. Make your voice heard— register, read up, vote!

NetLibrary Just Keeps Growing

We added four new subject sets to our NetLibrary online book collection over the summer. The Ready Reference, Health & Wellness, Teacher's Resources Basic, and Computer Security & Networking sets are now available. We also added another large multidisciplinary set through a consortial purchasing deal. These new purchases bring our NetLibrary collection to well over 7,000 titles!

NetLibrary gives our users 24/7 access to those thousands of books, whether they're on campus or off. This includes classic fiction and poetry, reference works, and books on just about any topic— from classroom management to wireless crime.

You can get to all of these e-books from the Library's regular catalog or from NetLibrary directly. To explore the possibilities, go to the Library's website (www.cobleskill.edu/library) and choose either Online Catalog or NetLibrary, or use the Quick Search right there on the homepage. Feel free to give us a call, shoot us an email, or just stop by if you have questions or simply want some help getting started.

Weeding the Garden of Knowledge

We can't keep every book; there's just not room. Materials that are out-of-date or falling apart crowd out other materials that may be more useful. In order to keep the Library's collection vibrant, it is necessary to pull the weeds from time to time.

So, this fall, we are beginning our biggest weeding project ever. The Library tracks how often and when materials are used. We analyzed those data to determine the "shelf-time period" of the collection. This is the amount of time something remains on the shelf between uses. Let's say that 99% of materials actually being used sit on the shelf a maximum of 14 years before someone uses them again. This means that, theoretically, you could remove everything that hadn't been used in more than 14 years and only 1% of those items would truly be missed. This is a somewhat extreme scenario but the theory is useful for identifying candidates for weeding.

Librarians will be examining items as they are pulled from the shelves to decide whether to keep or weed them. We strongly encourage faculty to help us make those decisions. Library liaisons will be in contact as things progress.

Calendar

Sept. 1
  Labor Day

Sept. 19
  Talk Like a Pirate Day

Sept. 26-28
  Book Sale begins /
  Homecoming Weekend

Sept. 27 – Oct. 4
  Banned Books Week

Oct. 11-14
  Fall Break

Oct. 16
  Dictionary Day

Nov. 4
  Election Day

Nov. 15
  America Recycles Day

Nov. 26-30
  Thanksgiving Break

Dec. 15-18
  Finals Week

Staff News

Thomas Barnes has joined the staff as our new Adjunct Reference Librarian. Tom has many years of reference experience from his time at Guilderland Public Library. He will be a valuable addition to the Library.

Peter Barvoets was recently promoted to Senior Assistant Librarian. Congratulations, Pete!

Katherine Brent joined us in July as Circulation/Interlibrary Loan Librarian. Katherine had previously spent several semesters with us as an adjunct Reference Librarian. In addition to her Library degree, she also holds an M.A. in History from SUNY Albany.

April Davies was elected to a two-year term as Secretary of the SUNY Librarians Association (SUNYLA) in April. She is also serving as Conference Chair for the Library Software Users' Group (LiSUG) conference to be held at SUNYIT in October.

Jiang Tan and Nancy Van Deusen traveled to China for two weeks in May. They visited five different institutions where Dr. Tan gave presentations about course management systems in the U.S. and Nancy gave presentations about academic libraries in the U.S. Both visited with counterparts at these campuses and made some good contacts for the Library and SUNY Cobleskill.

Kyla Titus joined the CASE staff in August as a disAbility Support Services assistant, replacing Judith Christman. Kyla graduated from Empire State College with a BA in Communications. Her first career in higher education was as an analyst with NY Medical College's Information Processing Center

Nancy Van Deusen and Katherine Brent attended the Information Delivery Services (IDS) conference held at SUNY Oswego in August.

Keep Your Eyes Peeled

The Library will be adding a new online "chat" reference service in the near future. AskUs24/7 will give our users 24/7 access to reference assistance right from their desktops. Will SUNY Cobleskill librarians be the ones answering questions at 3:00am? Goodness, no! This is a cooperative effort among libraries all over the world and commercial enterprises. Our librarians will be on duty a certain number of hours each week, answering questions for users in Denmark, Zimbabwe, or wherever they happen to be.

Our participation in AskUs24/7 is another fine example of libraries working together to maximize resources. By working with the Capital District Library Council and area libraries, the participation cost is significantly lowered thus making it possible for us to bring you this valuable service.