

The Role of an Instructional Design Specialist in an Academic Library

By Kate McMillan

New technology is nothing new to academic libraries. It can be said a lot has changed in academic libraries in the past ten to twenty years. Gone is the card catalog; OPACs and electronic databases are the standard in nearly every academic library in the United States. Even the way students go to class has changed. Because of the widespread use of the Internet, many colleges and universities offer an ever-growing number of their courses online. The availability of new online research technology has impacted libraries as well; in 2008 Dempsey, Fisher, Wright, and Anderson concluded the use of electronic library resources by students is in response to faculty making their use a course requirement. With all of this new technology being introduced, academic librarians are finding that they may need training in order to support the research needs of the students and faculty that they serve.

A lot is involved in understanding the many aspects of technology and the capacity of human learning ability that come into play when providing online education services. According to Larreamendy-Joerns & Leinhardt (2006) online education is "an emerging field that lies at the junction of distance education, human-computer interaction, instructional technology, and cognitive science." The need for academic institutions to deliver and support a multitude of online platforms has created a need for a professional, full-time instructional design specialist at many institutions. Academic librarians, in their ongoing mission to obtain more complete and efficient ways of disseminating information, are now relying on these professionals in order to keep current with existing and emerging educational technology resources.

Dr. Les Lunce is one such professional. He is an Instructional Design Specialist as well

the Associate Director for the Center for Instruction, Research and Technology (CIRT) at Indiana State University (ISU) in Terre Haute. His position encompasses a number of duties. In addition to being involved in video and online distance learning projects, he coordinates and supervises projects for faculty in the areas of instructional design, academic programming, multimedia design, visualization, 3D modeling, and grant writing. Lunce's CIRT-related duties also include providing technical assistance, including workshops, and acting as liaison to faculty in support of their traditional and online course offerings.



Dr. Les Lunce

In his role as a liaison to the campus library, Lunce maintains direct communication with the ISU Library Systems Department chair, while his supervisor, the Director of CIRT, sustains contact with the ISU Dean of Library Services. Lunce has ongoing

communications with the systems chair about training in any educational technology for ISU librarians. Examples of CIRT workshops that ISU librarians have taken advantage of include Blackboard (a course management system), Elluminate (a web conferencing program), SafeAssign (a plagiarism detection tool), Adobe Connect (another web conferencing program) and Qualtrics (a survey software program), and special topics like assessment and social networking. CIRT workshops can also be tailored by request. Along with all ISU faculty, library faculty receive all electronic and printed notifications and invitations from CIRT regarding programs, services and available technologies. Although faculty have available to them a growing variety of CIRT workshops

each semester, unfortunately, like many academic departments on the ISU campus, CIRT is limited by what they can offer by time and available staff. "Given the diversity of the projects and the frequency with which they arise, judiciously assigning staff and scheduling their time is paramount," Lunce explains.

In addition to expanding his staff, Lunce looks forward to seeing how new technological developments might improve the CIRT's ability to offer training and software to the campus community. "For CIRT I would like to see expanded visualization and video production resources, creation of a state-of-the-art learning space, increased investigation of virtual environments and simulations for instruction, collaboration and experiential learning," Lunce said. Whenever this new technology arrives, you can be sure that ISU librarians will be involved, and it's probably a safe bet that Les Lunce and his CIRT colleagues will be there, readily able to assist them with whatever they need.

References

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