

E-Text Website Research Project

***A collaborative effort of Information Technology and Disability
Service Professionals***

CSU CATS TIGERS Grant Proposal, 2002/2003

Category: Service

Proposal Team

Jeniffer Wellington, Coordinator, CSU Hayward Media & Technology Services, CSU Hayward
jwelling@csuhayward.edu | 510.885.3576

Anne Judd, Instructional Designer, Online Programs, CSU Hayward
ajudd@csuhayward.edu | 510.885.4495

Penny Peterson, Coordinator, High Tech Center, CSU Long Beach
penny@csulb.edu | 562.985.5605

Jeff Senge, Coordinator, Information & Computer Access Program, CSU Fullerton
jsenge@fullerton.edu | 714.278.7253

Mary Cheng, Director, Student Disability Resource Center, CSU Hayward
mcheng@csuhayward.edu | 510.885.2672

Supervisors of Proposal Team

John Charles, Associate Vice President, Information Technology & Computing Services,
CSU Hayward, jcharles@csuhayward.edu | 510.885.3785

Janis Linfield, Interim Assistant Vice President, Divisional Resources and Retention Services,
CSU Hayward, jlinfiel@csuhayward.edu | 510.885-4740

David Sanfilippo, Director, Disabled Student Services
CSU Long Beach, dsanfili@csulb.edu | 562.985.5401

Paul Miller, Director, Disabled Student Services
CSU Fullerton, pmiller@fullerton.edu | 714.278.2408

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to research the feasibility of establishing a secured website to archive and distribute electronic Text (e-text) files of textbooks across the CSU System. The project will focus on needs assessment, development of best practices, and efficient utilization of resources across the entire CSU university system.

Background

For the last several years, there has been an increasing need for textbooks in e-text to accommodate students who are visually impaired or have other learning or physical disabilities that preclude them from using standard print texts. Federal and state laws mandate that enrolled CSU students with print disabilities must be provided equal access to instructional materials, which can require the production of textbooks in e-text, Braille, or large print. Producing alternate format materials is a costly and labor-intensive process. Books must frequently be optically scanned, recognized into text, and proofread and edited for accuracy and usable format. On average, this costs about \$1,000 per book to accomplish. Some CSU campuses are currently spending \$100,000 annually to address this need.

Individual CSU campuses have expressed concern that the production of e-text and other alternative formats is not being integrated in a coherent, coordinated, and strategic fashion into the operations, planning, and budgeting of the CSU institutions. Moreover, the recent passage of AB 422 requiring publishers to provide e-text to students with print disabilities has increased the demand for e-text and created additional burdens to existing e-text production systems. The lack of a common standard and the differential quality of the e-texts received from the publishers have necessitated CSU e-text production staff to “clean up” and restore the structural integrity of the e-texts before they can be used by students. In addition, the delivery time lag from the publishers posed another challenge. Campuses have responded by producing the e-text in advance of receiving the material from the publisher so students can receive their books in a timely fashion. Heretofore, each CSU campus has had to wrestle with the provision of e-text in a timely and cost-effective manner on its own, and the strain on existing resources is evident. In light of these challenges, there exists a unique opportunity within the CSU to develop more cost-effective methods of delivering this service through a coordinated and systematic approach based on best practices in this field.

Description

Technology has historically played a significant role in providing universal access to people with disabilities. Assistive technology such as screen readers, voice recognition, and optical scanning, has provided access to educational resources to students with disabilities. Though the linkage between technology and the field of disability is self-evident, yet, the professionals in these two fields have traditionally worked in isolation from one another. This project seeks to bring together the expertise of IT and disability services professionals to work on a problem of significant magnitude within the CSU. The project team consists of IT staff at CSU Hayward (Jeniffer Wellington, Anne Judd) and the disability services professionals at CSU Long Beach (Penny Peterson), CSU Fullerton (Jeff Senge), and CSU Hayward (Mary Cheng).

The first phase of this project will be to conduct a CSU system-wide need assessment to determine current efforts, practices, and costs related to producing e-text of textbooks for students with print disabilities. This phase of the project will focus on data gathering to determine which campuses are providing e-text, who is responsible for providing it, and how they are producing it. The objective of this component of the research project is to determine the extent of the need throughout the CSU system and develop standards based on best practices for e-text and alternate media production.

The second phase of the project will address the need for best practices and standards for e-text and alternate media production throughout the CSU. Guidelines for consistently producing accurate and usable e-text in the most cost efficient manner will be developed and disseminated. This will be accomplished by utilizing the available CSU IT and disability services personnel with expertise in this area as well as other professionals knowledgeable in the production of e-text and alternative media from the Community College and UC systems. A one-day work session on October 16, 2002 to explore e-text best practices and a “birds of a feather” meeting on October 17, 2002 will be held in conjunction with the CAPEd conference (California Association of Postsecondary Education and Disabilities) in San Francisco. This venue is chosen because alternative media and e-text production personnel from the community colleges and the UC will be in attendance at this conference.

The final component of this project will research the feasibility of utilizing web-based technologies to enable e-text of textbooks to be shared among the CSU campuses. Since there are legal issues related to publisher permission, security, and copyright protection to be addressed, concentrated effort must be directed toward identifying solutions to these priorities. This component will be examined by bringing together technical and disability experts from within the CSU, professionals from the Community College and UC systems as well as outside consultants.

Discussion

Demand for e-text and alternate media (Braille and large print) is dramatically increasing throughout the CSU. Individual campuses are experiencing the fiscal and personnel resource strain this demand has created without any relief in sight. One possible way to reduce this strain is to develop methods to efficiently produce and share e-text that are produced in-house as well as received from the publishers across the CSU System. By identifying the need, developing production guidelines, and establishing a web-based method of sharing e-text textbooks, both fiscal and personnel resource efficiency may be maximized in this area. This research project will provide the information necessary to evaluate the feasibility of implementing a more centralized e-text production and distribution program in the CSU System.

Deliverables & Timeline

The resultant product of this grant would be a PowerPoint presentation of different approaches with associated costs, benefits and limitations of e-text production and distribution. Findings will be posted on a project website that is linked to the CATS-Merlot site. The presentation will be shared at the CATS conference. Recommendations will be forwarded to the CSU Advisory Committee on Services to Students with Disabilities for consideration. Moreover, consultation with the CSU Academic Technology Advisory Committee (ATAC) and the CSU Information Technology Committee (ITAC) regarding next steps for an enabling infrastructure that could be leveraged for all campuses via 4CNet will take place via appropriate channels.

Deliverables & Events	Due Date	Person(s) Responsible
System-wide Need Assessment & Survey of Existing Practices	September 1, 2002	Jeff Senge
E-text Best Practices Work Sessions	October 16 & 17, 2002	Project Team
Best Practices Recommendations	December 15, 2002	Penny Peterson, Anne Judd, Jeff Senge
Feasibility Study: Utilizing Web-based Technologies to Share E-text	January 15, 2003	Project Team
Creation of the e-text website	January 30, 2003	Jeniffer Wellington
PowerPoint Presentation of Findings	February 1, 2003	Project Team

Budget

Amount	To be Used for:	Time Allotted
\$2,000	Release Time for Jeff Senge to conduct need assessment & best practices survey	60 hours
\$2,000	Release and/or travel costs to project team members for Web-based Feasibility Study	60 hours
\$3,500	Travel costs to bring together ten (10) CSU IT and disability services professionals to work together with alternative media experts from the Community College and UC systems at the CAPED (California Association of Post-Secondary Education and Disability, October 16 and 17, 2002, San Francisco) Conference to create standards and best practices recommendations. Website for the conference: www.caped.net	\$130 for travel \$120 lodging \$100 per diem
\$500	Creation of project website to post findings and recommendations	20 hours
\$8,000	Total Funds Requested	

Biographies

Jeniffer R Wellington has worked as a technology professional in CSU since 1990. Her time in career afforded her experience with networks, information technology solutions, and instructional technology programs, directing information technology programs, and also working in a student service environment. Presently, Jeniffer serves as Coordinator for the Student Technology Service Center at CSU Hayward. She has designed and maintained web sites for academic and technology materials and services since 1997. She can be reached at jwelling@csuhayward.edu or 510.885.3576.

Anne Judd has worked in Academic Computing Support for over 20 years. During this time she spearheaded efforts to make technology accessible to students who needed it. Recently Anne has co-authored the CSU Hayward Accessible Technology Plan; wrote the draft for the campus Section 508 compliance plan and supervised the installation and distribution of assistive technology out into the campus environment. Anne is working on her Ph.D. in Online Education and Learning and her dissertation will address the issue of accessibility of online education for students with disabilities. She can be reached at ajudd@csuhayward.edu or 510.885.4495.

Penny Peterson is the Coordinator of the CSU Long Beach High Tech Center since 1988. A certified learning disability specialist as well as a certified adaptive technology specialist, Penny's expertise spans both the technology and disabilities fields. She has extensive experience in procuring and deploying adaptive hardware and software, providing training on assistive technology to students with disabilities, and producing e-text, Braille, and other alternative formats. She is currently spearheading web accessibility training efforts on the CSULB campus. She can be reached at penny@csulb.edu or 562.985.5605.

Jeff Senge is the founder and coordinator of the Information & Computer Access Program at CSU Fullerton. He was the co-project director of the Braille Transcription Center Project and co-authored "Preparing for College and Beyond, A Guide for Students with Visual Impairments." During his nearly 20 years in the field of adaptive technology and information access, he has authored numerous articles and presented at many professional conferences. His work for the past ten years has focused on improving information accessibility for persons with disabilities in postsecondary education. Jeff has conducted campus-wide as well as statewide research studies in this area. He has provided assessment and consultant services for the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights as well as the California State University and the California Community Colleges. He can be reached at jsenge@Exchange.FULLERTON.edu or 714.278.7253.

Mary Cheng is the Director of the Student Disability Resource Center at CSU Hayward. She along with Anne Judd co-authored the CSUH Accessible Technology Plan, which resulted in the procurement of long term funding of the adaptive technology program at the CSU Hayward campus. She is the Chair Elect of the statewide CSU Disability Services Directors Group and a member of the system-wide Advisory Group on Services to Students with Disabilities. Recently, she and Jeff Senge convened a cross-segmental meeting of 25 e-text and alternative media professionals from the CSU, Community College, and UC systems to discuss the challenges of AB 422 implementation and the issues surrounding e-text production. She can be reached at mcheng@csuhayward.edu or 510.885.2672.