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An Exploration of the Issues Related to Video Training of Student Workers in an Academic Library

Libraries have relied heavily on student workers to accomplish routine tasks. However, the student workforce is constantly changing and libraries often have to hire and train new student workers every year. If the library had access to training videos, some of the routine training tasks that library workers undertake every year could be eliminated.

Technological advances have led to the production of low cost editing and distribution tools for videos. Amateurs do not need to invest in expensive software to produce good videos. (Horizon, 2008) and colleges and universities are beginning to use the free video hosting service of YouTube to host educational videos Many have also established their own YouTube channel. Some examples of educational video content are listed in the Horizon 2008 report. One library in Australia has investigated the use of videos for printing and photocopying tasks. See <http://library.chisholm.vic.edu.au/intranet/ProducedTutorials/Demo.htm>

The change in student culture has also created an environment where students have different expectations. Pressley (2008) stated that current students grew up in a media environment that specialized “in short messages and multimedia, with news dispatched in sound bites and snippets of stories.” These students are now watching online video and according to Pressley “represent a change in our clientele and a potential need to change how we approach providing service” for the current generation of students.

Consequently, the widespread popularity of videos in the student population and the technological advances in video production implies that libraries should consider using video for training purposes. However, a review of the library literature including journals such as Information Technology in Libraries in the ProQuest database with the keyword video or student workers and video training produced less than ten articles.

The research study would investigate the techniques of producing video for training students in a low budget environment such as a library. For instance, software resources such as iMovie and Windows Movie maker could be used to train students to edit videos. Part of the project would investigate the best low cost software and equipment to use for video editing and production. Training techniques to train student workers to produce videos using storyboard software and video editing software would also be investigated. Different video editing software would be evaluated as well as video software that could be used to produce different video formats such as Flash video and the .avi video format. Guidelines for producing good quality audio and video would also be developed. The resources and techniques tested during the research period would be made available to LIBRAS member institutions on a wiki.

Another goal of the project would be to investigate the time savings from producing instructional videos to train student workers. Full time staff can use videos to train student workers in repetitive processes such as book processing instead of engaging in time consuming one-on-one training. One-on-one training, however, may be inevitable in some cases. A before and after survey about the amount of time spent training one-on-one versus the amount of time saved using the training video will help to evaluate some of the benefits of video training.