

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

ETDs and Virginia Tech

Nov. 18, 1996



What are we doing?

- Using computer-based technology to improve the content and availability of theses and dissertations
- Educating future scholars so they can public electronically and effectively using digital libraries

Why are we doing it?

- So students can be more creative in their scholarship
- So the knowledge contained in TDs is easily and widely available
- So students can learn to use digital libraries and publish electronically

What are the benefits?

Elimination of the hard copy will:

- Save the student money without a significant increase in effort
- Save shelf space in the library
- Save library staff resources
- Fit into the electronic library of the future
- Make access to ETDs more rapid and less expensive

What are the long term goals?

- 400K students/yr getting graduate degrees are exposed to e-publishing
- ETDs become rich hypermedia works
- Graduate education is more effective, students are more productive
- University publishes its scholarship
- Knowledge, technology transfer are faster and better

How are ETDs done at Virginia Tech?

ETDs are:

- Produced using standard word processing packages
- Delivered as portable document format (PDF) files
- Reviewed by the Graduate School
- Cataloged and archived by the library
- Downloaded by UMI from the library

Status of ETD Project at Virginia Tech

- Approved by university governance for implementation in Spring 1997
- Submission software is now in place at <http://etd.vt.edu/etd/>
- Submission workshops for students and faculty occur often
- Over 60 ETDs have been submitted
- Project is expanding to other universities

How has usage changed?

- Virginia Tech theses submitted 1990 - 1994, combined average circulation per copy is 2.24/yr
- Virginia Tech dissertations submitted 1990 - 1994, combined average circulation per copy is 3.2/yr
- July - August 1996, there were 1190 inquiries of the 50 ETD abstracts and 324 inquiries of the full text

What are Some of the Challenges?

- Training students and faculty
- Explaining importance to publishers
- Managerial and technical steering
- Evaluating at national scale and over research career of graduate students
- Improving digital library technology
- Scalability, sustainability, usability

Who are the sponsors and cooperators?

- Virginia Tech
- SURA
- SOLINET
- CSGS/CGS and CNI
- US Dept. of Ed. FIPSE
- University Microfilms
- IBM
- Adobe Systems

Universities in the Southeast Participating in the ETD Project

- Auburn University
- Clemson University
- Georgia Institute of Technology
- University of Georgia
- Mississippi State University
- North Carolina State University
- University of North Carolina at Charlotte
- University of Pennsylvania
- University of Virginia
- Vanderbilt University
- West Virginia University

Other Universities Interested in the VT ETD Project

- Columbia University
- Ohio State University
- MIT
- U. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- University of Pennsylvania
- University of Utah
- Rhodes University (South Africa)

What are steps toward the future?

- North Carolina State University is implementing a start-up plan
- The SURA/SOLINET Monticello Electronic Library will include theses and dissertations
- This concept will be extended to the National Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (with FIPSE support)

Help Available to Others

- WWW site with all you might need
- Automated submission system
- Student guidelines, style sheets, training materials, FAQs, PR info
- Word processor templates and converters
- Multimedia educational materials

Why might your university want to be involved?

- To improve graduate education
- To unlock university information
- To save money for students and for the university
- To build an important digital library that will help others get built

How can your university get involved?

- Planning/implementation team
 - Graduate School
 - Library
 - Information Technology
- Adapt Virginia Tech solution
- Parallel development
 - Build interest and consensus
 - Start trial/allow optional submission

VT ETD Team

Ed Fox - Computer Science

John Eaton - Graduate School

Gail McMillan - Library

Neill Kipp - Computer Science

<http://etd.vt.edu/etd/>

<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/>

