Alternate Format Production Service in Nova Scotia:
A University and Community College Collaborative Study
Agenda

- background
- process
- findings
- discussion & questions
Introduction - Setting

- “by 2007, 1/3 of jobs will require post-secondary education”
- students with disabilities have higher drop out rates than their non-disabled counterparts
- specific supports beyond minimal student services increase the rate of success
- because NS Government recognized this, several strong support programs are in place
Introduction - Problem

- acquiring AF versions of required readings, research materials, educational documents and related ephemera in a timely manner is crucial
- while NS students are largely receiving required course materials, a lack of coordinated and cooperative effort results in inefficiencies
- creating alternate format materials is a small part of the complete support system – staff can direct expertise to other important functions
Process

- interviews across province: 10 universities, NSCC, APSEA, Novanet
- review of selected models in BC, Manitoba and Ontario
- review of selected reports
- roundtable session
- proposal of a consortial model for province-wide service & report
Findings - Nationally

- as better services become available, the percentage of students requiring them grows
- difficult to measure outcomes due to lack of meaningful statistics
- there is a lack of training and awareness within the educational community
- e-resources are common in library collections – can be especially useful for PD students
- ultimately, UID is the ideal
Findings - Nationally (2)

- central and local models have strengths and weaknesses
- bottlenecks occur, partly due to difficulties obtaining appropriate files and/or books
- converting complex materials (e.g. math texts; graphs, charts, sidebars; etc.) is challenging
- sharing works isn't as efficient as it could be & obtaining publishers' files is a key concern
- AF research materials are rarely provided
Findings - Other Provinces

- no standard models but there are best practices
- anecdotally, central services work well at meeting demand some of the time
- many institutions rely on both in-house and central production
- local production is costly, all services profiled use some form of sharing materials
- central services are provincially funded (BC CILS, Manitoba SMS, Ontario WRMS)
Costs Per Student

- UBC: $500
- SFU: $1,000
- CILS: $1,500
- WRMS: $2,000
- Average: $2,500

Bar chart showing the costs per student for various institutions, with UBC having the highest cost followed by SFU, CILS, WRMS, and an average cost.
Staff & Student Ratios

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In Nova Scotia - Statistics

- approximately 49,200 total student population
- approximately 565 students with print disabilities
- NSCC serves the highest percentage followed by Saint Mary's
- higher percentage of PD students than other institutions profiled – identification process is effective
In Nova Scotia - General

- no specific funding for AF materials
- duplicate production is problematic here, too
- students prefer getting materials in about 1 day
- lack of coordinated statistics makes it difficult to measure outcomes
- NSCC system is a model service, however face same national issues
- desire to share best practices
Conclusions

- best practices in NS and elsewhere
- adding to existing infrastructure frees up student and staff time – more focus on studying and learning
- coordinated effort with regard to publishers' files
- better record keeping adds to the strength of our stories
- many details and procedures to be determined!
Questions?
The Proposal
Suggestions

- 4 additional positions: 2 Library Resource Facilitators, 1 Coordinator and 1 Administrative Assistant
- incorporate existing equipment plus add scanners, server space and additional supplies where necessary
- use of a central, secure server to reduce delivery times to students
- piggyback on existing administrative structures & partnerships with other agencies
The student makes a request to their local DRF → The local DRF electronically forwards the request list to the LRF

The LRF checks all possibilities for existing alternate format copies, including contact with the publisher

- If an alternate format copy is available, consideration is given to delivery time and appropriateness of format
- The LRF reports the findings back to the local DRF, including whether e-copies are available for the student to purchase directly.

If print versions of the books are available:
- The local DRF could scan the first week's required readings on the spot to carry over the student for the waiting period
- The local DRF ships print items to the LRF (or CBU if appropriate) via NovaNet Express or 1-day courier, or APSEA in the case of blind and VI students

If print books are not yet available:
- The LRF will check for available copies on site
- The LRF will source books using usual local methods

The local DRF arranges for delivery either to the local DRF or directly to the student.
Model – Day 2/3

Books are cut and scanned

Files are saved electronically to the secure server

Notice is sent to the local DRF and/or the student that files are ready for download

Item is referred to Ferguson for editing if required immediately

The Ferguson Library notifies the DRF and student upon completion of each chapter
Model – Days 3/4 & 5/6

Books are rebound

Books are shipped back to local DRF office for the student to pick up via NovaNet Express or Canada Post using the book rate

Notice of completed scanned items and brief descriptions (e.g. 'raw unedited scan in ASCII format') is sent to the local institution's library for cataloguing

OR

LRF catalogues items

Catalogued records are submitted to NovaNet, CAER, AMICUS and CANWIP
Consider....

- **fast turnaround for scanned items** – even faster if e-copies are found, priorities can be responsive to student needs

- **pilot project with the ultimate goal of significant reduction in scanning activity in favour of full and equitable electronic access from publishers**

- **model based on supplemental scanning of required readings**, bottlenecks at semester beginning still need to be addressed
Discussion

- administrative model: consortial governance, arms length body, advisory committee, Department of Education, etc.

- staff locations: are there advantages to some locations?

- long term goals and roles of the coordinated service, including information sharing and training

- QUESTIONS?