

Interim Progress Report

**A Needs Assessment Study of
Texas Academic, Public, and School Libraries**

Submitted by

**The Texas Center for Digital Knowledge
University of North Texas**

Prepared by the

**The Texas Center for Digital Knowledge
Needs Assessment Study Team**

William E. Moen, Texas Center for Digital Knowledge
Carol Simpson, Texas Center for Digital Knowledge
Florence Mason, F. Mason & Associates
Louella Wetherbee, Library Management Consultant

April 6, 2002

Introduction

This document summarizes the work to date on the Needs Assessment Study of Texas Academic, Public, and School Libraries. During the three months since signing the contract with the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund Board (TIFB), the Needs Assessment Study Team (the Team) has focused on the study start up activities. The Team has laid the foundation for the study, examined a range of data sources and documents to inform our work, designed and drafted data collection questionnaires, and planned a forum to be held at the Texas Library Association conference in April 2002.

At this time the team is focusing on the data collection and analysis activities. The immediate focus will be the review and finalization of the questionnaire instruments so that data collection can begin. Due to the study's short timeline, the Team wants to ensure it has sufficient time to analyze the data and then prepare preliminary findings and recommendations for presentation to the TIFB Library Working Group at the end of May 2002.

The interim progress report first discusses the personnel working on the study and then summarizes the Team's work on several of the work areas contained in the Project Plan (April 1, 2002).

Personnel

Principal and Co-Principal: Dr. William E. Moen, Principal Investigator and Project Manager, is responsible for putting together the team of researchers and research assistants to work on the study. Co-Principal Investigator Dr. Carol Simpson coordinates the school library data collection aspect of the study. The Team consists of the following (in addition to the Principal Investigator):

- Principal Researcher, Florence Mason
- Principal Researcher, Louella Wetherbee
- Graduate Research Assistant, Sandal Miller
- Graduate Research Assistant, Yeh Chang-Ching

Principal Researchers: Florence Mason and Louella Wetherbee are serving as the primary researchers that will carry out the data collection and analysis activities for the study. The University of North Texas and the Texas Center for Digital Knowledge issued subcontracts with consultants Florence Mason and Louella Wetherbee. The subcontracts were signed in February 2002 and work by the subcontractors commenced. Mason and Wetherbee have initiated start up activities and data collection activities.

Graduate Research Assistants: The project has hired two graduate research assistants to assist with data collection and programming for the online survey. Graduate research assistant Sandal Miller began work in January 2002; her responsibilities include data collection and analysis. Graduate research assistant Yeh Chang-Ching began work in March 2002; his responsibilities include preparing web-based online data submission forms for collecting data from the surveys.

Progress on Work Areas

The study activities and timelines have been defined in detail in the Project Plan. The focus of this first interim report is on various start up, document analysis, and data collection activities (specifically work areas 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 9 in the Project Plan). Subsequent interim reports will discuss additional study activities as they are developed and delivered.

1. Start Up Activities

The Team first focused on preparing a work plan to guide the study. The key deliverable was the development of the Project Plan that was published in its final form April 1, 2002. Another important component of this work area was the development of the framing questions and methods for the study. A draft of these questions and methods were reviewed with members of the TIFB Library Working Group in February and are incorporated into the Project Plan. All deliverables for this work area have been completed:

- The Project Plan is available at:
<http://www.unt.edu/needz/ProjectDocuments/ProjectPlan1Apr2002.doc>
<http://www.unt.edu/needz/ProjectDocuments/ProjectPlan1Apr2002.pdf>
- The Project Website is available at: <http://www.unt.edu/needz>
- Framing Questions and Methods is available at:
<http://www.unt.edu/needz/ProjectDocuments/FramingQuestionsMethods13Feb2002.doc>

2. Document and Data Scan

The Team has collected documents, studies, and other background data with reference to the study efforts. The Team will continue to search for and identify relevant information and documents. An Excel database of study documents is being prepared and will be submitted as part of the study's final report. The following briefly outlines categories of documents and data that have already been reviewed.

- KPMG quality Assurance Program Deliverables. The Principal Researchers have examined the Quality Assurance Program Deliverable Reports for Grants LB-1-LB 4 and LB 6. These reports include the cycle questionnaires, the responses and the resulting summary reports for each of these cycles. The Principal Researchers have not yet obtained and reviewed the detailed responses from a number of questions that called for open-ended comments.
- AMIGOS Library Services. The Principal Researchers have obtained and reviewed the AMIGOS TIF Tech Training Evaluation reports for the years 2000 and 2001. The results will be summarized in the reports filed by the Principal Researchers.
- Gates Grant Evaluation. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation U.S. Library Program has filed a series of evaluation reports on the Gates program. Surveys of library staff, volunteers, and library patrons in five states have been reviewed.

- ZLOT –the Z Texas Implementation Component of the Library of Texas. The Principal Researchers reviewed the Technology Inventory Survey developed as part of the ZLOT project and also are reviewing the summaries of focus groups being held as part of that project.

Other selected surveys reviewed:

- Urban Libraries Council. *Impacts of the Internet on Public Library Use*. Available at: <http://www.urbanlibraries.org/>
- Ester Smith. *Texas School Libraries: Standards, Resources, Services and Students' Performance Study*, April 2001.
- Research Division. Illinois State Board of Education. *Evaluation of the Use of Technology in Illinois Public Schools*. Final Report.

The Principal Researchers also conducted interviews with library directors and administrators in a number of library-related agencies related to the objectives of the study. Names and a summary of these interviews will be included with subsequent study reports.

The Principal Researchers have accessed the TIFB website <http://www.tifb.state.tx.us/> to obtain lists of the grantees for each of the relevant grant cycles to be evaluated. The grantee lists from the grant cycles will constitute the survey population who will receive the online evaluation questionnaires. The following summarizes data from this review:

TIF Grant Cycles for Survey Population

<u>Grant Name</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Number of Libraries</u>
LB 1	Public Libraries	158
LB 2	Public Libraries	39
LB 3	Public Libraries	130
LB 4	Public Libraries	163
LB 5	Public School Libraries	147
LB 6	Public Libraries	127
LB 7	Public Libraries	118
LB 8	Academic and Four Year	116
HE 2a	Community Colleges	57
HE 2b	Public and Private four-year	78
Total institutions		1,125

3. Online Questionnaires

The primary method for gathering information from the key library user communities will be an online questionnaire. There will be separate versions of the questionnaire to be distributed to public, higher education, community college and school libraries. All questionnaires have been drafted and pre-testing will be done for each. In addition, the TIFB Library Working Group will be provided with drafts for review and input. Graduate Research Assistant Yeh Chang-Ching

will providing programming support to the Team for mounting the online survey. The separate questionnaires contain many common questions and additional community-specific questions.

4. Library User Needs Questionnaire

This questionnaire focuses on user needs for information: what questions are being frequently asked in public libraries. The questionnaire will be pretested with libraries in the Northeast Texas Library System (NETLS) in electronic format. Based on the results from NETLS librarians, The Team will determine whether or not to distribute the survey to other selected systems and their libraries. The Principal Researchers expect to be able to use data from this survey to help inform the focus group sessions to be held later in the study. This focus will be on gathering data about public library user behavior, categories of information sought, and use of electronic resources. The survey instrument has been drafted and will be distributed in mid April. A draft copy of the survey instrument is available at:

<http://www.unt.edu/needz/ProjectDocuments/LibraryUserNeedsSurvey1Apr2002.doc>

5. TexShare User Access Evaluation

In addition to the online survey, the Team will survey approximately 40 public library users by telephone about their access and use of TexShare databases. These users were given remote codes to access the TexShare databases in December 2001. Graduate Research Assistant Sandal Miller is currently conducting a pre-test of this instrument and will perform the telephone interviews. A draft copy of the survey instrument is available at:

<http://www.unt.edu/needz/ProjectDocuments/TexShareAccessSurvey1Apr2002.doc>

7. In-depth “Focus” Inquiry

To explore and understand the needs of library and library users in greater detail, the Team will contact and interview by telephone representatives drawn from the list of all previous TIFB grantees. This inquiry will take the form of focus groups conducted via telephone conference calls. The Principal Researchers are compiling a list of names and have prepared a focus group script that will guide the sessions. A copy of the draft script is available at:

<http://www.unt.edu/needz/ProjectDocuments/FocusGroupScriptDraft6Apr02.doc>

9. Study Feedback Session

The Team has arranged to do a feedback session at the Texas Library Association meeting in Dallas on April 25, 2002. The session will be held from 2-4pm. Preliminary findings will be reported. The primary purpose of the session is to collect additional input on needs of libraries.

Next Steps

A meeting on April 9, 2002, with the Library Working Group will be held for the purpose of reviewing the Interim Progress Report and a discussion of the drafts of the survey instruments prepared by the Team. After this meeting, the Team will finalize the surveys and commence data collection and analysis activities.