

ETD Evaluation Program

Phase 1: post-training session (paper)

- how did you find out about training
- reaction to training (how helpful)
- feedback/suggested improvements

Phase 2: end of submission form (WWW form)

- effectiveness of tech support
- reaction to submission process
- feedback

Phase 3: exit interview (after acceptance) (paper?)

- usefulness
- reaction to process
- effectiveness of tech support
- how EDT project is viewed (i.e., as part of larger initiative?)
- perceived delay in submission
- feedback

Phase 4: 1 year post-graduation (mail)

- how useful was ETD to current career
- feedback

Phase 5: NDLTD users (WWW form)

- usefulness
- feedback

Other:

- quality of submissions/quality of final submission
- log analysis
 - accesses (read vs. printed)
 - exceptions (and reason)
 - use of non-traditional media
- time and resources expended by graduate school and by library
- demographics
 - users
 - submitters

nothing. As a result, ETD staff could then concentrate on refining the ETD process so as to meet the goals set forth by the SURA and FIPSE grants.

In terms of evaluating the effectiveness of the local ETD project, it is important to link survey responses to changes in the ETD process. It is unwise to ask for authors' opinions if their opinions will not be used in implementing changes. Therefore, a careful examination of survey items is important. Otherwise, surveying authors can do more harm than good.

All in all the NDLTD appears to be headed toward much success. Many of the major glitches appear to be resolved (or in the process of being resolved) locally and the number of beta sites is growing steadily. A careful evaluation program will help to ensure that necessary changes can be identified and implemented adequately.

information, including email addresses for ETD supporters at campuses across the country.

The next step in recruiting beta sites should be a mass mailing of a pamphlet to all institutions in the United States offering graduate degrees. Those that respond to the pamphlet should be sent the video we produced this summer, or should be visited by an ETD representative. Finally, schools agreeing to join should then be sent the VT ETD CD-ROM that was developed this summer.

With the increased national press (NPR, *New York Times*, etc.) and the increasing number of 'early adopters' the number of schools agreeing to join the NDLTD should increase quickly over the next year. While the prospect of many new schools joining the NDLTD is very appealing, support of the current members of the NDLTD as they follow in the footsteps of Virginia Tech should not be overlooked. It would be advisable to have an individual contact each beta site periodically for implementation status reports.

Concluding Comments

Based on the surveys I conducted, as well as some more informal comments and conversations, there are several general suggestions I have. First, it is apparent to me that too much time is spent in tech support. ETD staff members are bogged down in helping authors with the submission process and are not able to make as much progress on some of the goals set forth by the SURA and FIPSE grants. One solution I see to this problem is for the ETD staff to train and license students to perform tech support for a fee, much like a resume preparer. ETD authors interested in this service would pay these 'ETD experts' directly for their help. These experts could take the tech support burden off of ETD staff, ease the submission process and earn money while costing the ETD project

Future Evaluation Initiatives

Currently, the majority of the evaluation process is providing useful information. However, according to the January ETD Evaluation Program outline previously mentioned, there are several surveys left to develop. First, in perhaps another year, it would be advisable to contact graduates of Virginia Tech to determine if the experience of submitting an ETD has made them more marketable to employers and if they have submitted other electronic documents. One of the goals of this project is to improve graduate education, and this survey would address whether the ETD requirement does indeed improve the education that graduate students at Virginia Tech receive. Second, as previously mentioned, placing the NDLTD User Survey on-line would allow an examination of the usability and utility of the NDLTD itself, as improving access to the fruits of graduate education is another goal of this project. Finally, the ETD Evaluation Program also suggests several alternate types of evaluation, such as ratings of submission quality/ use of multimedia and an examination of the time and resources devoted to implementation by the Graduate School, the library et cetera. Future analyses should also begin to address these sources of data.

Beta Sites for the NDLTD

In terms of the current status of this issue, it appears that Bill Schweiker's distribution system should prove to be very helpful in organizing the increasingly complex job of assisting new beta sites. There has been no push for beta sites to join since I sent out a mass email to all known interested parties in May, yet there seem to be a steady number of schools still signing on. With another membership push, the distribution of CDs and videos could easily become very complex. Bill is in possession of all my beta site

Approval Form Survey/NDLTD User's Survey. Once the Graduate School has approved the ETD, the author must submit an approval form in place of the traditional signature page. At this point, the author is also asked to complete two surveys. The first asks about the author's experiences with accessing the NDLTD for research purposes, while the second asks about the author's publication expectations. Currently approximately 75 of these surveys have been received.

The Approval Form survey addresses the issue of publication of ETD material once it has been included in the NDLTD. General results indicate that most ETD authors expect to (or already have) pursued some sort of publication for portions of information contained in their ETDs. While few surveys have been collected at this point it will be informative to investigate authors' reasons for not releasing their ETDs worldwide (question 3). Additionally, the possibility of releasing portions of the ETD worldwide (while securing other portions) addressed in question 5 should be investigated if sufficient interest is expressed in this option. However, before any decisions are made a larger sample of ETD authors is necessary.

Concerning use of the NDLTD by ETD authors, the few NDLTD User Surveys received indicate that only a handful of authors have used the NDLTD in their research. Perhaps since the authors are presumably all Virginia Tech students at this point, they may already be aware of the relevant information on their topic available through the NDLTD through informal communication with peers and advisors. Therefore, it would be advisable to place a copy of this survey on-line so that anyone (both VT and non-VT users) accessing the NDLTD could submit responses. Once other universities begin to supply ETDs to the NDLTD, perhaps this survey will provide more useful information.

Submission Form Survey. The next step in the ETD process is for authors to submit their ETDs to the Graduate School. At the end of the Submission Form is a short survey asking authors to evaluate the helpfulness of the workshops and technical support, as well as the overall submission experience. Each time an author submits an ETD, he or she is asked to fill out this survey. As a result, it is possible to track the effectiveness of the training and technical support functions in reducing the number of submission attempts each author makes. At this time, approximately 350 authors have submitted this survey.

The results of this survey generally show that authors who attended workshops and /or contacted technical support had fewer submission attempts. Those who attended workshops made between 1 and 4 submission attempts before their ETDs were accepted. Those who did not submitted between 1 and **14** times before success! This survey also identified a sub-population of authors who attended workshops and contacted technical support, yet still could not successfully submit an ETD. These authors appear to be non-traditional (i.e., older) students submitting remotely, often on older computers. Special consideration should be given to accommodating these individuals.

In terms of continuing the Submission Form Survey, it would be wise to automate the collection of this data. Currently, each survey is emailed to the evaluator, who must input the data by hand before any evaluation can be done. Over the summer, I spoke to Tony Atkins about this problem and he was working on a Java script to fully automate the data collection. This process would instantaneously update the statistics after each survey. Particularly because the project is now without the aid of someone whose main job function is data analysis, this strategy should be pursued to simplify the evaluation process.

Training Survey. The first survey to be developed was the Training Survey. The purpose of this survey is to investigate attendees' previous experience with computers and electronic publishing, as well as their reactions to the workshops themselves.

Additionally, space is provided to allow attendees to ask questions that are posted in FAQ files. As of September 1, approximately 300 Training Surveys have been returned.

Besides providing information concerning the particular software or hardware requirements of ETD authors, basic demographic information and a forum for asking questions not covered during the workshop itself, the Training Survey is designed to assess the effectiveness of the training itself. Therefore, several questions ask whether the attendee feels capable of submitting an ETD and if he or she knows where to turn for help.

The training survey has produced several results of particular interest. First, there do not appear to be any demographic differences concerning how capable attendees feel in their ability to submit an ETD or in their previous electronic publishing experience. Race, gender, area of academic interest, age and previous degrees appear to be unrelated to perceived ability to submit an ETD. Second, attendees either seem to find the ETD workshops to be too complex or too simple. As a result, the format of the workshops was adjusted in July 1997. A basic workshop describing how to submit a 'plain vanilla' ETD is offered first, followed by an advanced workshop that describes how to use many of the value-added features of producing an electronic document (e.g., multimedia applications). At this point it is too early to determine if this change is effective. However, continued evaluation should address attendees' reactions to the modified training workshops to determine if the new format improves authors' ability to submit ETDs.

Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Project Status Report

September 1, 1997

Prepared by: Tim McGonigle

My position with the ETD project over the past 8 months has been primarily to a) provide evaluation and assessment information concerning the implementation of the ETD requirement locally and b) to serve a liaison between the ETD project team and other universities interested in joining the National Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (NDLTD) Initiative. To facilitate the continuation of these goals, this report will outline the process, current status and recommendations for the future of evaluation of the ETD requirement locally. Second, I will also outline the current status and recommendations for the future of the NDLTD Initiative.

Evaluation

Evaluation Process

In January 1997, I developed an outline of ETD program evaluation that was to be used to guide the evaluation of the ETD project at Virginia Tech. I have included a copy of this document. The outline consists of 5 phases, as well as recommendations for additional sources of evaluation information. In summary, the outline suggested development of surveys for assessing reactions to the training workshops, the submission process itself, the entire process of developing an ETD and to accessing the NDLTD. As of September 1997, four of the five surveys have been developed and utilized.