Postsecondary Alternate Format Committee
Annual Report 2008

The first meeting of the new Postsecondary Alternate Format Committee was held in Toronto on November 7, 2007. The Terms of Reference were reviewed, amended, and accepted. (Term of Reference and Membership List attached.) It was decided that the committee should be co-chaired by a member from CCDI and a member from IDIA.

An action plan for this year was developed. It was agreed that this committee would begin to gather statistical information on transcription services, work towards developing a method of sharing our resources, and liaise with outside agencies like the Canadian Publishers Council and the Initiative for Equitable Library Services (IELA). It was agreed that the committee would look to developing both a short term and long term plan which would improve transcription services in the postsecondary settings in Ontario. The short term plan would be to develop an interim way by which institutions could begin to share our current resources and cut down on our duplication of work, and a long term solution that would work in conjunction with Resource Service Library (RSL).

The committee has met 6 times after the November 7th meeting, twice in person and five times by teleconference.

Meeting Highlights

Mary Francis Laughton, Manager, IELA was invited to attend the first part of our second meeting. She briefed the committee on the focus of IELA which is public libraries and is a national initiative.

The committee spoke with Margaret Ann Wilkinson, LLB/MLIS about the feasibility of seeking a legal opinion regarding whether or not we could legally share resources (electronic files) that individual institutions have created in order to cut down on the duplication of services and to save costs. Her opinion was that the law is not clear on this at this time and that we should be following the upcoming changes to copyright legislation. At this time, there is not regulation against it and also no regulation that indicates we can.

Jackie Hushion of the Canadian Publisher's Council was invited to attend the February 14th meeting but declined the invitation. She did ask for information regarding our statistic for transcription services. A copy of our Statistical Analysis of Students with Disabilities Requiring Alternate Format Text in Ontario's Postsecondary Institutions was sent to her. (Report attached)

The committee has recommended that CCDI and IDIA request that statistical data regarding the number of students receiving transcription services become part of the annual CCDI and IDIA annual reports.

The committee felt it was important to develop a position statement regarding the requirements for alternate format texts for Ontario's publicly funded institutions. This statement will be shared with the Information and Communications Standards Committee of the AODA. The committee has also asked to be able to present the work we do to this committee so that the needs of students with perceptual disabilities in postsecondary settings are taken into consideration as the AODA Information and Communications standards are developed.

Proposal for the addition of a new statistic capture in the MTCU yearly report.

The members of the Post-secondary Alternative Format Committee have been asked on several occasions this past year to generate statistics for both inside and outside agencies. We have found these requests to be quite challenging since there is no requirement in the yearly report to capture production methods and numbers by institution.

These types of informational requests will in all probability increase in the upcoming years, and so we would like to propose that a new reporting statistic be added into the yearly report starting immediately for final report capture in April 2009.

The following are the parameters for information gathering:

- Number of students requesting Alternative Format broken down by disability type.

- Overall number of requests

- Methods used for completing requests. (This would simply indicate if the material was converted in-house, requested via a publisher, or requested through RSL. The primary factor would be per item, as opposed to per request.)

The third parameter is to be used for general information only since a true linear statistic will not be generated due to overlaps in service points. In some cases, one item may be originally requested through RSL. If not available from RSL, then that same item may be ordered through a publisher for a master file which is then converted in-house, or could be simply scanned and converted totally in-house. That one item in this case would be counted in all three parameters.

We strongly feel that this type of statistic must be included in the yearly reporting structure of our institutions. Presently we are faced with generating statistics under a "best guess" scenario; a methodology which is no longer acceptable. At one past point of time, using primarily the RSL statistics as representative of the use of Alternative format

was an appropriate measure. This is simply no longer true as many institutions have moved into in-house and direct from publisher methods. This has been a growing component over the last five years, and as such, we feel that the current statistics generated are no longer a true reflection of the use of alternative formats in the post-secondary sector of Ontario.

Resource Services Library Repository

PAFC is happy to report that this project has moved along and that we are now in the first stage of a pilot project. What we will need at the moment is a list of all institutions who are interested in being a part of this pilot. The pilot itself will require the institutions involved to share their current alternative format holdings with RSL. We will also need to know how many institutions will be willing to share their electronic files once the pilot has been completed in order to determine the amount of server space required.

Further details will be available as the project develops. We are hoping to have the Pilot up and running by the beginning of June. Please contact Karen Coffey (CCDI) or Sue Burns (IDIA) if you are interested in participating or want further details.

Attachment 1:

Statistical Analysis of Students with Disabilities requiring Alternate Format Text in Ontario's Postsecondary Institutions – PAFC Analysis February 2008

Sources:
1)   Survey of Transcription Services Ontario Colleges & Universities May 1, 2006 to December 31, 2006, University of Ottawa
2)   Resource Services Library statistics for elementary/secondary students and postsecondary students 2002-2007 Ministry of TCU
3)   Number of Students with Disabilities at Ontario Universities and Colleges 1989-2006 Ministry of TCU
4)   Number of Students with Disabilities at Ontario Universities and Colleges by category 1989-2006 – Ministry of TCU

Numbers of Students with Disabilities in Postsecondary

An analysis of the numbers of declared SWD at Ontario's postsecondary publicly funded institutions shows an increase over the years to a fairly steady number of around 30,000 in recent years.

Of this number, approximately 12000 (38% SWD) are students with perceptual disabilities and 500 (.01% SWD) are students who are blind or low vision. Based on the surveys completed by over 70% of the colleges and universities, about 20% of the students with perceptual disabilities qualify as students who require alternate format or about 2,400 plus about 90% of students with low vision or about 450 require various alternate format for a total of at least 3,000 as of this date. Including institutions not reporting, the number could be extrapolated to be around 4,000 students in total. A review of actual books produced in 2006 shows that the RSL produced 1971 books in alternative format for post secondary students including 91 Braille books, 572 tape, 633
e-text, 141 large print, 35 MP3 and 499 Daisy. For the same period, 71% of colleges and universities identified an additional 34 Daisy, 3,309 e-text, 94 large print, 254 MP3, 30 audiocassette. The total production by RSL and postsecondary institutions was about 6,100 titles in 2006. Of note is that only 71% of institutions participated in the reporting, thereby underestimating the total number of books actually produced at various campus locations.

Since many post secondary programs have the same text in use, we assume that there are a number of redundant productions of the same books. Since postsecondary institutions don't have a mechanism to share completed alternate format text, we can't estimate the savings by being able to share. However, RSL reports that to date this year they searched approx 1800 titles at the Post Sec level and saved 78 person hours by having approx 250 orders go direct to order fulfillment (copy department), not to mention the dollars saved duplicating rather than producing items as original. We notice that of the entire booklist, students with perceptual disabilities will choose only those text books that present a reading barrier to have converted to AFT. Students with disabilities are registered in every program in the institutions. (all numbers are approximate and rounded up)