



*Dedicated to Innovation
and Collaboration*

VALE

*Virtual Academic Library Environment
of New Jersey*

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
FY2002/03



Introduction

The Virtual Academic Library Environment of New Jersey (VALE) was established in 1998 with the goal of creating a shared information environment to further the academic missions of all institutions of higher education in New Jersey. Currently in its fifth year, VALE has overcome many hurdles that face newly established organizations and successfully harnessed the strength of collaboration to build a robust statewide information network.

In 2002 John Gaboury, Associate Vice President for Library Services and Information Technology at William Paterson University and VALE's Executive Director, left New Jersey after three years of tireless effort to establish VALE as a productive entity. The Executive Committee decided to collapse the position of Executive Director into the responsibilities of the Chair of the Executive Committee and to establish a Finance Committee to assist in database licensing and financial issues. In addition, VALE held a retreat for the Council of New Jersey College and University Library Deans, University Librarians and Directors, to review VALE's progress and chart directions for the next five years. A new mission statement was adopted and is reflected on VALE's homepage (www.valenj.org):

The Virtual Academic Library Environment (VALE), a consortium of New Jersey college and university

libraries and the New Jersey State Library, is dedicated to furthering excellence in learning and research through innovative and collaborative approaches to information resources and services.

At the retreat, the following strategic priorities were identified for VALE's future: expanding and sustaining an effective funding stream through collaboration; advocacy and public relations efforts; shaping a communications plan that will enhance the visibility of VALE to its constituencies, the state legislature, and the public; developing and implementing a remote reference service; developing and implementing a shared information literacy website; securing funds to publish on the web, appropriate and unique local databases; identifying other potential areas for collaboration; and conducting ongoing assessments to measure accomplishments. Bylaws were developed to reflect the growth and sophistication of the organization. This report highlights the many achievements towards these goals in FY02 and FY03.

Our many accomplishments could not have been achieved without services and support from very special people. We especially wish to recognize the continued support from the New Jersey State Library directed by Norma Blake, our VALE Coordinator, Judy Avrin of William Paterson University, our technical support from Dave Hoover of Rutgers University, Anne Ciliberti, representing VALE's fiduciary agent, William Paterson University, and the chairs and members of VALE committees. The many accomplishments noted would not have been possible without their efforts.

**~Marianne Gaunt, Chair,
VALE Executive Committee, FY02-03**

Expanding Access to Scholarly Resources Across NJ

VALE's strategic goals are to expand access to scholarly materials across New Jersey and to raise the overall level of the information environment for the New Jersey academic community. A major factor in achieving these goals is the ability to leverage the strength of VALE's membership in negotiating licensing agreements with electronic database vendors.

In FY03 VALE licensed access to 29 different electronic resources at a total cost of more than \$1.6 million. This is a substantial achievement for VALE or any library consortium. VALE databases are delivered to a full-time equivalent student population of over 248,400 students across the 52 member institutions that span the entire higher education landscape of New Jersey.

In FY03, VALE offered its member libraries the following suite of electronic resources:

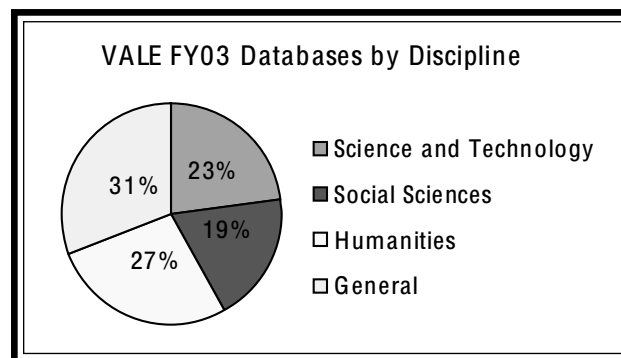
ABI Inform
Academic Search Premier (via the NJ State Library)
Academic Universe
Alt-Health
America: History and Life
Art Abstracts & Art Retro
ATLA Religion & ATLA Full Text
Basic Biosis
Biographies Plus
Books in Print
Cinahl
Encyclopedia of Life Sciences
ERIC
*E*Subscribe*
Ethnic NewsWatch
Gender Watch
Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians
Grove's Dictionary of Art
Health Reference Center
Historical Abstracts
Literature Resource Center
MLA Bibliography
Oxford English Dictionary
PsycINFO
ScienceDirect
Silverlinker
Social Work Abstracts

A specific goal identified in VALE's planning efforts relates to making New Jersey a leader by expanding "State support for math, science and technology databases that can be used by any NJ citizen in any NJ academic library."

While the state budget situation in FY03 precluded further state support for VALE, access to science databases did increase as VALE renegotiated its contract with *ScienceDirect*, and twelve new libraries joined the fifteen libraries already subscribing to this top tier database. A total of six science, health and technology databases were available in VALE's FY03 portfolio, an increase of two databases since the last report.

VALE has also made strides in providing new humanities and social science databases by increasing the number provided in the last two years by twelve, bringing the total to seventeen. These databases are heavily used and provide high quality scholarship in their respective disciplines.

Given the variety of electronic resources available, VALE continues to target full-text databases in order to bring content, rather than just bibliographic citations, to our users. In FY03 the number of full-text (or substantially full-text) databases provided by VALE grew to eighteen.



In terms of usage, VALE databases generate a very high volume of searching at member institutions. In FY01, 3.7 million searches were recorded, averaging 16 searches per FTE. This

pattern has continued, for in FY03, an estimated 4.623 million searches were conducted, averaging 17 searches per FTE. The following chart illustrates FY03 Database Usage:

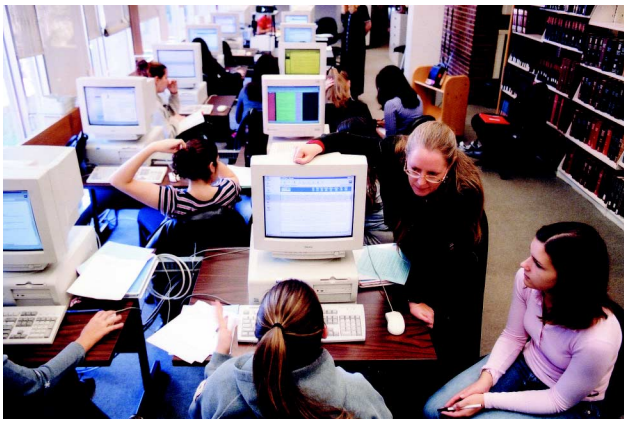
Database	# Searches	# Libraries	Cost/Search
Academic Search Premier	1,797,852	52	\$ 0.17
Lexis Nexis Academic	700,000*	40	0.40
ABI Inform	531,462	42	0.51
Literature Resource Center	369,093	21	0.44
PsycINFO	269,820	28	0.45
ERIC	225,447	48	N/A
MLA Bibliography	124,202	21	0.52
Health & Wellness/ Health Reference	118,298	15	0.50
Cinahl	101,628	37	0.40
Science Direct	82,933	15	1.73
ATLAS Full Text	69,682	6	0.35
Social Work Abstracts	46,286	10	0.39
Gender Watch	24,183	18	0.65
Ethnic Newswatch	23,521	17	2.36
Alt-Health Watch	22,153	13	0.57
Biographies Plus	20,904	19	1.27
America History & Life	20,166	14	2.68
Grove Dictionary of Art	15,228	16	0.93
Grove Dictionary of Music	13,620	14	0.83
Art Abstracts	12,106	16	1.80
Historical Abstracts	11,935	13	4.48
Basic Biosis	11,441	7	2.47
ATLA Religion	11,367	4	1.16
Art Retro	521	1	0.49
Encyclopedia of Life Sciences	N/A	17	N/A
Grand Total	4,623,848		
<p>*Estimated</p> <p>Due to the unique nature of these products, the usage data for the following resources is not comparable to the other products and is not included in the total:</p> <p>Books in Print OED (Oxford English Dictionary) Silverlinker</p>			

In FY03 the New Jersey State Library discontinued its direct grant support to VALE and began subsidizing multi-type database licenses for New Jersey libraries. As a result, VALE libraries gained access to EBSCO's *Academic Search Premier (ASP)* at no local cost. This particular resource, one of the most

heavily used products on any campus, is broad-based and encompasses both academic and popular literature across all academic fields. It provides thousands of full-text articles, bibliographic citations, peer reviewed journals, and mass market magazines, and serves as a strong, full-text foundation for all VALE libraries.

Learning to Use Information Resources

Information literacy, "the ability to locate, evaluate and use information," is a learning outcome for higher education mandated by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Working with students across member institutions, VALE librarians realize that many students are unable to easily navigate the wealth of information in multiple formats available to them and require help in developing their information literacy skills. In order to address this need, VALE created a Shared Information Literacy Committee, one of whose goals is to create online tutorials, available at the point of need, explaining numerous facets of the research process, such as learning how to evaluate information and how to cite an information source. During January 2003, four members of the Shared Information Literacy Committee dedicated themselves to developing a prototype of such a tutorial. The participants included Triveni Kuchi of Rutgers, Richard Kearney of William Paterson, Bill Vincenti of Montclair State and Matthew Brown of NJIT. While the prototype focused on bibliographic citations, the tutorial's design will be template-based so that instructors may insert examples from the discipline they are teaching. The modules in the tutorials will be open-source and shareable across institutions, and each tutorial could be composed of several modules as desired. Menu choices built into the templates will make it unnecessary for instructors to know programming in order to use or change the tutorials. Although unsuccessful in its attempt to win a FIPSE grant to continue the development, VALE will seek other external funding sources to move the development of the tutorial ahead.



Leslie Murtha, Rutgers University, teaches a class in the library.

Accountability

While it is easy to create programs that librarians *believe* will further serve their clientele, without a means to measure the effects of the innovations, there is no gauge on how VALE actually impacts libraries and their users. Over the years the Assessment, Evaluation and Statistics Committee has conducted several surveys attempting to gauge user satisfaction with VALE's resources and services. The committee conducted a two-part survey of VALE member librarians and VALE library directors in June 2003. The survey confirmed a very high overall satisfaction rating from all the respondents with high scores being given to the tremendous value that VALE affords through skillful vendor negotiated purchasing, as well as the generous selection of databases that is offered. 70% of the library director respondents reported that they could not purchase as many databases on their own without VALE, and 87% of the VALE member librarian respondents reported that the database selection was outstanding. This is also a testament to the fact that the selection model that VALE uses allows VALE members to choose and not just settle for the databases that are offered. The survey also revealed that the VALE membership is very pleased with the quality of the VALE Annual Users' Conference, the VALE Listserv and the leadership of the VALE Executive Committee. A few comments from the survey illustrate VALE's impact:

"Our science faculty, in particular, have benefited from the VALE program."

"The databases VALE offers are essential."

"Some resources, such as ScienceDirect, have had a tremendous impact on our ability to provide resources for our faculty."

The Executive Committee conducted a second survey, seeking information on priorities for further collaboration across academic libraries (full survey and results are located at: www.wpunj.edu/library/vale/results_pdf.pdf). Of the eleven potential areas suggested, the following were highlighted as being most important for VALE members: acquisitions discounts, e-book licensing, bindery discounts, sharing knowledge of new technologies, cooperative collection development, and assessment skills training. Not surprisingly, the majority of these areas involve leveraging VALE's purchasing power and licensing skills to reduce costs at individual libraries. While the Executive Committee will be following-up with existing committees or creating new groups to address these priorities, it has already pursued opportunities for members to keep abreast of new technologies. The Technology Awareness Group, an informal "tech watch" group hosted by Rutgers Libraries for its staff, has agreed to expand attendance to include VALE members.

Providing Reference Service Round the Clock

The mass proliferation of information sources available to library users both at their libraries and through their home computers has created a growing need for librarians to help students locate appropriate information sources. Many library users who need assistance in finding and using quality information, especially from digital sources, are not physically present in the library. Many are at home working on assignments, in their offices, or taking distance education courses remotely. Providing reference service at any time, from any place, is a challenge and can be especially difficult for smaller academic libraries with fewer staff members.

The Reference Services Committee investigated the creation of a 24-hour virtual reference service, staffed by VALE librarians for use by VALE patrons. They tested the software that is being used by the New Jersey State Library's similar service, QandANJ and recommended to VALE that its member libraries consider joining the statewide initiative, QandANJ, rather than establishing a separate service. At some future point, an academic queue within QandANJ might filter the queries that are primarily at the academic level and focus the resources of VALE's libraries at the higher level. Several VALE members have joined QandANJ already, thus making 24-hour reference service a reality for their patrons.

Communicating with the Membership

The annual VALE Users' Conference continues to be a success. It is VALE's primary effort to bring together participating librarians to exchange ideas, hear a keynote speaker of relevance to their work, learn more about the initiatives of VALE's committees and celebrate the success of collaboration. It also enables the VALE Executive Committee to provide an annual overview of VALE's work and an opportunity for feedback about VALE from front-line librarians. This is a critical element of accountability that is pivotal to the sustained excellence of the VALE partnership.

The January 2003 Users' Conference was held in collaboration with the New Jersey Chapter of the Association of College and Research Libraries. The conference was strengthened



Middlesex County College students using VALE databases.

by this partnership, which expanded the planning team, and resulted in more creative breakout discussion groups and poster sessions. The keynote speakers for the last two conferences were Jeffrey Rosedale, Manhattanville College, who spoke in 2002 on *The State of the Art of Electronic Reserves*, and in 2003 Anne Lipow, Library Solutions Institute and Press, presented *Beyond the Horseless Carriage: Re-professionalizing Our Work*. Approximately 160 New Jersey academic librarians participated each year.

VALE's website (<http://www.valenj.org>) continues to be the prime source of information about the consortium. Over the last year the website was reviewed and expanded, and now each VALE committee has its own webpage to provide information about its initiatives and activities. The listserv, VALE@Corrado.Rider.edu, remains a primary vehicle to communicate information in a timely manner, and VALE is grateful to Ed Corrado and the Rider University Library for providing this important hosting service.

Making Print Collections More Accessible

In FY02 the VALE Resource Sharing Committee embarked on several initiatives to improve access to print collections among VALE libraries for their faculty and students. The VALE Faculty Reciprocal Borrowing Agreement, effective January 2, 2002, is a cooperative onsite borrowing agreement among forty-six participating VALE member colleges and universities. Under the agreement, faculty and staff from participating institutions who are in good standing at their home libraries qualify for onsite borrowing privileges at each others' libraries. Before faculty and staff may borrow at one of the participating libraries, they must have a signed "VALE Faculty Reciprocal Borrowing Application Form," available at their home institution's library. This process makes it easy for faculty to borrow directly rather than using the traditional interlibrary loan service, thus expediting access to needed information. During FY03, the committee revised the website to make it more user-friendly.

Another initiative of the committee will make it easier to identify materials located in New Jersey's academic libraries. Just recently, the holdings of VALE's academic libraries became more readily apparent through the creation of a Z39.50 compliant union catalog. Z39.50 is a NISO standard for data exchange that enables all compliant catalogs to be searched at one time. As a result, catalogers can locate cataloging records more easily for materials they acquire and need to catalog; users can find needed materials to borrow by searching multiple catalogs at once; and interlibrary loan librarians can more readily find materials they wish to request on loan from other institutions.

VALE Finances

VALE created a Finance Committee of the Executive Committee in FY03, which is composed of the Executive Committee Chair, the representative of the Fiduciary agent institution, the three research institution representatives and one other member elected from the Executive Committee. The purpose of the committee is to review database licenses and to assist the fiduciary representative in preparing the budget for VALE. The committee codified *Preferred Licensing Terms* for all VALE databases to be used in negotiating licenses, created a *Memorandum of Understanding* for all members to sign that states their obligations and responsibilities to the consortium, especially as they relate to database licenses and finances, and made all license agreements available on a restricted website.

In FY02 VALE began assessing its members a service fee to support part-time administrative and technical staff, the Users' Conference, and other VALE activities. The rate was set at 2.6% of each library's database costs from the previous fiscal year. In FY02 the fee generated \$ 26,288 and in FY03 it resulted in revenues of \$ 39,556. The major work of the consortium, however, continues to be carried out by the superb volunteer efforts of many librarians across the state who work through VALE's committee structure.

To supplement the financial and human resources dedicated to VALE from the member libraries, efforts to secure additional resources for VALE initiatives will include seeking opportunities for grants and by working with the New Jersey State Library to advocate for funding for New Jersey's libraries. The focus for VALE libraries will be additional business, science, health-related and technology databases.

As the chart below indicates, nearly 100% of the revenue collected by VALE is spent on database licenses for its member libraries. In FY02 this was \$ 1,529,300 and in FY03 it was \$ 1,607,300. Other annual expenses include the salaries and benefits of the VALE part-time employees, public relations initiatives and the annual Users' Conference. Vendor contributions also offset some of the expenses of the Users' Conference.

EXPENSE	FY02	% OF TOTAL	FY03	% OF TOTAL
Databases	\$ 1,529,300	99.5	\$ 1,607,300	98.1
Salaries*	N/A		26,430	1.6
PR & Users' Conference	5,280	0.3	4,373	0.3
Other	2,696	0.2	780	0.0
Total	\$ 1,537,276	100.0	\$ 1,638,883	100.0

* In FY02, salaries were paid by a grant from the NJ State Library. In FY03, the grant paid for a portion of the annual salary expenses.

Executive Committee Members FY02-FY03

Judy Avrin, William Paterson University, 02-03
 Norma Blake, New Jersey State Library, 02-03
 Brother Paul Chervenik, College of Saint Elizabeth, 02-03
 Anne Ciliberti, William Paterson University, 02-03
 John Cohn, County College of Morris, 02
 Judith Cohn, UMDNJ, 02-03
 Jane Crocker, Gloucester County College, 02-03
 Colleen Daze, New Jersey State Library, 02-03
 Marianne Gaunt, Rutgers University, 02-03
 Joan Getaz, Camden County College, 02-03
 Judith Lynn Hunt, Montclair State University, 02-03
 Marilyn Martin, Rowan University, 02
 David Murray, Brookdale Community College, 02-03
 Lewis Ostar, Middlesex County College, 03
 David Pinto, Richard Stockton College, 03
 Andrew Scrimgeour, Drew University, 02-03
 Elizabeth Smith, Rider College, 02
 Richard Sweeney, NJIT, 02-03
 Pat Tumulty, New Jersey Library Association, 02-03

VALE Member Libraries

Assumption College for Sisters
<http://www.acscollegeforsisters.org>

Atlantic Cape Community College
<http://www.atlantic.edu/library/index.html>

Bergen Community College
<http://www.bergen.edu/library>

Berkeley College
<http://www.berkeleycollege.edu>

Bloomfield College
<http://www.bloomfield.edu/home.htm>

Brookdale Community College
<http://www.brookdale.cc.nj.us>

Burlington County College
<http://www.bcc.edu>

Caldwell College
<http://www.caldwell.edu>

Camden County College
<http://www.camdencc.edu/library/index.htm>

Centenary College
<http://faculty.centenarycollege.edu/library/>

College of St. Elizabeth
<http://www.cse.edu>

County College of Morris
<http://www.ccm.edu/>

Cumberland County College
<http://www.cccnj.net>

DeVry Institute
<http://www.nj.devry.edu>

Drew University
<http://www.depts.drew.edu/lib/>

Essex County College
<http://www.essex.edu/Library>

Fairleigh Dickinson University
<http://www.fdu.edu/studentvcs/library.html>

Felician College
<http://www.felician.edu/Library>

Georgian Court College
<http://www.georgian.edu/library/index.html>

Gibbs School - Montclair, NJ
<http://www.gibbsmontclair.com>

Gloucester County College
<http://www.gccnj.edu>

Hudson Community College
<http://www.hccc.edu/library/index.html>

Kean University
<http://library.kean.edu>

Mercer County Community College
<http://www.mccc.edu>

Middlesex County College
<http://www.middlesexcc.edu/library/>

Monmouth University
<http://www.monmouth.edu/irs/library/library.html>

Montclair State University
<http://www.montclair.edu/pages/library/library.html>

New Jersey City University
<http://www.njcu.edu/guarini/home.htm>

New Jersey Institute of Technology
<http://www.library.njit.edu>

New Jersey State Library
<http://www.njstatelib.org>

Ocean County College
<http://lib.ocean.edu/>

Passaic County College
<http://www.pccc.cc.nj.us>

Princeton Theological Seminary
<http://www.ptsem.edu>

Princeton University
<http://libweb.princeton.edu>

Ramapo College of New Jersey
<http://www.ramapo.edu>

Raritan Valley Community College
<http://library.raritanval.edu>

Richard Stockton College of NJ
<http://library.stockton.edu>

Rider University
<http://library.rider.edu>

Rowan University
<http://www.rowan.edu/library/>

Rutgers University
<http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu>

Salem Community College
<http://www.salemcc.edu>

Seton Hall University
<http://library.shu.edu>

St. Peter's College
<http://www.spc.edu/library>

Somerset Christian College
<http://www.somersetchristian.edu>

Stevens Institute of Technology
<http://www.lib.stevens-tech.edu>

Sussex County Community College
<http://www.sussex.edu/library/index.html>

The College of New Jersey
<http://www.tcny.edu/~library>

Thomas Edison State College
<http://www.tesc.edu>

University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey
<http://www.umdny.edu/librweb/>

Union County College
<http://www.ucc.edu/library>

Warren County Community College
<http://www.warren.cc.nj.us/lib.html>

William Paterson University
<http://www.wpunj.edu/library>

