Gapen (1993) states that the concept of remote access to the contents and services of libraries and other information resources provides the user technology that brings access to the resources of multiple libraries and information services. With the evolution of a variety of methods involved in distance education, the role of academic libraries has broadened to provide resources and services to these invisible but very tangible students. This chapter begins with a brief review of the history of distance education and the impact of this technology on higher education. The chapter also explores the role of libraries and librarians in providing the variety of services, resources, and technology necessary to support this steadily growing facet of academic institutions. Finally, the chapter will present a case illustration of how one university has incorporated its virtual library as a critical element in its distance learning educational initiatives.

BRIEF HISTORY OF DISTANCE LEARNING

Historically, distance learning or distance education began as little more than “correspondence courses” that promised an education in one’s own home. One of the first advertisements for distance learning in the United States was in an edition
of the *Boston Gazette* dated March 20, 1728. Caleb Phillipps, who was a teacher of shorthand, advertised that any “Persons in the Country desirous to Learn this Art, may by having the several lessons sent weekly to them, be as perfectly instructed as those that live in Boston” (Distance Learning, 2002). In 1900, Martha Van Rensselaer came to Cornell University to organize an extension program in home economics for New York State’s rural women (Cornell University, 2001).

During the 1920s, new technology, radio and radio-based courses were offered by Pennsylvania State University and the University of Iowa. By 1926, interest in distance education had increased to the point that a National Home Study Council was formed under the cooperative leadership of the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the National Better Business Bureau, with the goal of promoting sound educational standards and ethical business practices within the distance/home-study field.

In 1933, the world’s first educational television programs were broadcast from the campus of the University of Iowa, with subjects ranging from oral hygiene to identifying star constellations. Television courses became increasingly popular during the 1960s and continue to be broadcast in the 21st century.

Another innovation in distance education was the use of teleconferencing that began in 1982 with the creation of the National University Teleconferencing Network, based at Oklahoma State University (Oregon Community Colleges for Distance Learning, 1997). This technology was used to provide site-to-site classroom teaching. Along with videotaped lectures or taped-for-television programs, teleconferencing added a human dimension to distance education. Students and faculty were now able to interact with each other in real time, and questions and responses were immediate, which enhanced the learning process by allowing student access to teachers, even from a distance.

**APPLICATION OF DISTANCE LEARNING TO SERVICES & RESEARCH**

In an era of increasing fiscal constraints, new technologic advances, and an explosion of information, technology has and will continue to revolutionize the manner in which societies function and communicate. Selected technologies, such as email, the Internet, and telecommunications, continue to evolve in both the scope and depth of their impact upon communities. This continuing technologic revolution has significant implications in terms of vastly increasing the accessibility and availability of information as well as providing increased global connectivity. These innovations also have significant applications for the provision of a variety of health and human services as well as for use in research and education.
Mammogram Retrieval: Image Selection Strategy of Relevance Feedback for Locating Similar Lesions
www.igi-global.com/article/mammogram-retrieval-image-selection-strategy/63650?camid=4v1a