

Policy Development for the Digital Library: Institutional, Legal, and Financial Issues

Information Infrastructure Project

Science, Technology and Public Policy Program

John F. Kennedy School of Government

Harvard University in cooperation with

The Harvard University Library

Universities face a fundamental, longterm shift from local collections of owned physical objects to participation by contract in distributed globally oriented publishing enterprises or libraries. The higher education community is already sensitized to digital library issues because of the rising costs of acquiring and manage information, the apparent advantages of the electronic publication, and the successful use of information technology in support of higher education and research.

With support from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the Science, Technology and Public Policy Program is undertaking a four-year project to analyze the institutional, financial, and legal issues involved in developing "digital libraries." The project is designed to broaden awareness and understanding of these issues within higher education, funding agencies, and the policy development community and to thereby facilitate integration of information and knowledge management functions within and across universities.

The project builds on the Science, Technology and Public Policy Program's NSF-funded work on scholarly communications in the networked environment. We will work with other efforts, especially programs of national higher education associations, by helping in the formulation and implementation of model policies and practices to support higher level infrastructure for research and education, including digital libraries and new forms of noncommercial publishing. Drawing on this experience in implementing new information infrastructure, we will also work in concert to develop and articulate public policy that reflects traditional principles of higher education.

To further this agenda, the project will produce original policy research and analysis, convene meetings of experts with different disciplinary perspectives, generate and publish collections of analytic papers, assemble a sourcebook of primary material, and contribute to curriculum development for library and related information resource management professionals. Beginning in September 1996, the project and the Harvard University Library will host a visiting fellow.