



The University of Arizona Southwest Project A Study of Shifting Learning Roles

Project Overview

In 1997, a group of 75 faculty and staff members met to brainstorm ideas on a number of issues seen as driving higher education. Among the most prominent of these issues in which we dialogued were:

- How can the University of Arizona make the most effective use of the new learning technologies?
- As a Research I institution, how can we integrate that research with the new learning technology?
- How does this transformation relate to the University of Arizona's vision of becoming a "student-centered research university?"

As Southwest Project participants shared ideas on these questions, they were energized by the idea of sharing the scientific, physical and cultural data that they are creating. Their concepts took shape and they focused attention on Southwest and Borderlands data. Within this framework, they identified goals to

- develop a methodology that would make this data searchable and accessible to other scholars and the community,
- frame the data for multiple instructional uses, and
- link the data to specific curricular goals and objectives both in K-16 settings.

Today, the Southwest Project provides a collaborative educational model that is cross-disciplinary, cross-institutional, and developmental. Faculty from the core curriculum, researchers, IT specialists, administrators, and such varied external partners as the Pima Community College, the Tucson Unified School District, the Pascua Yaqui, and the Arizona State Museum, are working together to enrich our students educational

experience. (rev. 11/04/99)

Our original **Project Abstract**, [proposal](#), and [Prototype Framework for the Project](#)

A vast array of multidisciplinary data on the Southwest has been amassed by the UA. Integrated, this data can help us create paradigms for addressing the needs and problems of our own and other arid regions around the world. For the most part, this data remain in raw form, tapped occasionally by individuals to address questions related to a single field. Normally, the data were gathered for the purpose of treating a discipline specific question. However, in many cases one data set provides information that can be applicable to diverse groups. In order to accomplish this sharing, it is necessary to organize the data in such a way as to make it accessible to discipline experts without requiring them to understand the significance of the data to any specific field.

The project will conduct a feasibility study to determine

1. what databases relating to Southwest issues exist at The University of Arizona;
2. existing databases are organized;
3. how much of the information might have applications to other disciplines;
4. how important this information is to external audiences (e.g., funding agencies and other universities);
5. how existing data might be used productively in other disciplines; and
6. what new audiences we can attract as research partners if we design organization systems that facilitate information sharing.

[Southwest Project Welcome Page](#)