

# Continuous Learning at Lincoln Trail Libraries System



Continuous Learning is considered crucial to developing, improving, and expanding library service. Therefore, continuous learning is a core service provided by Lincoln Trail Libraries System (LTLS). A central goal of this service is to meet the needs of our diverse membership, consisting of academic, public, school, and special library staff by providing a range of programs in a variety of formats: hands-on workshops, demonstrations, web-conferencing, face-to-face workshops, video teleconferencing, web-conferencing, satellite downlink, both print and electronic materials, and in FY2006 we will have recorded web-accessible tutorials.

**Hands-on training and demonstrations** are predominantly used for training for LINC and other electronic resources and services. Other services include OCLC ILL, SILC, FirstSearch, or new services and resources available to member libraries.

**Face-to-face workshops, video teleconferencing, and satellite downlinks** are used primarily for continuing education (CE), which addresses more of the theory and practice of librarianship. These formats support education on a wide range of topics: technology trends, current legislation and law, repairing materials, personnel management, marketing, fundraising, advocacy, etc.

**Print and electronic resources** have the broadest applications. They are used before, during, and after CE and training events. These materials may also be delivered as a mechanism for education (e.g., material distributed regarding e-rate and changes in the non-residency laws). In addition, LTLS distributes event specific materials and references to relevant resources through the LTLS web site.

**LibraryU** is used as a means for learning via distant education. Through the collaboration of the Illinois State Library and library systems, a wide variety of courses are available online. LTLS will continue efforts to find new ways to utilize the resource as part of our FY 2006 CLaSS program.

**Web Conferencing** is the newest tool in the education and training toolkit. In addition, LTLS is working to supplement this distance option with recorded web-accessible tutorials through web-conferencing technology (iLinc). iLinc consists of an integrated quartet of applications that furnishes the user with the ability to meet, conference, train, and provide support across the Internet. This technology will allow us to provide traditional training online as well as do point of need, one-on-one training and troubleshooting relating to LINC, SILC, OCLC ILL and other topics. In FY 2005 LTLS purchased 10 licenses to the webconference tool iLinc. In addition LTLS can use the service for instant telephone conference calls at a fraction of previous costs.

**Webcasting** is the final mechanism for providing education and training. During FY 2006 LTLS will begin to generate webcasts for programs such as Orientation, Advocacy, service updates. This will be the first step into this type of programming and the staff is looking forward to testing its applicability.

The variety of mechanisms by which LTLS offers CE and training programs make our Continuous Learning Service truly dynamic. By carefully matching the format to the content, we are developing, improving, and expanding library service throughout East Central Illinois. As always, we are continually seeking to improve how we do business so our members have the support they need to meet the needs of the residents of Illinois.