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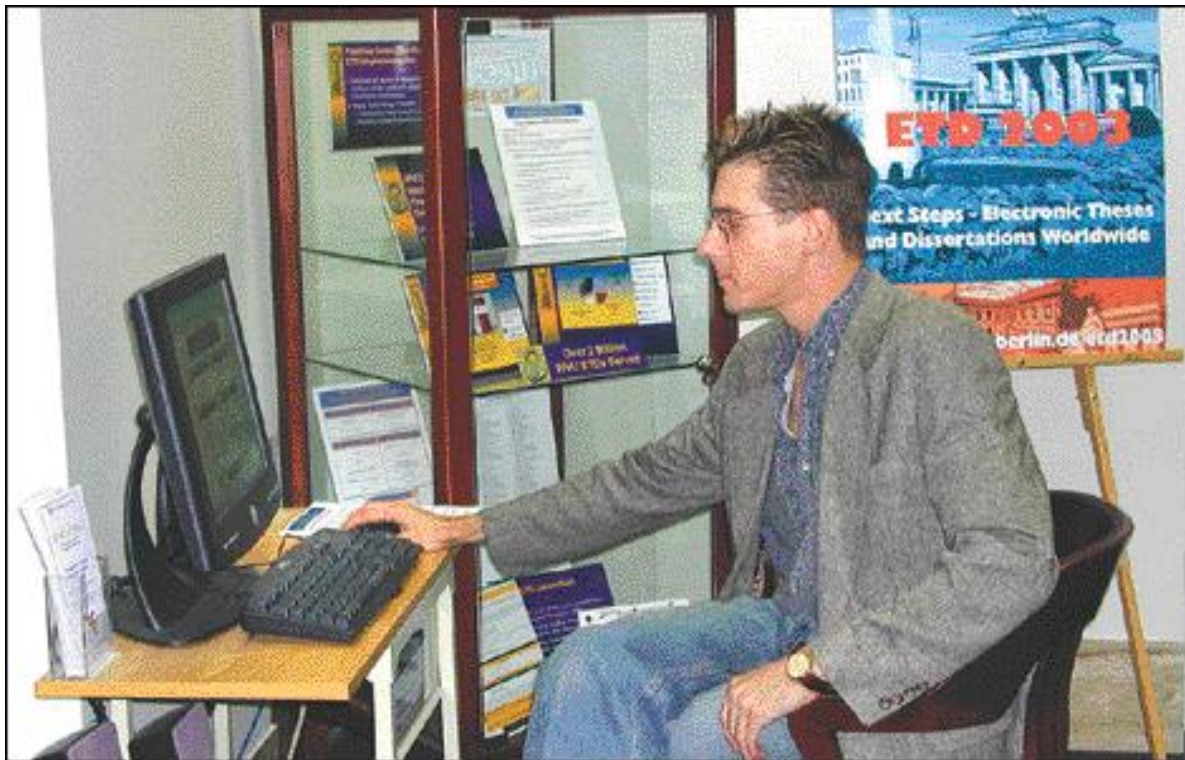


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[Return to the listing of articles of September 27, 2002.](#)

WVU grad research goes global with electronic thesis program

Master's and doctoral students post their papers on the Web



Jennifer Roush/The Dominion Post

John Hagen, coordinator of the WVU Libraries' program and Electronic Thesis and Dissertation program, views an ETD display in the atrium at the WVU Downtown Campus Library. On the computer, anyone can watch a multimedia video about the ETD program and get information about a global ETD conference.

BY JENNIFER ROUSH

The Dominion Post

The Electronic Theses and Dissertation program has opened up WVU research to the world.

The 1,419-document collection of graduate theses and dissertations averages a million hits a year, said John Hagen, WVU Libraries' program coordinator and ETD coordinator. Last May, the collection scored a peak 2,101,741 hits.

"WVU has never (experienced) such an interest in our local, homegrown research," Hagen said.

ETD began in August 1998, and serves as a partial fulfillment for the requirements of receiving a master's or Ph.D.

Students can chose to allow world access, campus only, campus encrypted (campus only with password) or no access to their thesis or dissertation. Students typically limit access when they have publishing concerns or are awaiting a patent.

Electronic documents allow for advanced multimedia capabilities to be added to the traditional thesis or dissertation -- such as videos, artwork and PowerPoint presentations.

"We're just trying to push the envelope now and get students to do more interesting things," Hagen said. "Since you're going to be doing electronic format, you might as well take advantage of the virtual environment."

Hagen believes ETD is also part of a package of technology that is transforming the state's economy.

"Certainly the residents and anybody in the state of West Virginia benefits from having this sort of program," Hagen said.

WVU's ETD also got national attention when it was mentioned in *The New York Times* as a part of the University Wire -- a national collegiate information service -- and was described as successful.

One of the benefits of having ETD is self-promotion, Hagen said. WVU ETD items were accessed 145,000 percent more than print documents in 2000-2001.

The most accessed ETD document at WVU was written by Liyun Zheng, for a doctorate in mechanical engineering in 2000. It received 15,000 hits from January 2001-May 2002. The paper is titled "Process Control of Applied Laser System for Enhanced Glass Production."

WVU was the second academic institution, after Virginia Tech, to require electronic submission for theses and dissertations. Now 12 institutions worldwide require the ETD program.

"Would you rather have a paper copy sitting on the shelf collecting dust, or would you rather have it out there for the world to see?" Hagen said. "When you go to promote yourself and apply for your new job, would you rather be mailing out physical, heavy copies of your thesis or dissertation to promote, or just send e-mails and point them to a spot on the Web where they can find your research?"

An exhibit of the ETD program, including a multimedia video and information about a global ETD conference on computer, is set up in the atrium at the WVU Downtown Campus Library. Those who can't visit the display can view the multimedia video, the conference information and be linked to additional program information at www.wvu.edu/~thesis/ETD_Kiosk.htm.

[Return to the listing of articles of September 27, 2002.](#)