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WVU INTRANET

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WVU Libraries to co-sponsor international ETD conference

The WVU Libraries are co-sponsoring an international conference focused on publishing academic research online and providing free access to the public.

"ETD2009: Bridging the Knowledge Divide," the 12th international symposium on electronic theses and dissertations, will be June 10-13 at the University of Pittsburgh.

"The goal of the ETD2009 conference is to provide a congenial and engaging atmosphere through which participants can learn about electronic thesis and dissertation programs and other areas of scholarly communication," said John Hagen, program coordinator for ETDs at WVU and ETD2009 conference co-chair. "Our aim is to live up to our motto of 'bridging the knowledge divide.'"

WVU has been a pioneer in the scholarly communications world since 1998 when it became only the second university to require students to submit their master's theses and doctoral dissertations electronically. Today, anyone can go online and browse more than 83 percent of the University's over 4,000 ETDs. Some ETDs maintain restrictions because of copyright sensitive content.

ETDs are popular among academics, private sector researchers and the general public. The research, much of it state or federally funded, impacts communities locally and around the globe.

For example, since 2005, people downloaded Shirley Stewart Burns' online dissertation about mountaintop removal more than 100,000 times. The Wyoming County native went on to publish a revised version of "Bringing Down the Mountains: the Impact of Mountaintop Removal Surface Coal Mining on Southern West Virginia Communities, 1970-2004," and the title became a best-seller for the WVU Press.

WVU is also a leader in Institutional Repositories, the newest frontier in scholarly communication. The "wvuScholar (<http://wvusolar.wvu.edu/>)" repository contains ETDs by graduate students, EHTs -- electronic honors theses by undergraduates and faculty research. Most of the content is freely accessible online.

Conference organizers expect researchers and librarians from more than 30 nations will participate in the conference to share their knowledge about digital library collections or to gain insight into how to establish a program at their institutions.

WVU will be well-represented at the event. Daniel Ferreras, an associate professor in the Foreign Language Department, and Patrick Conner, Eberly College Centennial Professor, will be featured speakers.

Conference participants will also come from WVU's Office of the Provost, Office of Graduate Education, Honors College, Eberly College of Arts and Sciences, College of Engineering and Mineral Resources, WVU Libraries and the Office of Information Technology. Interim Provost E. Jane Martin will welcome attendees on behalf of WVU.

ETD2009 is organized by the Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations and co-sponsored by WVU and the University of Pittsburgh. For more information, visit the conference Web site: <http://www.library.pitt.edu/etd2009/>

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