



*Virtual
Academic
Library
Environment*

New Jersey's Virtual Academic Library Environment Initiative: A Proposed Statewide Academic Virtual Library

Planning is currently underway for the development of a New Jersey academic virtual library system, tentatively called **VALE**, to improve electronic access to information for students and faculty at all 54 New Jersey institutions of higher education. Under the aegis of the New Jersey Intercampus Network (**NJIN**), a proposal will be developed for \$2 to \$3 million of funds from the proposed \$50 million NJ Higher Education Technology Bond Issue. These funds, as well as the required institutional matching funds, will be used to upgrade, as necessary, the information technology infrastructure of the New Jersey campuses and to acquire and make available statewide, a suite of core electronic resources common to all academic programs.

Recent advances in Internet-accessibility, the prolific development of the World Wide Web, and the enormous increase in the number and diversity of electronic information resources have made library resource sharing and cooperation a necessary component of every academic library's service plan. New Jersey's college and university libraries, like their counterparts in Georgia, Virginia, Ohio, Illinois and elsewhere, understand that by harnessing the power of the Internet and participating in collaborative resource sharing projects they can better serve their communities. New Jersey's **VALE** initiative seeks to further this service goal across the higher education community. As funding permits, the key components of the **VALE** project are as follows:

- 1. Provide baseline automation opportunities for all academic libraries by hosting non-automated collections as discrete databases on existing library systems.*
- 2. Support the necessary infrastructure improvements at each institution to ensure adequate local access to statewide networked information services.*
- 3. Promote resource sharing opportunities by creating seamless catalog interfaces using WEB based applications and Ariel document delivery software.*
- 4. Provide statewide access to a suite of core undergraduate and graduate electronic databases including full-text periodicals, standard reference sources, and subject-specific indexing and abstracting services.*
- 5. Train faculty and staff in the effective use of the expanded networked information opportunities.*
- 6. Address technical support needs by the creation of a centralized Help Desk.*

The **VALE** planning efforts are guided by the **NJIN VALE Task Force** chaired by Dr. John Gaboury, Assistant Vice President at William Paterson University and six workgroups. A target date of September 1, 1997 has been established for the development of a draft proposal to be submitted in the fall semester as an application

for funding under the Higher Education Technology Bond Act. Additional details of the **VALE** project as well as ongoing status reports of the planning efforts are available at [//~vale](#)

The New Jersey Intercampus Network, Inc. (NJIN) is a non-profit corporation which fosters the development and implementation of video, voice and data networking in higher education, libraries and school systems in the State of New Jersey. Forty-five private and public colleges and universities are institutional members of the organization. A number of school districts, corporations, and government entities are cooperative members.