

Changes in Classroom Media Distribution Services for Fall 2002

Trent Batson, Ph.D.

trent@uri.edu

Director, Information and Instructional Technology Services

Office of Information Services

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We at Information and Instructional Technology Services (IITS) are changing and improving the way we provide media equipment to the classroom this fall. Classroom media includes equipment such as video projectors, VCRs, DVDs, etc. We've been planning these changes for a long time and with the reductions to our personnel budget this year, we decided to implement the changes.

What change will you be most apt to notice? We've ended van delivery of classroom media. We simply can not afford to continue this service with any degree of reliability. However, we have four other options for providing classroom media, which are explained below. Each of these new options is more efficient, reliable, and scalable than van delivery.

Alternative Options for Getting the Equipment You Need in the Classroom

As an alternative to centralized media delivery to the classroom this fall, the following four options are available for faculty:

1. Schedule classes in one of the media-installed, general-assignment classrooms; many classrooms were added to the list of media-installed classrooms early this calendar year. For a description of multi-media equipment in classrooms, including photos of each room, go to:
<http://www.uri.edu/es/faculty/roomDirAlpha.html>
2. Check out classroom media equipment from IITS and bring it to your classroom. This system has been used to check out laptops in the past and we have now expanded it to include all classroom media.
3. Bring classroom media housed within your department, school, or college to the classroom.
4. Apply for a "Tech Buddy" to set up and troubleshoot classroom media during class time – a program we introduced at the beginning of the last semester. For example, a tech buddy may be assigned to assist you for one week or, if necessary, fifteen weeks. S/he will bring the appropriate media to the classroom, set it up, remain on call during class, and return the media after class.

Each of these options is described in the paragraphs that follow. As always, we work with faculty members who have special circumstances. Please feel free to contact me at 4-7499, or Janie Palm at 4-4487, or send us e-mail at trent@uri.edu or janie@uri.edu.

First Option: Classrooms with Installed Equipment

In the last year, the number of classrooms with installed media has increased significantly. Now, approximately 75 more classes can be scheduled each day in classrooms with installed projectors, computers, and other classroom media. Since the rooms with installed media include the largest teaching spaces on campus, thousands of students can attend classes in these rooms daily and potentially benefit from the new installed media.

Second Option: Self Check-Out and Delivery

The option for faculty members to check out classroom media and bring the media to the classroom themselves has existed for some time. As the size of both computers and projectors has decreased, this option is both flexible and viable. Therefore, we have looked carefully at our system for supporting checkout and have made the system simpler and more efficient. The form to initiate checkout is at <http://www.uri.edu/ois/iits/itms/itms.class.media.kingston.html>.

Third Option: Departmental Equipment Check-Out

IITS is working with departments which have their own classroom media, the “grassroots system” we mentioned above. We’re helping departments that already have a local distribution system in place to extend that system. Please check directly with your department to see if any equipment is available for distribution.

Fourth Option: Student Media Assistant Program

Finally, in the last year, IITS started the Student Media Assistant program – the program that provides a student assistant for faculty members needing help when they start using classroom media in new ways. This is a relatively new but highly successful service that we started just eight months ago. For more information on the program and to submit a request for a student assistant, go to http://www.uri.edu/ois/sta/STA_sub/sma_info.htm on the STA Web site.

Conclusion

While the shift from media delivery to media distribution is driven, in part, by budget reductions, we believe that in reality we’ve moved to a multi-faceted system that in its totality is more efficient, scalable (can handle large numbers of requests), and sustainable. Eventually, all classrooms at URI will have technology already installed as a matter of course. In the interim, we are working actively to make the current media distribution system work for you in the best way possible. We think the budget reductions have encouraged the development of a better, multi-optional, system of classroom media distribution.