Alabama Virtual Library

December 1, 1999
What is the Alabama Virtual Library?

• A collection of scholarly, essential, electronic information resources
• Accessed through the Internet
  – school libraries and classrooms
  – public libraries
  – colleges and universities
  – remote authentication
Goals of the AVL

• Equity
  – every student, teacher and citizen will have online access to current core of information

• Economy
  – statewide licenses offer significant savings

• Excellence
  – appropriate, accurate/reliable, scholarly, up-to-date information
AVL Partners

• Alabama Commission on Higher Education
• Alabama Department of Post-Secondary Education
• Alabama Public Library Service
• Alabama State Department of Education
• Alabama Supercomputer Authority
How is it funded?

• $3,000,000 appropriated by the Alabama Legislature for FY 2000
• APLS serves as the fiscal agent for the AVL
• Funds
  – Special Education Trust Fund
  – Budget signed by the Governor in June
  – Funding began on October 1, 1999
  – First databases were available in August
How was it created?

• **Years of work**
  – AETC provided the venue
  – Coalition of state agencies and associations
  – 1998 “seed money” to develop the project

• **Grassroots effort**
  – post cards
  – video tape

• **Legislative advocates**
How is the AVL governed?

• Under the legal authority of APLS
• “Council” appointed by agency heads
  – 3 members from each agency
• Bylaws
• Committees
How is the money used?

- License databases
  - online encyclopedias
  - almanacs
  - indexes
  - full text of online books and magazines
- Training
- Set up and maintain hardware and software
- NO FUNDS FOR STAFF!!
Where is the AVL?

http://www.avl.lib.al.us

Alabama Supercomputer Authority
How do I use the AVL?

• Go to the web site
• Log on
  – Passwords through December
• Explore
  – Each database is unique; try them all
• Attend training
  – Train the Trainer sessions have been underway since September
What does this mean for our schools?

• AVL will provide teachers and students with accurate, up-to-date information

• AVL makes information available at the desktop

• AVL allows teachers in the poorest and most rural schools to have access to the same information as everyone else
School library example
(1998 survey)

- average number of print magazine subscriptions per school is 11
  - 2000+ magazines now available through AVL

- average age of science books in school libraries in Alabama is 19 years
  - AVL resources are current

- 73% of school libraries have access
  - “dial up” access must not be the standard
  - goal is 100% high speed, LAN connectivity
What does this mean for school libraries?

• The role of the school media specialist is critical to the success of AVL

• AVL contains only *reference* resources

• AVL resources allow for the use of library enhancement funds to develop the school collection for use by all
How can I learn more about the AVL?

• Log onto the Alabama Supercomputer Authority’s web site:

http://list.virtual.lib.al.us/cgi-bin/majordomo

• Join the AVL discussion list
AVL Databases
How are the databases selected?

- Emphasis on support for education
- Applies to a broad base of AVL users
- Reliable, quality database information
- Content represents a good value
- Pre-existing user base
What databases have been selected?

- EBSCOHost
- Electric Library
- SIRS Knowledge Source
- OCLC FirstSearch
- Grolier Online
- Bell+Howell ProQuest
- Encyclopedia Britannica
EBSCOHost includes

• Academic Search Elite
  – support the core curriculum, degree requirements, and elective classes
  – provides journal coverage for most academic areas of study
  – features full text for over 1230 journals with many dating back to 1990
• **Business Source Elite**
  
  – compiles the research and perspectives from leading business thinkers
  
  – rich collection of popular business magazines, scholarly journals, and trade publications
  
  – full text for over 925 journals
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• **Health Source Plus**
  – authoritative source for information on health-related questions
  – topics covered include medical sciences, psychology, food sciences and nutrition, childcare, sports medicine, health care law and general health
  – over 255 full text journals
• ERIC
  – citation and abstract information from over 750 educational journals
  – full text ERIC Digest records

• Searchasaurus
  – Especially for younger kids
• Professional Development Collection
  – Professional education resources on everything from children’s health and development to cutting-edge theory and practice
  – searchable full text for over 240 journals
• Newspaper Source
  – delivers more than half a million articles to the desktop
  – full text of *The Christian Science Monitor*
  – abstracts and indexing of the *NY Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *USA Today*
  – abstracts from *NY Times Magazine* and *NY Times Book Review*
• **Vocational Search**
  
  – offers industry-specific information from trade-related journals, reviews and newspapers
  
  – designed for vocational and technical curriculums
  
  – full text articles, reports, and special issues from 150 industry and trade journals
• Designed for the novice user, but powerful enough for an experienced researcher

• Variety of resources including newspaper, TV & radio transcripts, maps & other images

• Allows for the retrieval of age appropriate resources
• **SIRS Discoverer**
  – interactive reference tool for young readers
  – each article is assigned a reading level category

• **SIRS Researcher**
  – general research information on social, scientific, health, history, business, and political issues
• **SIRS Renaissance**
  – current perspectives on the arts and humanities

• **Government Reporter**
  – wide range of information published by and about the federal government, i.e. Supreme Court decisions, directories, information on Congress, etc
- OCLC WorldCat
  - 37,000,000 bibliographic records
  - 370 languages
- OCLC Union List of Periodicals
  - 7 million library specific holdings
  - 750,000 periodicals in WorldCat
- Other OCLC databases
• Grolier MultiMedia Encyclopedia
  – Grades 5 and up (middle school)
• New Book of Knowledge
  – Grades 3 and up (elementary school)
• Encyclopedia Americana
  – Grades 7 and up (high school and junior college)
• Research Abstracts II
• PrQuest Gold
  – high school
• JuniorQuest
  – middle school
• KidsQuest
  – elementary
• Full text of most authoritative encyclopedia
• Other EB services
• Free vs. Fee Britannica service
What’s next for the AVL?

- Additional databases
- Access to government and other free information
- Recurring appropriation to maintain AVL
- Training and use are critical
- Thank the legislature!