

Advice from the Front Line: Providing Computer Support for ETD Preparation

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West Virginia University

- ◆ State Land Grant Institution, Carnegie Research I
- ◆ 22,315 Students
 - 1,432 Faculty
 - 2,678 Staff
- ◆ 13 Colleges and Schools
- ◆ 181 Theses, 131 Dissertations submitted in 1998-99
- ◆ Does not have a separate Graduate School; instead an Office of Graduate Education handles central policy
- ◆ www.nis.wvu.edu/intro/ataglance.htm

ETD Project at WVU

- ◆ Mandatory as of Aug 15, 1998
 - ❖ for those who defended after that date
 - ❖ Exemption requests go to Provost
- ◆ ETD Task Force started meeting Fall 1997
 - ❖ Determine policy, provide publicity, etc.
 - ❖ Members appointed by Provost:
 - Included humanities & technical faculty members
 - Representatives for Library, Information Technology, Research Corporation, Graduate Office

Changes due to ETD Project

- ◆ Authoritative copy is now a PDF file instead of bound book; paper documents considered derivative works
- ◆ Revised format guidelines
- ◆ New approval form for committee signatures
- ◆ All masters students must submit thesis to UMI (optional in previous years)
- ◆ Submission via web form upload
- ◆ Increase in work load for Technical Reviewer

Revised format guidelines

- ◆ Standard title page includes committee members, keywords, and copyright info
- ◆ Abstract page must follow title page & include document title and author name.
- ◆ Do not include approval page; don't include signatures on scanned letters.

ETD Process at WVU

- ◆ Student defends work and makes corrections as requested
- ◆ Converts word processing file(s) to PDF using Adobe Acrobat software
 - ❖ we suggest printing to PostScript and using Distiller to convert to PDF
- ◆ Combine smaller PDF files into single PDF file unless final file size > 10M

ETD Process, continued

- ◆ Ideally, student adds bookmarks &/or hyperlinks to enhance document navigation
- ◆ PDF file(s) must be “optimized” before submission using **File | Save As...** command in Acrobat software
- ◆ File naming conventions: name after author, no blanks or special symbols in filename
- ◆ PDF file(s) submitted via web page

Computer Support at WVU

Mixture of:

- ◆ Centralized support from Academic Computing and OIT Help Desk
- ◆ Decentralized support from department computer labs' staff and dept. support specialists

ETD Computer Support Staff

Formal support provided by Academic Computing

- ◆ 6 full time Senior Info. Tech. Consultants
- ◆ 3 full time Instructional Technology Resource Center staff members
- ◆ 3 ITRC student interns
- ◆ Computer Lab staff & student employees
- ◆ Director: maintains web server & ETD database

Informal support

- ◆ Library Technical Reviewer
- ◆ ETD Task Force members
- ◆ Faculty member on student's committee
- ◆ Other computer labs' staff members: we will train them if they install Acrobat

ETD Computer Support Topics

- ◆ General information: deadlines, guidelines, process, location of resources, workshop info
- ◆ File conversion
- ◆ Word processing
- ◆ Acrobat software use
- ◆ Scanning
- ◆ Submission of ETD via web page

Types of Support

◆ Scheduled & Unscheduled

- ❖ scheduled: staff sets aside time for support
- ❖ unscheduled: student comes in any time

◆ Staff on Duty & Self-Paced

- ❖ staff time needed to create materials
- ❖ publicity needed for both live sessions and for availability of self-paced materials

Support Summary

Scheduled



Appointments

Workshops

Clinics

Unscheduled

Web & Print
Resources

E-Mail

 Walk In

 Phone

Self Paced

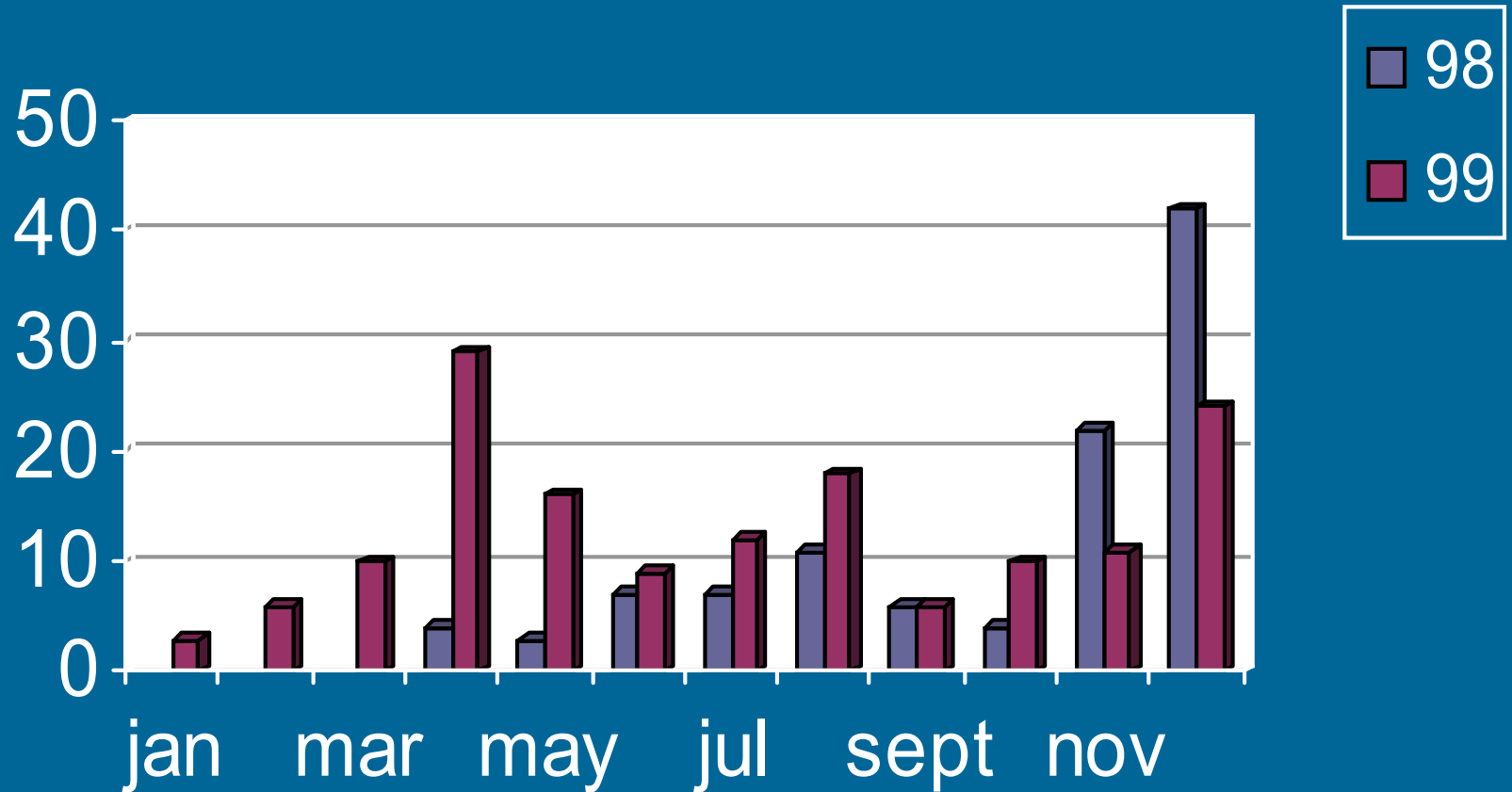
Staff Needed

Statistics

1998-99 Statistics

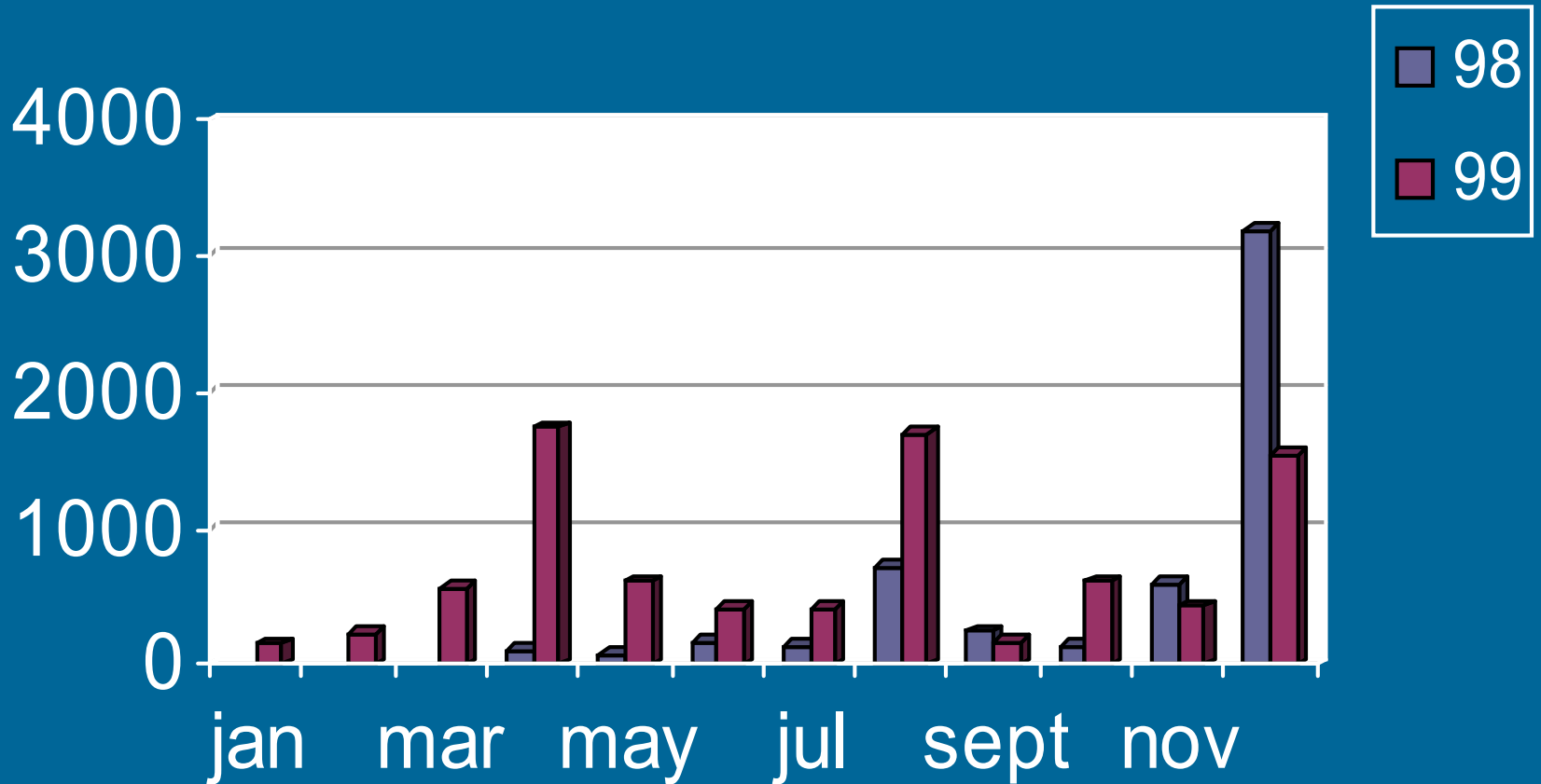
- ◆ 15 Workshops, 110 Attendees
- ◆ 10 Quick Starts, 40 Attendees
- ◆ **April-May 99 (Spring 99 graduates):**
146 Clinic Hours, 188 Staff Hours
50 Attendees
- ◆ Task Force members made informational presentations to faculty April 98 - May 99

Consulting Contacts



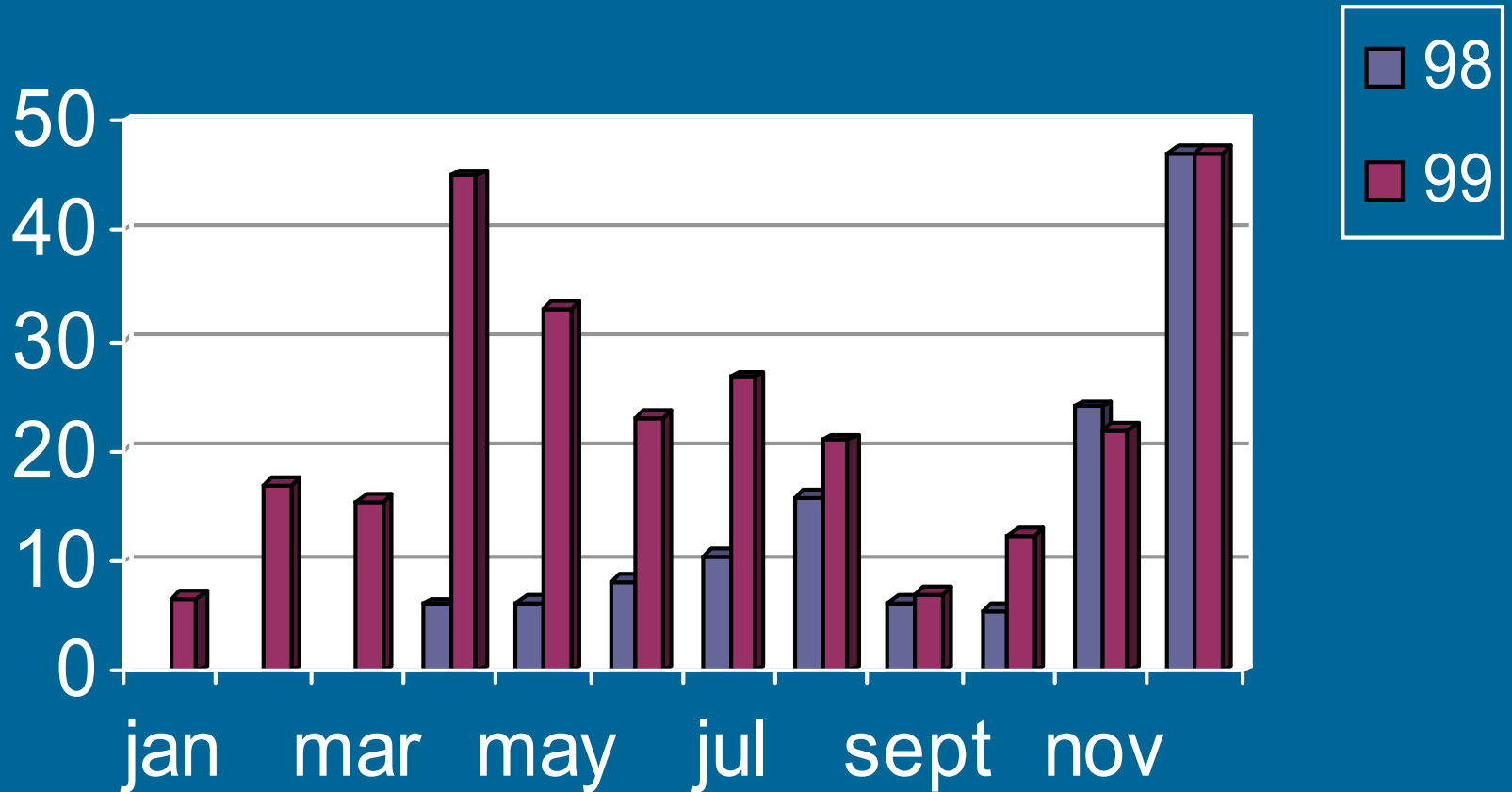
Consulting Time:

number of minutes spent on ETD support



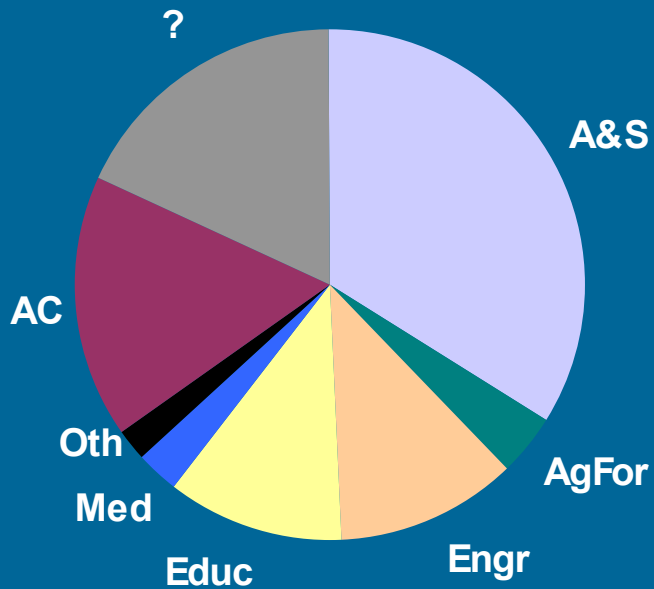
Percent of Consulting Time

of time spent consulting, percentage of that time spent on ETD support

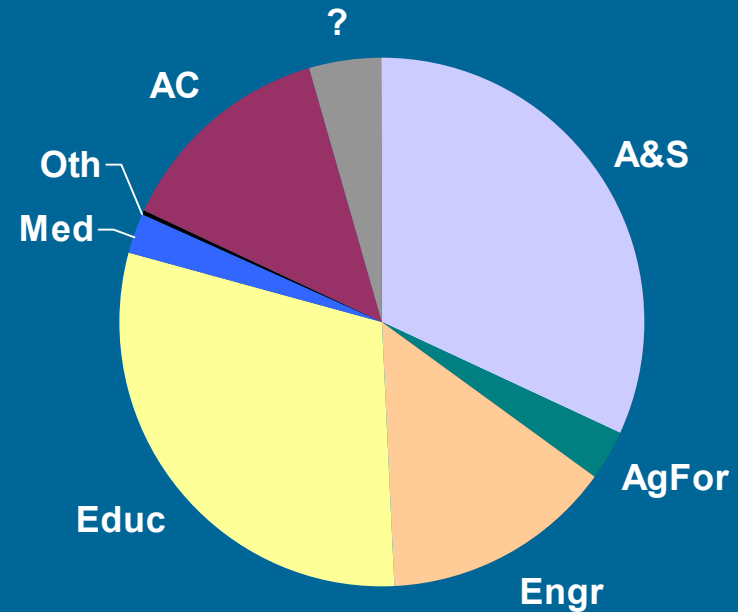


1998 by College

Arts & Sciences
Engineering
Education
Agric. & Forestry
Medical Schools
Acad. Computing
Other
? = unknown



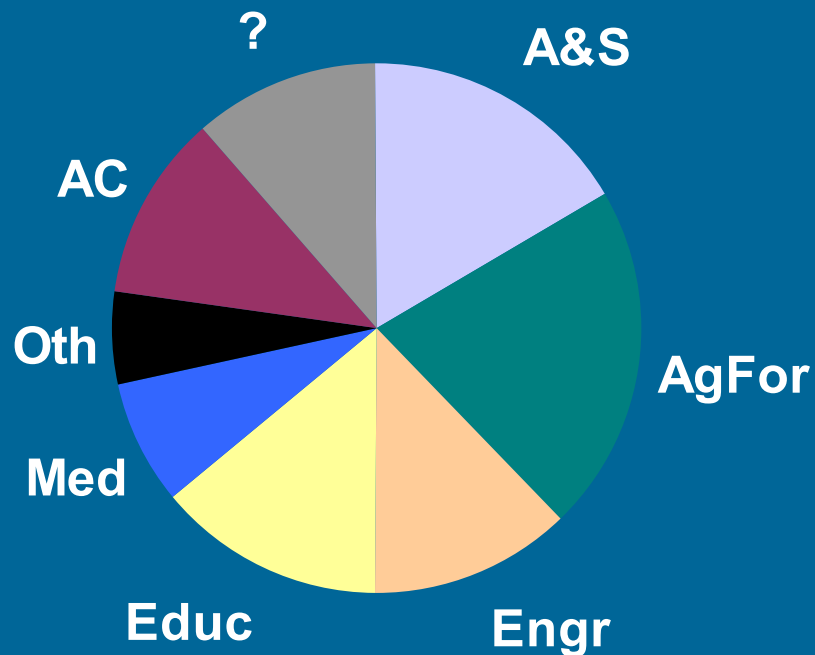
Contacts



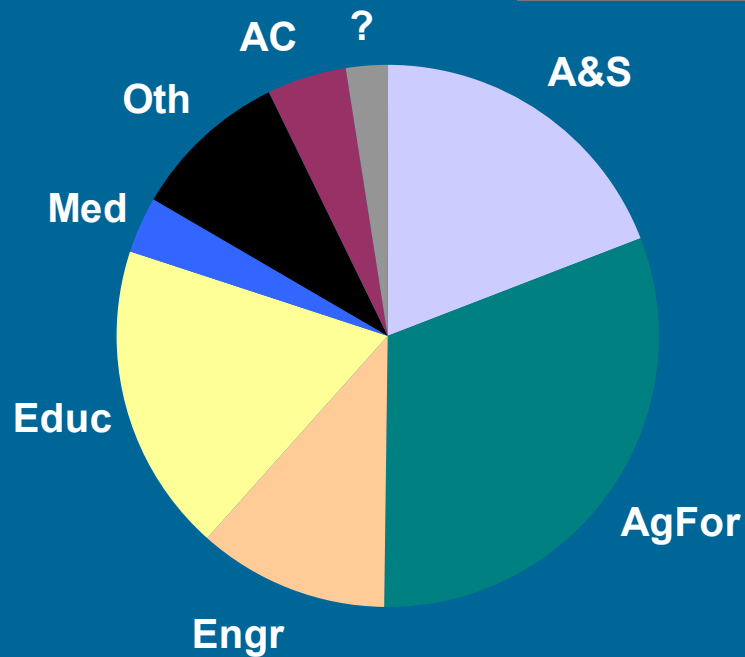
Time

1999 by College

Arts & Sciences
Engineering
Education
Agric. & Forestry
Medical Schools
Acad. Computing
Other



Contacts



Time

Possible Problems

- ◆ supporting off-campus students ⇒
- ◆ staff turnover
- ◆ competing support demands
- ◆ keeping materials up-to-date
- ◆ hostile or anxious students

Tips for Success

- ◆ train staff first
- ◆ adequate resources
 - ❖ staff
 - ❖ copies of Acrobat and other software
 - ❖ scanners etc.

Tips for Success, continued

- ◆ publicize deadlines & policies
- ◆ server and database support
- ◆ scheduling based on deadlines
- ◆ be flexible and creative

Support Details

Electronic Mail

◆ Advantages

- ❖ asynchronous
- ❖ copy & paste routine responses
- ❖ can include URLs to web resources
- ❖ can create transcript of Q&A (FAQ file)

◆ Disadvantage

- ❖ delay in receiving response



Web Based

- ◆ Guidelines and sample pages on web
- ◆ Forms on web: approval, submission, UMI, survey of earned doctorates
- ◆ PDF files of workshop materials
- ◆ Web-based tutorials
 - currently we link to VT web site
- ◆ www.wvu.edu/~thesis/



Web Based [slide 2]

- ◆ Staff time needed to create & update PDF files and web pages
- ◆ Students:
 - ❖ need access to Internet
 - ❖ need to know how to get to site
 - ❖ need to be motivated to learn on their own



Workshops

- ◆ Free, for WVU faculty, students, staff
- ◆ Must pre-register
- ◆ ETD sessions: 2 hours, once per month
- ◆ 12 workstations
- ◆ Special request sessions
- ◆ www.wvu.edu/~support/training/



Workshops [slide 2]

Advantages

- ◆ Part of regular schedule
- ◆ More efficient than tutorial
- ◆ Hands on learning
- ◆ Q & A: students learn from others' questions
- ◆ Staff development: nothing forces you to learn something like teaching it.

Disadvantages

- ◆ Schedule conflicts for non-traditional students and with WVU classes
- ◆ Timing around deadlines
- ◆ Ties up lab/staff resources
- ◆ “Rabble rousers” stir up anxiety and paranoia in others



Appointments

◆ Advantages

- ❖ personal attention to students' needs
- ❖ staff reserves time to provide service

◆ Disadvantages

- ❖ time consuming, inefficient
- ❖ staff may do too much of the actual work



Clinics

- ◆ Students drop in without pre-scheduling
- ◆ Use training lab and ETD support staff
- ◆ Clinics normally start at 9 or 10 am and run until 6 or 8pm
- ◆ Start scheduling sessions 2 weeks before deadline
- ◆ www.wvu.edu/~support/training/classmat/etd/etdlist.htm



Clinics [slide 2]

Advantages

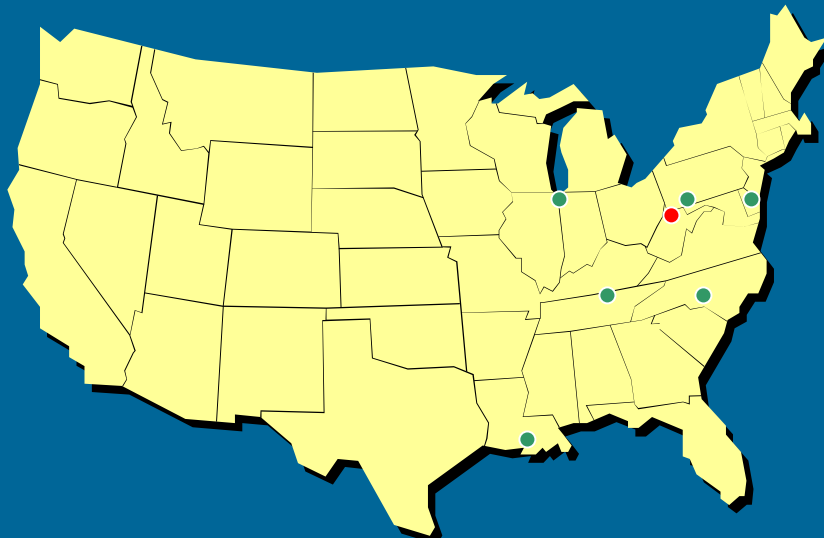
- ◆ Self paced yet help readily available
- ◆ Access to resources: Acrobat software, scanner
- ◆ Quiet time for staff to catch up on projects if no students show up

Disadvantages

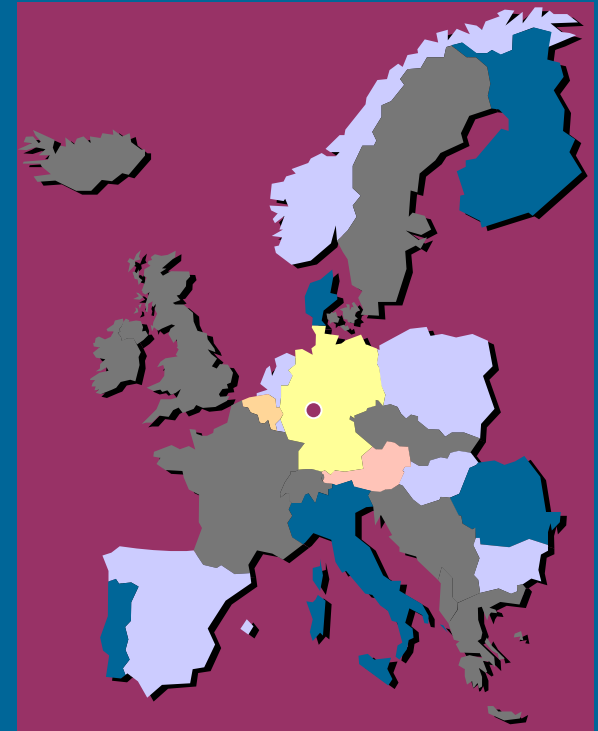
- ◆ Lab & staff hours
- ◆ Possible need for weekend / evening hours
- ◆ Hard to predict usage



Off Campus Students



out of state & 
Puerto Rico



Germany