DEVELOPMENT OF A MULTILINGUAL SELF-GUIDED AUDIOCASSETTE

TOUR OF THE PARKS LIBRARY

Project Proposers

Mary Ellen Huls, Instructor and Media Services Librarian
Kathy A. Parsons, Instructor and Information Services Librarian
Lorna Peterson, Assistant Professor, Library Instruction
Mary Jane Vakili, Instructor and Information Services Librarian

Amount requested: $1254.00
I. Background

Iowa State University receives approximately 6,000 new students each academic year. A significant portion of the student body, as well as new faculty and staff, desire some kind of orientation to the Parks Library. The conducted group tour has long fulfilled this need and served as a systematic introduction to our major collections and service points. The General Walk-Up Tour was developed in the early 1970s and provided tours to interested individuals at scheduled periods during the first week of classes. Successful and popular, this tour complemented the group tours arranged through established programs such as those conducted for the adult student, international or graduate students, and faculty.

The 1980s witnessed Library staff shortages coupled with a proliferation of time intensive library user services, thus creating a need for an alternative method for providing basic library orientation. This situation is not unique to Iowa State University. In response to increased user demands and critical staff shortages, many academic libraries have successfully implemented individual self-paced audiotape tours similar to those used by museums, and have found to be effective. The self-guided tour solves the problem of providing needed library orientation without increasing demands on the library staff. Comprehensively covered in the library literature, conducted group tours have been criticized for lacking effectiveness. Often, groups are so large that people cannot hear or see what the librarian is explaining. An individual audiotape tour avoids these flaws by allowing the patron to proceed at his/her own pace.
We propose developing a 20-30 minute self-guided audiotape tour of the Parks Library. The narrative will be recorded on audicassette and distributed to the user with a lightweight player powered by rechargeable batteries. A package of maps and descriptions of the Library’s collections and services will be issued with the tape.

Using the audicassette format offers a unique opportunity to address the needs of ISU’s international students. Three years ago it was proposed that selected handouts of the Parks Library guide series be translated into the major foreign languages spoken on campus. The proposal was received enthusiastically by the Office of International Educational Services but was not implemented. Interest remains high in finding innovative ways to ease the international student into the Iowa State University community. To help meet the needs of the international student, we plan to produce, in addition to an English tape, tapes in the six most common languages spoken by our international student population. Dennis Peterson, Acting Director of International Educational Services, has offered the assistance of IE’s staff in the identification of appropriate translators, narrators, and listeners. We have consulted with Barbara Matthies and Margaret Graves in the Intensive English and Orientation Program, and will continue to do so, concerning the inclusion of pertinent orientation information, and the choice of languages to record.

II. Description

The tour will last 20-30 minutes and will include only the ground, first, and second floors of the Library. The chosen route will be tested for ease of flow, and the script will be fine-tuned to include visual clues to the listener as to where he/she should be before a particular area is introduced. The patron will be prompted to turn off the cassette at an audio cue (e.g. music, chimes) and to turn it on again when he/she has arrived at the desired
location. To reinforce the cue, a tour map will be included in the handout packet which will be given to the patron along with the cassette player. The handout also will include general information about the Library and will consist of no more than five stapled pages. The Library's graphic artist will design the layout of the packet materials.

Library department heads will review the script for appropriateness and accuracy of information. Michael Albright and Robert Lindemeyer of the Media Resources Center will be consulted on instructional development aspects of the script and other details. The script will be recorded by MRC on 1/4" Master Recording Tape, and from this master copy MRC will produce cassette copies on MRC C-60 tape. The foreign language tapes will be reviewed by native speakers for pacing, pronunciation, and clarity before the cassette copies are produced. We plan to evaluate the tour first in English, by having volunteers take it and appraise its effectiveness. This same process then will be repeated for each language.

After the tapes are finalized, they will be evaluated by the patrons themselves. At the end of the tape, the patron will be asked to fill out an evaluation form, so that the effectiveness of the tape can be judged over a period of time. A campus mail envelope will be provided for the user to return the questionnaire at his/her convenience. The audiocassettes, tape players, and handouts will be distributed from the Library's Media Center, and maintenance of the tape players will be provided by the Library's A-V equipment specialist.

III. Significance

At the Parks Library the General Walk-Up Tour was discontinued in 1985 due to staff shortages. This proposal would fill the gap that was created by our lean years. Although Library Instruction 160 introduces the undergraduate student to the Parks Library, the average class size of fifty-five students
does not allow for a conducted group tour. A self-guided audiotape tour would encourage students' independent use of the library, and the availability of the tour in the native languages of our international students would help lower frustration levels for both students and library staff.

IV. Time Schedule

Contingent upon funding, our time line is as follows:

May/June 1988 Complete script.
July Complete maps, descriptive handouts, and evaluation forms in English only.
August Record in English.
September Test English tape.
October Implement public use of English tape and identify translators and narrators for the six most common foreign languages on campus.
December Complete recordings and implement public use of the six foreign language tapes.
April 1989 Submit progress report.
December Submit final report.

V. Budget

We submit our breakdown of anticipated expenditures as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Unit Cost</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 Sony Walkman Model WM-14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$28.50</td>
<td>$285.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 packages of Panasonic P3R-BP2 AA batteries</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$6.30</td>
<td>$63.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Panasonic Rechargeable Nickel-Cadmium Battery Charger</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$11.20</td>
<td>$11.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 1/4&quot; x 1200ft Scotch 808 Master Recording Tape</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$6.60</td>
<td>$66.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 MRC-C-60 audiotapes</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>$1.20</td>
<td>$28.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500 photocopies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$150.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 narrators</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
<td>$350.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 translators</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
<td>$300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1254.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VI. Other Potential Sources of Support

To our knowledge, the ISU Instructional Development Grant is the most suitable source for funding this type of instructional project which would facilitate learning and lead to more efficient use of faculty time. Don Rieck, Assistant Director of MRC, has informed us that personal cassette players are considered departmental purchases. However, the Library does not have funds available for this project, due to three years of budget reversions and reductions coupled with rising costs of books and journals, according to William Black, Assistant Director of Administrative Services of the Library.

VII. Qualifications

Mary Ellen Huls, Instructor, joined the Library Faculty at ISU in 1983 as a Government Publications Librarian and has supervised the Library Media Center since 1985. Long involved in public service, Ms. Huls has conducted tours and done special work with our international students.

Kathy A. Parsons, Instructor, has more than six years experience in library public service work. Information Services Librarian at ISU since 1985, Ms. Parsons has extensive experience in conducting groups tours, giving class presentations, and providing reference desk service.

Lorna Peterson, Assistant Professor, has eight years of academic library experience, five years of it at ISU. She is involved with the Library Graduate Seminar Series and has extensive volunteer experience in general library orientation programs. She has taught Library Instruction 160 since 1985.

Mary Jane Vakili, Instructor, is an Information Services Librarian with three years experience in public service activities at the Parks Library and many years of interaction with other languages and cultures. Ms. Vakili has been very involved in library instruction responsibilities since joining the Information Services Department in 1986.