The Map Library 2.0: Using Podcasting to Connect Students with Maps

ABSTRACT
The Owen Library Map Collection is using new technologies, popularly called "Web 2.0" or "Library 2.0," to connect students with maps. The use of podcasting to instruct students on using maps in science research is highlighted.

THE OWEN LIBRARY MAP COLLECTION
The Owen Library Map Collection includes more than 46,000 maps and more than 650 atlases providing access to topographic, geologic, bathymetric, and other scientific information. The Map Collection is currently being overhauled after several years without a designated maps librarian. As the collection becomes easier to access and use, it is more important than ever to make sure students are aware of this resource.

USING PODCASTING FOR MAP LIBRARY INSTRUCTION
The Owen Science Library began producing podcasts for library instruction in fall 2006. These podcasts are designed to be used on their own, or to complement in-class library instruction. To further explore this medium, and to provide information to students online in the kind of format they prefer, it was decided to continue producing podcasts on a number of library subjects, including maps. The podcasts are kept short for easy listening, and each focuses on just one topic, to make it easy for students to select just those topics of interest.

The first map library instruction podcast provides an introduction to the different kinds of cartographic materials at Owen. The large topographic map collection is particularly discussed, as well as explanation of the organization of the other scientific maps and atlases in the collection.

The podcasts are recorded using the software Audacity and a combined microphone/headset. The software is easy to work with, allowing the recording to be cleaned up to exclude any unwanted noises.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS
The series of map library instruction podcasts will continue with sessions on using specific kinds of maps, such as topographic and geological. As students begin to use them, the utility of the podcasts will be evaluated through usage statistics and, potentially, focus groups. This will inform the selection of additional topics to be covered by podcasts.

Other Library 2.0 technologies are also being integrated into the services of the Owen Library Map Collection. Work is underway on a weblog which will publicize new maps and other cartographic materials of note. The WSU Pullman Libraries will soon begin use of instant messaging software at the library reference desks, which will allow closer contact between students in the third floor maps room and knowledgeable library staff on the first floor. Social networking software is also being employed to provide students additional ways to connect with the Maps Librarian.