

<b>Technology</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Future (1-5 years)</b>
<b>E-mail</b>	Electronic transmission of mail messages asynchronously to one or more individuals with fixed addresses	Widely deployed and used between meetings by ALCTS staff and members	<p>Stable technology. Media attachments (sound, pictures, video) will increase into the future.</p> <p><b>Feasibility:</b> Highly likely to persist, with individuals' parent organizations paying use cost, or individual accounts supported by an advertising model. If it has not already reached this state de facto, it will be considered necessary for full participation in ALCTS, similar now to meeting attendance.</p>
<b>Blog</b>	Easy to create and maintain Web-based journaling tool. Multiple members can collaborate to author blogs.	Several ALA divisions (ACRL, LITA, AASL) already maintain blogs as communication outlets. ALA now has a mechanism in place for blogging, but ALCTS has not yet adopted it.	<p>Quality blogs will be sustainable; the ACRL model that treats it as an official publication within the committee structure can contribute to sustainability. Blogs are here to stay – and will only grow in breadth and depth. As use of RSS and aggregators becomes more commonplace, blogs will be more accessible. Technology features, such as video within blogs, will continue to mature.</p> <p><b>Feasibility:</b> An affordable technology that can be maintained with relative ease. It's very feasible, but the challenge is finding the right blog leader who can develop an effective writing team. If the blog isn't going to be updated regularly with good content, forget it.</p>
<b>Electronic journal and newsletter</b>	A regularly issued publication in digital form made available over the Internet. (Once popular non-Internet based electronic publications, such as CD-ROM, are virtually non-existent now.)	One of the dominant forms of publishing today. Many journals and newsletters exist without any print cognate. ALA has examples of both electronic journals and newsletters, although ALCTS so far has only adopted the newsletter format.	<p>Electronic journals and newsletters will continue to grow over the next 1-5 years. Print format is a declining share of collection in many libraries.</p> <p><b>Feasibility:</b> The ALCTS newsletter is already well established and works well. The journal would require a change in ALCTS economic model and infrastructure (in particular good electronic management software and archiving strategy), at some risk to the organization. Journals can be labor intensive, and would require additional support to load and maintain. Could be distributed via e-mail, protected in a members-only region, or other services as a members-only prerogative.</p>

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<p><b>Group conferencing or online meeting software</b></p>	<p>Simultaneous virtual meeting of a group electronically. Interaction may be through instant messaging to the group or individuals, voice (online or via conference telephone call), slide presentations, instant polls, etc. May or may not include video conferencing.</p>	<p>Widely deployed at the low-end through free services such as Yahoo and AOL. Higher end products with better guarantees of levels of quality and more features are becoming prominent in business. ALA's Online Communities has a meeting component.</p>	<p>Use of group conferencing is growing rapidly as businesses seek to reduce cost of travel. In the past, high-end conferencing software required special broadcast locations, videographers, and dedicated lines. This is no longer the case and quality systems are now available for four and five digits. Basic systems and freeware systems can be cobbled together for much less, although with compromises in quality and features.</p> <p><b>Feasibility:</b> Online Communities makes group meetings feasible now, but effort is required to make it workable. Still buggy systems, different desktop capabilities, user resistance, and lack of leadership will inhibit wide-spread adoption. Early adopters and demonstration projects will prevail.</p>
<p><b>Image management tools</b></p>	<p>Storage, organization, description of digital images. Allows for re-purposing to create posters, photo books, cell phone and desktop wallpaper, etc. Promotes sharing with easy to use tools for posting pictures to blogs, adding to e-mail, Web site, etc. Can be used with camera phones</p>	<p>Growing. Tools such as Flickr, Picassa, Shutterfly, Photosite, and Snapfish. A more complete list is available on Wikipedia under Photo Sharing. No real penetration within ALA outside of perhaps strictly staff work.</p>	<p>Poised to become more integrated into other online tools. A description of the growth of digital image use is available at <a href="http://scanblog.blogspot.com/2006/01/i-love-to-take-photograph.html">http://scanblog.blogspot.com/2006/01/i-love-to-take-photograph.html</a></p> <p><b>Feasibility:</b> Good for documenting events and building community services. See Ann Arbor District Library pictureAnnArbor project as an example of community building. Some ALA units are using image tools at conferences and workshops to help record events.</p>

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<b>Instant messaging</b>	Real-time communication between two people or among several people, using the Internet. Often refers specifically to text-based interaction, though also includes Internet telephone and video	Informal and limited use now by some ALCTS committees. Some institutions may block real time messaging, limiting its utility	<p>Could be very promising, as free services are widely available. Demand for real-time distance communication is growing. Text-based IM entails little if any expense and much less coordination and maintenance than a mailing list. Voice and video will likely always bear higher costs.</p> <p><b>Feasibility:</b> ALA’s Online Communities currently supports instant messaging, but one must be logged on to the site. Having members maintain a logged in presence is unlikely without further development (e.g., a lightweight client that is always on and senses other hosts, such as AIM, Yahoo, or an institutional messaging service).</p>
<b>Mail distribution list (“listserv”)</b>	Mechanism for distributing e-mail simultaneously to a group of subscribers. Depending on the rules for the list, messages can come from within or outside the group, with or without moderation	ALCTS uses a mailing list for announcements and news updates from headquarters. Many committees also use mailing lists for group discussion and collecting feedback	<p>Stable, perhaps some growth in use. Interfaces, particularly for archival data mining, will improve.</p> <p><b>Feasibility:</b> A good medium for group work, though lacking capability for real-time interaction. Simplicity and versatility are qualities in its favor. Because it can fit easily into the ubiquitous e-mail environment, many members prefer it over other communication channels</p>

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<b>Online community software</b>	No agreed upon definition. Also known as social software or groupware. The use of two or more modes of computer mediated communication to engage in community formation and maintenance. Allows participants to collaborate and share knowledge. Includes both synchronous and asynchronous modes of communicating. Typically includes discussion tools (Web or e-mail) with thread tracking, file/document management (with or without annotation), and chat services. Some definitions include Web presentation software.	<p>Not quite new. Historical precedents include IRC, bulletin board systems, MUDs, MOOs and MUSHs.</p> <p>Current iterations add services such as friend of a friend (FOAF) to allow the visualization of social networks and to create trust mechanisms. Examples include Friendster, Tribe.</p> <p>ALA and ALCTS are in the beginning stages of an online community implementation.</p>	<p>Difficult to discern, but use is likely to increase. Market is rife with competing products both commercial and open-source.</p> <p><b>Feasibility:</b> Good for groups working on shared documents (such as ALCTS committees), but requires technical savvy and server space to implement. Widespread use will require change in user behavior to log on to service, or development of software that will alert though e-mail, instant message, or other communication that content has changed and that one should log on. Changing user behavior and habits to use the environment is the biggest challenge.</p>
<b>Podcast</b>	A digital recording made available on the Internet for downloading either onto a personal media player or computer. Usually refers to audio recordings. The term is a merger of iPod and broadcasting. Shows can be syndicated and RSS feeds can be used to push episodes to users.	Use is rapidly growing. Several commercial vendors offer podcast subscriptions (iTunes, Rhapsody) and there are search engines and Web directories specifically for the format. Major radio networks (NPR) offer podcasts of their content. Podcasts have begun to appear in libraries and among ALA groups	<p>Strong, particularly with the low cost of entry. Expect to see more formats (video).</p> <p><b>Feasibility:</b> Excellent for distributing conference talks, training sessions, library news, author talks, etc. There is potential for new member services as well as new revenue streams.</p>

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<b>RSS</b>	Various translated as RDF Site Summary, or Rich Site Summary, or Really Simple Syndication, with the latter most in favor now. Uses XML format to share content. Syndicates lists of hyperlinks and metadata, allowing a user to subscribe to those of interest. Subscription may be through a browser, e-mail client, or dedicated client. Atom is a variant of RSS	Extremely popular. RSS feeds are being developed for a wide variety of content, both individual and institutional. Some ALA units are incorporating RSS into their work	Use likely to increase. The RSS format will likely be enhanced and different uses found for it.  <b>Feasibility:</b> A good prospect for ALCTS. Possible areas for development are news items, leader communication, updates by committees, etc. RSS can be built into such applications as Online Communities for widespread deployment. Modest development work could extend RSS to other ALCTS centers, such as the newsletter
<b>VoIP</b> (Voice over Internet Protocol.)	Allows voice communication over the Internet as a replacement for conventional telephone service; limitation is one speaker at a time	Still developing; not widely used by librarians. There are cost and technology barriers. Quality of service can vary.	Poised for tremendous growth; gaining popularity owing to Skype. Some businesses are installing VoIP systems to replace traditional telephones, at tremendous cost savings. Quality of service is expected to improve dramatically as more first-tier companies adopt.  <b>Feasibility:</b> Excellent technology for online training and conferencing. As it becomes more commonplace most individuals will expect to talk to each other through their computers – and video will become a part of the package. Complete implementation within ALCTS would require an expensive conversion, although costs would probably be recouped because of the large volume of long distance calling. Working groups who settle on a common technology such as Skype could reduce cost of participating in ALCTS.

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<b>Social bookmarking</b>	Web-based tool for managing links or bookmarks and making them available for others to use. Bookmarks are annotated with descriptive tags to facilitate search and retrieval.	Many social bookmarking tools are available, such as del.icio.us, Furl, Blinklist.	Growing and being adapted for different purposes (e.g., tagging catalog records). There are search engines for finding popular bookmarks and subscription feeds for watching other people's bookmark lists.  <b>Feasibility:</b> Cheap and easy to use and implement without significant overhead. Useful for collaboration between group members. URLs pertinent to the job can be shared easily
<b>Webcast</b>	A conference or presentation that takes place in a virtual space using any one of several software packages that combine communication and presentation technologies. They can feature online chat, VoIP, whiteboarding, instant polls, etc.	Strong growth; associations and corporations are using Webcasts for virtual meetings and online continuing education. One barrier is the expense of the conferencing software. Webcasts are relatively easy to organize and implement	As budgets tighten and there is less time for travel, Webcasting will continue to grow; an excellent technology for ALA divisions to offer continuing education programming  <b>Feasibility:</b> ALA may not wish to acquire the necessary software, but it would be feasible to partner with organizations that offer the technology. A good model is ACRL's virtual workshop series with the TLT group – using the Learning Time Network's Elluminate software.
<b>Wiki</b>	Similar to a blog, but it can be edited by any member of a select group, or it can be made publicly accessible. Slightly more complicated to create than a blog – but not a barrier.	The success of Wikipedia has created great interest in wikis for building communities online; excellent possibilities to allow ALA committees to create and edit documents in a virtual space.	Like blogs, will continue to grow and expand as a social collaboration tool, especially as it becomes easier to create and maintain.  <b>Feasibility:</b> Like blogs, very affordable and can be maintained by an individual. If committees want a communication tool that invites member participation, this is one way to accomplish it. The division could create its own ALCTSipedia as a low cost technical encyclopedia and guidebook.