Delivering VALUE
Equitably, Cooperatively, and Cost-Effectively
VIVA’s mission is to provide, in an equitable, cooperative, and cost-effective manner, enhanced access to library and information resources for the Commonwealth of Virginia's nonprofit academic libraries serving the higher education community.

“For two decades, VIVA has helped students, faculty and researchers while saving the Commonwealth millions of dollars. It stands at the intersection of academic excellence and institutional collaboration. VIVA represents innovation at its best.”

– Gilbert Bland, Chairman, State Council of Higher Education of Virginia

For more information, visit www.vivalib.org • Phone: 703.993.4654
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Celebrating VIVA: Its First Twenty Years of Making the Virtual a Reality

The Virtual Library of Virginia (VIVA) began in July 1994 as a collaborative effort of public and private nonprofit academic libraries to support higher education in the Commonwealth. This fundamental spirit of collaboration has not changed, even as the world of libraries has changed in dramatic ways.

During the past 20 years, VIVA has been part of this change, finding new ways to improve library services for students and faculty and delivering maximum value with public funds. Scores of librarians from every type of nonprofit higher education institution in Virginia have volunteered to share the work of VIVA – planning workshops and conferences, drafting organizational documents, training colleagues, working with vendors, and doing the day-to-day work necessary for the smooth operation of such a large, complex organization.

VIVA’s success in providing equitable access to library resources and services for higher education in Virginia is primarily due to the exemplary level of commitment and cooperation by the VIVA members.
What has changed in VIVA:

The budget has grown tremendously, due to increases in both General Assembly funds and institutional cost-sharing. New General Assembly funds have been critical to VIVA acquiring Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Health (STEM-H) e-book resources. The willingness of member institutions to commit their limited local resources in order to acquire key resources for the VIVA community is extraordinary and reveals the power of the VIVA cooperative.

The electronic collections have expanded and diversified greatly throughout the history of VIVA. The number of academic e-journals in the VIVA collection has tripled over the last ten years, and the number of e-books has grown from just a handful of titles ten years ago to a collection of over 50,000 e-books.
What hasn’t changed in VIVA:

Even today, more than 97 percent of the total VIVA budget is allocated directly to library materials and services for member libraries while administrative costs of any kind have remained below 3 percent of the total budget.
Delivering Value — Equitably

Through VIVA, from Bristol to Winchester, from Hampton Roads to the Shenandoah Valley, from Danville to Fairfax, all students and faculty members—at both the VIVA public and the private nonprofit member institutions—have access to essential library resources. VIVA’s resources provide support for programs in fields ranging from nursing to engineering, and from basic sciences to humanities, that otherwise would not be possible at many smaller colleges and universities. VIVA effectively levels the playing field for VIVA’s students and faculty no matter where they teach and learn.

“Within just a few years after VIVA began its legendary purchasing of online materials, all Community Colleges enjoyed library collections that far exceeded anything that a typical community college could hope to acquire. Using the famous VIVA ‘leveling the playing field’, especially for undergraduates, students throughout the Commonwealth, regardless of their location, had world class library materials to support their coursework.”

– Frank Moran, Former Dean of Learning Resources, Blue Ridge Community College
Delivering Value — Cooperatively

The Virtual Library of Virginia, VIVA, is widely recognized as a model for cost-efficient, cooperative operations in higher education. VIVA’s decentralized organization depends on the engaged and active volunteer staff of member libraries for much of its work, and its small central administration requires less than 3% of its funding to operate. As a result, more than 97% of VIVA’s funds go toward direct services for our members—acquiring electronic collections, providing resource sharing services for students and faculty throughout all of the Commonwealth’s college and university libraries, and training for our members.
Delivering Value — Cost-Effectively

Since VIVA’s inception in 1994, cost effectiveness has always been a top priority, and it remains a key focus in every initiative undertaken by VIVA. The ability of VIVA to negotiate contracts on behalf of all academic libraries in Virginia gives it enormous leverage, driving down prices and allowing VIVA to provide the best possible return on the Commonwealth’s investment of taxpayer funds.

Since 1994, VIVA has benefitted the Commonwealth with more than $670 million in cost avoidance, while also providing the highest quality library materials to students and faculty who otherwise would not have had access to these resources. Because of its cooperative approach to purchasing library materials, for every $1 spent on electronic resources, VIVA provides more than $5 worth of materials, a 5-to-1 payoff for Virginia’s college and university students.
VIVA Resources

Research resources acquired by VIVA are purchased cooperatively, and libraries avoid costly duplication in acquisitions by coordinating their work. The extraordinary electronic collections provided by VIVA cover a wide array of disciplines and include:

- More than 160 databases supporting research and education
- Almost 6,500 academic videos
- Almost 30,000 journals supporting research and education
- Over 50,000 electronic books
- More than 2,000,000 additional full-text reports, dissertations, conference proceedings, pamphlets, and newspapers

Since 1994, VIVA has benefitted the Commonwealth with more than $670 million in cost avoidance. That's more than a 5-to-1 payoff for Virginia!
Over 100 million full-text articles and e-book chapters downloaded through VIVA

Use of these materials is staggering. From 1995 through 2014, over 100 million full-text articles and e-book chapters have been downloaded from these resources by VIVA’s students and faculty members.

Over 2 million books and articles shared through VIVA

In addition, member libraries have freely shared their valuable print collections. Since FY1996, VIVA members have shared more than 2 million books and articles with students and faculty at other institutions, with substantive contributions from the smallest to the largest academic libraries in Virginia.

“The services VIVA provides are essential to my work as a scholar and teacher: without the interlibrary loan infrastructure VIVA helps make possible, I simply would not have access to materials I use for research and course design. I’m deeply grateful for the opportunities it makes possible for me and my students.”

– Dr. Steele Nowlin, Elliot Associate Professor of English, Hampden-Sydney College
Looking to the Future

VIVA continues to explore new ways to serve the Commonwealth while providing cost-effective access to the highest quality research materials for students and faculty across Virginia. We have seen unprecedented change in libraries over the last twenty years, and the next twenty years will undoubtedly bring even more change to libraries, including more open systems of sharing scholarship and library materials among scholars. VIVA members are committed to creating this future with new levels of collaboration and innovation.

Key to the future is VIVA’s emerging vision of the member institutions’ collections as a single, shared collection, available wherever and whenever materials are needed. VIVA is deeply engaged in new efforts to increase the strength and visibility of the combined collections, ultimately providing students and faculty access to the vast collective resources held by all of the VIVA libraries and providing the best possible return on the Commonwealth’s significant, cumulative investment in its academic libraries.

As the Commonwealth contemplates its next steps towards a stronger and more productive higher education system, VIVA’s far-reaching collaborative can be seen as a successful and evolving mechanism for assuring vital information access for all of Virginia’s faculty and students.
VIVA Member Institutions

Public Community and Two Year Branch Colleges
Blue Ridge Community College
Central Virginia Community College
Dabney S. Lancaster Community College
Danville Community College
Eastern Shore Community College
Germanna Community College
J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College
John Tyler Community College
Lord Fairfax Community College
Mountain Empire Community College
New River Community College
Northern Virginia Community College*
Patrick Henry Community College
Paul D. Camp Community College
Piedmont Virginia Community College
Rappahannock Community College
Richard Bland College
Southside Virginia Community College
Southwest Virginia Community College
Thomas Nelson Community College
Tidewater Community College
Virginia Highlands Community College
Virginia Western Community College
Wytheville Community College

Public Colleges and Universities
Christopher Newport University
College of William and Mary*
George Mason University*
James Madison University*
Longwood University*
Norfolk State University
Old Dominion University*
Radford University*
University of Mary Washington*
University of Virginia*
University of Virginia's College at Wise
Virginia Commonwealth University*
Virginia Military Institute
Virginia State University
Virginia Tech*

Educational and Research Institutions
Institute for Advanced Learning and Research
Library of Virginia
New College Institute
Roanoke Higher Education Center
Southern Virginia Higher Education Center
Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center

Private, Nonprofit Institutions
Appalachian College of Pharmacy
Appalachian School of Law
Averett University
Bluefield College
Bridgewater College
Christendom College
Eastern Mennonite University
Eastern Virginia Medical School
Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine
Emory & Henry College
Ferrum College
Hampden-Sydney College*
Hampton University
Hollins University
Institute for the Psychological Sciences
Jefferson College of Health Sciences
Liberty University
Lynchburg College
Mary Baldwin College
Marymount University
Randolph College
Randolph-Macon College
Regent University
Roanoke College
Shenandoah University
Southern Virginia University
Sweet Briar College*
Union Presbyterian Seminary
University of Richmond
Virginia Union University
Virginia Wesleyan College
Washington and Lee University

*VIVA Steering Committee Members, 2014-2015

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