Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (TLG) Database Update

I am writing to update interested faculty on the status of the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (TLG) database. TLG is a comprehensive, full text database in Greek of most surviving texts from Homer to the fall of Byzantium (1453) and beyond. All texts are in Greek using ancient Greek fonts or standard transliteration for search queries. Knowledge of ancient Greek is needed to make use of this resource.

As many of you know, in December, we restricted use of this database to UST-owned computers physically located in the Ireland Library. We took this action after more than a year of problems with access to the database. At least seven times in 14 months, TLG's computer server security software detected what it thought was a "bot" attempting to harvest database content. When this happens, TLG considers us in breach of our license contract, and shut down access to the database for two weeks. Library staff worked diligently in concert with IRT and TLG's technical staff to investigate the problem and tested various solutions, to no avail: the problem recurred.

The problem appears to be caused by a conflict with web filtering software (K-9), which is in wide use in the Seminary on student-owned computers. Our staff looked at a great many potential technical fixes to preserve broad access to the database over the past 14 months, and were unsuccessful. Most recently, on November 15, 2012, our access was blocked again. Shortly thereafter we decided to restrict access to computers in the Ireland Library.

Fundamentally, we can’t offer online access to a resource that is subject to random and frequent shutdowns--our users need to be able to rely upon consistent access to our research resources, and when a product can’t deliver that, we need to take action.

Since that time, we have continued researching and testing technical solutions to this problem.

We’d now like to try an experiment to open up access a little more broadly. We've made and tested system adjustments that, if they continue to work, will allow broader access:

- Students will be able to access TLG from UST-owned computers campus-wide, but personally-owned computers will be blocked in the dorms and via the wireless network. Students will not be able to access the database from off-campus.

- Faculty and staff will be able to access TLG from computers on campus, whether in computer labs or their offices. They may also be able to access the database from off-campus if they connect remotely to their office computer and the UST network using the Virtual Private Network (VPN) and a remote desktop connection. Faculty and staff would first initiate a VPN and remote
desktop connection, then navigate to the library website and access the TLG database links via our list of databases. Instructions and assistance on how to sign up for and use the VPN and remote desktop connections are available via the IRT website and your assigned Academic Technology Consultant (ATC).

We'd like to try this now as the semester begins and see if it prevents a recurrence of the problem of the TLG database being blocked. If the problem does recur, we may once again need to restrict access to Ireland Library.

Please let me know if you have questions.

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