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Library Services Newsletters

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5-2005

## 05-2005 Newsletter

Minnesota State University, Mankato. Library Services

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## Online Subject Guides Offer Starting Points for Research

Online guides to resources for more than 50 subject areas will be easily available to MSU users from the Library Services web page starting this summer. Each MSU college is served by a team of liaison librarians who recommended the resources to include on subject pages related to the departments in that college.

Each guide includes brief descriptions of and links to electronic databases and full-text resources related to the targeted subject. The guides also provide links to electronic sources of facts, statistics, and definitions, as well as visual resources such as collections of photographs or art images.

The pages include a link to MnPALS so that users can quickly locate books, videos, maps, and other items available for checkout from Memorial Library. A link to WorldCat also makes it possible to search for books held at other libraries.

Other parts of the page are specific to the subject covered. For example, the recommended databases for finding journal articles in Accounting will be quite different than those listed for Physics. Each listing includes a brief description of the topics included and the range of dates covered. An icon indicates resources that offer full-text materials.

In addition to the tailored subject pages, a separate guide covers basic sources that students in beginning classes such as Composition 101 might use. A "General Resources" page provides links to databases that cover a broad range of topics, including current events and general knowledge.

The guides all include links to instructions about how to access the online resources from off campus and how to find out whether the Library has print or electronic versions of specific journals. Another link leads to a page that encourages users to contact reference librarians for additional help in person, by phone, or online.

Librarians hope that these pages will prove useful for instructors as they work with their classes. Links from D2L or course web pages can direct students to relevant research guides. We encourage you to try the pages yourself and suggest them to students. If you have suggestions for changes or additional resources on particular subject pages, contact the librarian who works with your department. This list is on the web at <http://lib.mnsu.edu/lib/cd/librns.html>.

**NOTE:** The online guides are already available from the Library home page <[lib.mnsu.edu](http://lib.mnsu.edu)>. Selecting the *Online Resources* link on the left side of the page and then choosing *New Subject List*. This summer, the current subject and alphabetical lists of online resources will be redesigned and the new design will replace the current list of *Electronic Resources by Subject*.

## Search Multiple Resources At Once

Starting this summer, MSU Library users will be able to search many databases at once by using a new search engine developed by Serials Solutions. Rather than searching each database separately using a number of different interfaces, users will be able to start their search for journal articles, books, and other resources with a single query.

The Basic Search mode provides a single search box where terms can be entered. Advanced Search offers several boxes that allow users to structure their search by combining terms in various fields.

Results can be sorted and displayed by date, author, title, and source. Direct links are provided to all full-text articles that are identified by the search process. For articles that are not available full-text, a link to MnPALS will help the user find out quickly if the needed journal and volume is

available in print in the Library or if the article must be requested through interlibrary loan.

Listings next to the search results will indicate how many matches were found in various databases. To search one of the databases in more depth, the user will follow a link to that resource. The specific search features of that particular database must then be used to continue the search.

For many users, the single search engine will provide a convenient starting point for research, particularly if used in connection with the subject guide pages. However, researchers who want to concentrate on a single database may prefer to go directly to that resource and use its specific features for more precise and complex search strategies.

The subject guides described in a related article in this newsletter will include a search box that offers the option of a combined search of the resources identified as part of that subject group.

Other resource clusters may be developed as librarians and users identify databases that are often searched together. Individuals can also make their own selections of resources to combine in a search.

Not every electronic resource can be included in the combined searches because of license agreements that may limit the number of simultaneous users or base their pricing on the number of uses per database. Excluded databases will be clearly indicated on the Library's web pages so that users will know they need to search them separately to retrieve information.

**Open sessions** to demonstrate and explain the new search capabilities will be offered during fall semester. To schedule an instruction session for a class, use the online request form at <http://lib.mnsu.edu/cgi/forms/askinstr.html>.

## New Database Trials

Although most of the database trials featured in the last newsletter have ended, a number of electronic resources are available into May. We encourage students and faculty to use these databases and provide comments to the librarian who works with your department.

**The Bibliography of Native North Americans** includes "citations from the cumulative eight volumes of the Ethnographic Bibliography of North America as well as additional new citations." Contact librarians at the Reference Desk (x5958) for login information. Access expires May 15.

**CRCnetBASE** provides access to full-text handbooks and other materials published by CRC Press. Our trial is limited to resources included in **ENGnetBASE**, which covers a variety of engineering specialties including biomedical, civil, computer, electrical, and mechanical. Users can search for specific subjects in all the resources or browse through individual reference titles. Access expires May 18.

**Cross-Cultural Database** draws information from Human Relations Area Files. It includes records "from more than 1000 reference sources in the fields of anthropology, sociology and psychology." Major topics covered include Crime

and Social Problems, Childhood and Adolescence, Death and Dying, Family, Marriage, and Old Age. Contact librarians at the Reference Desk for login information. Access expires May 15th.

**Historical New York Times** includes pdf versions of articles that appeared in the newspaper from 1851 through 2001. Contact the librarians at the Reference Desk for login information. Access expires May 17.

**Referex Engineering** from Compendex also offers full-text engineering reference books. Titles included in this resource are available through the eBooks Search tab in Engineering Village. The trial provides access to the following collections: Chemical, Petrochemical, and Process; Mechanical and Materials; and Electronics and Electrical. Access is available until May 18.

**Scopus** provides citations and abstracts to articles in 14,000 peer-reviewed titles from more than 4,000 international publishers covering scientific, technical, medical, and social science topics. Access expires May 16.

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To explore any of these resources, select the *Database Trials* link on the right side of the Library's home page: <[lib.mnsu.edu](http://lib.mnsu.edu)>.