

# MINITEX

## Reference NOTES

A Program of the Minnesota Higher Education Services Office (HESO) at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

July 2005

### Inside This Issue

Try Cool Tools @  
Your Library  
State Fair Exhibit!!! . . . . . 1

Question and  
Answer Web Sites . . . . . 2

MINITEX Reference  
Services ELM  
Training Calendar . . . . . 4

### **Information Bits**

**WebSearch University**  
Information Today will offer WebSearch University conference to be held at the Crystal City Marriott in Arlington, VA, on September 19-20, 2005. MINITEX will be coordinating a discounted group registration. The special rate for the WebSearch University conference is \$395.00 for the two day event (September 19-20, 2005). No discount rates are available for the pre-and post-conference seminars and workshops. For additional information regarding the conference go to: [www.websearchu.com](http://www.websearchu.com).

### **Try Cool Tools @ Your Library State Fair Exhibit!!!**

If you make it to the State Fair this year be sure to be one of the 800,000 Fairgoers that stops by the Wonders of Technology building to check out the Try Cool Tools @ Your Library exhibit. Building on the ALA @ Your Library campaign, this exhibit will feature electronic tools and resources available to all Minnesota residents. Partnering in this exciting event are MnLINK, MINITEX's ELM program, MDL (Minnesota Digital Library Coalition), and the University of Minnesota Libraries. This exhibit will feature six computer terminals that will allow visitors to search a wealth of electronic resources, as well as provide informational handouts and giveaways. The State Fair runs from August 25 through September 5. If you are planning on attending the Fair and are interested in volunteering at the Try Cool Tools @ Your Library exhibit, contact Christine Kline at [kline119@umn.edu](mailto:kline119@umn.edu).



---



## Question and Answer Web Sites

### Fugitive Fact File

[http://www.hclib.org/pub/search/fff\\_public.cfm](http://www.hclib.org/pub/search/fff_public.cfm)

This site, maintained and updated by Hennepin County Library staff, contains many Minnesota specific questions and answers. Using this database, you can search for and locate hard-to-find information on thousands of different topics. The database combines information files from individual libraries throughout the Hennepin County Library System. The Fugitive Fact File is a full-text database, which means that all terms which appear in the title, text and keyword fields are fully searchable. Keywords are additional and alternative terms that help link related facts together for enhanced retrieval. In addition, appropriate websites have been added to many of the facts in the database and can be accessed easily by clicking on the link.

### AskA+ Locator

<http://www.vrd.org/locator/>

The AskA+ Locator is a database of high-quality "AskA" services designed to link students, teachers, parents and other K-12 community members with experts on the Internet. Profiles of each AskA service include identification information (e.g., publisher, e-mail address, contact person, links to services' home pages), scope, target audience, and a general description of the service. Some of the web sites linked from AskA+ service profiles provide additional resources such as online reference, archives of previously asked questions, and links to related sites. Information in the Locator, including links to AskA services, is accessible through the following search options.

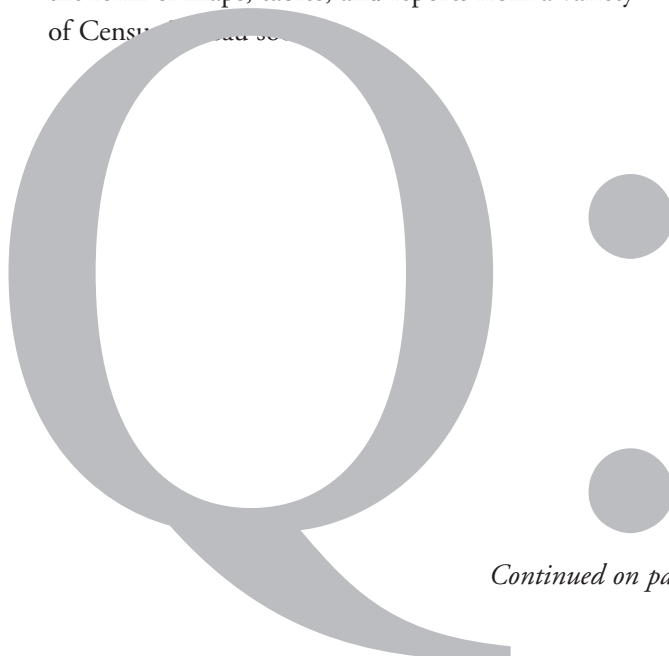
- Search the Locator by term (e.g., keyword, subject, grade, etc.)
- Allows for limiting by age and educational level.
- Browse a listing by subject

- Contains all sites organized by their subject matter. The list is in alphabetical order of subject and then title name. There may be more than one site with the same name listed, but each link leads to an individual resource.
- Browse an alphabetical listing by AskA+ service
- Includes a list of all the sites organized into alphabetical order by title. The subject of each site is also listed.

### U.S. Census Bureau Question & Answer Center

[http://ask.census.gov/cgi-bin/askcensus.cfg/php/enduser/std\\_alp.php](http://ask.census.gov/cgi-bin/askcensus.cfg/php/enduser/std_alp.php)

This site lets you browse and search through hundreds of questions and answers about population, demographics, and more. Some topics include housing, education, employment, and health. You can also ask questions and save specific answers although there is free registration for those features. Along the same lines as the U.S. Census Bureau Question & Answer Center is American Fact Finder (AFF), also available through the Census Bureau. AFF is an online source for population, housing, economic and geographic data that presents the results from four data programs and lets you obtain data in the form of maps, tables, and reports from a variety of Census data sets.



*Continued on page 3*

---

### Scientific American: Ask the Experts

[http://www.sciam.com/askexpert\\_directory.cfm](http://www.sciam.com/askexpert_directory.cfm)

Sponsored by *Scientific American* magazine, readers can submit questions to scientific experts. The more interesting questions are archived by topic including astronomy, biology, chemistry, computers, environment, geology, mathematics, medicine, and physics. Because of the volume of questions they receive, they do not promise to answer them all. Some examples of current questions:

- Why do bees buzz?
- How do embryos survive the freezing process?
- How can deleted computer files be retrieved at a later date?
- What causes feedback in a guitar or microphone?
- Why do bags form below our eyes?
- Why do migratory birds fly in a V formation?
- You can find answers to these and thousands of other questions at the Scientific American: Ask the Experts site. Some answers include a chart/graph/illustration to better explain the answer. Each answer is prefaced with the name of the scientist who answered the question, as well as the institution, for which they work.

### Everyday Mysteries: Fun Science Facts from the Library of Congress

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/scitech/mysteries/>

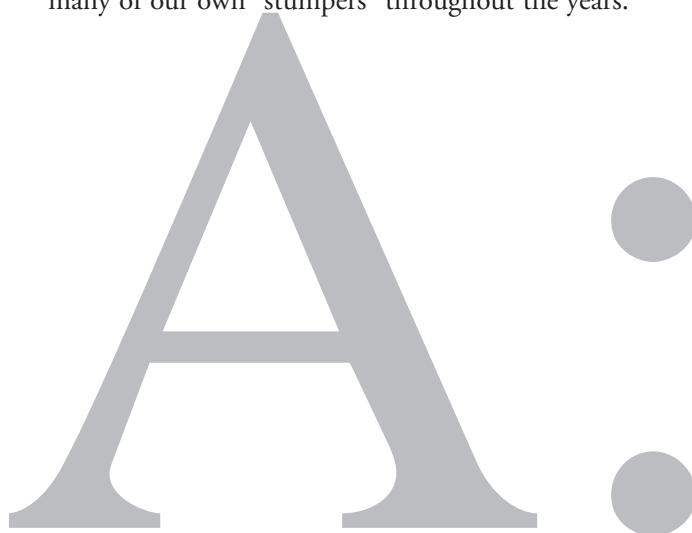
This site provides answers to questions that “deal with everyday phenomena that we often take for granted, but...can be explained scientifically.” Everyday Mysteries helps get the answers to many of life’s most interesting questions. All of the questions presented on this site were asked by researchers and answered by librarians from the Library of Congress Science Reference Services. You can

perform a keyword search or browse by specific archived category including agriculture, botany, animals, energy, home economics, recreation, and more. Answers to common questions such as “Why do onions make me cry?” and “Why do bats live in caves are available?”

### Stumpers

<http://domin.dom.edu/depts/gslis/stumpers/>

“The Stumpers list is a place for librarians (and others) to discuss reference questions which they are unable to answer using available resources, including the Internet and local interlibrary loan capabilities. Stumpers was created in 1992 by Ann Feeney, who was at that time a student at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS) at Rosary College. For many years, Stumpers was hosted through Concordia University, and then in May of 1997, Rosary College changed its name to Dominican University. Over a period of several years, the hosting of the list was moved from Concordia to Dominican, where it currently resides. Moderation of the list has been handled since the beginning by graduate students in the GSLIS. This site contains information about the list, including how to subscribe to the list, how to send questions to the list, frequently asked questions from and about the list, and some links to list-related resources in other places.” A handy feature of this site is its searchable archive that can be limited by date. We at MINITEX Reference Services have posted responses to others’ Stumpers and have posted many of our own “stumpers” throughout the years.



MINITEX Reference Services staff will be traveling around the state this fall offering training on the ELM resources. The calendar below lists currently scheduled dates of training. As more training sessions and webinars are offered, we will continue to update this calendar. For more information on upcoming sessions please visit the MINITEX Event Calendar at <http://lists.minitex.umn.edu/forums/calendar.php>.

- 1 SAMMIE Benson, MN
- 2 SAMMIE Slayton, MN

**MINITEX Reference Services ELM Training Calendar**

August

10-11 Branch Out Duluth, MN  
 25 Minnesota Catholic Education Association  
 Annual Conference St. Cloud, MN  
 29 Edgerton Schools Edgerton, MN

September

22-23 MLA Annual Conference Minneapolis, MN

October

14-15 MEMO Annual Conference Mankato, MN  
 20-21 Education Minnesota St. Paul, MN  
 24 Lake Agassiz Regional Library System Moorhead, MN  
 25 Lake Agassiz Regional Library System Crookston, MN  
 26 Lake Agassiz Regional Library System Detroit Lakes, MN

November

**REFERENCE NOTES**

MINITEX Library Information Network  
 University of Minnesota, 15 Andersen Library  
 222 21st Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55455-0439

Reference Phone . . . . . 612-624-4150, WATS 800-462-5348  
 Reference Fax . . . . . 612-624-4508  
 Staats, Beth . . . . . 612-624-7873, fried004@umn.edu  
 Parker, Mary . . . . . 612-624-1024, m-park1@umn.edu  
 Main Website . . . . . www.minitex.umn.edu  
 Reference Email . . . . . ref@othello.lib.umn.edu  
 Office Hours . . . . . Mon-Fri., 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
 Reference Intake Form . . . . . <http://www-minitex.lib.umn.edu/reference/refdb/index.asp>

*The Institute of Museum and Library Services, a Federal agency that fosters innovation, leadership, and a lifetime of learning, and State Library Services & School Technology, the Minnesota state library agency, supports MINITEX Reference Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA).*

MINITEX Library Information Network  
 University of Minnesota  
 15 Andersen Library  
 222 21st Avenue South  
 Minneapolis, MN 55455-0439



*A Program of the Minnesota Higher Education Services Office at the University of Minnesota*