

MINITEX *Reference* NOTES

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

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Inside This Issue

Google Scholar
<http://scholar.google.com/> . . . 1

Upcoming Library
Teleconferences 2

EBSCO's Business Source
Premier to get facelift. 3

Web Site Hit: Dietary
Guidelines for Americans
<http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/> 3

Computers in Libraries
and Internet @ Schools East
conferences:
discounted registration
through MINITEX 4



Google Scholar

<http://scholar.google.com/>

One of several high-profile and library-related projects that Google has announced in recent months is Google Scholar, which went live in mid-November 2004. Google Scholar lets users "search specifically for scholarly literature, including peer-reviewed papers, theses, books, preprints, abstracts and technical reports from all broad areas of research....available across the web." There was a lot of media buzz (from the *New York Times* to *Science* and *Nature*) when the service became available, but reaction from the library world was a swirl of excitement and skepticism, not to mention some hand-wringing over possible erosion of library turf. We scanned what had already been written about this new service and took it for a quick test drive ourselves.

While Google hasn't been forthcoming about the content and has received a lot of criticism for this obscurity, searchers will find results from well-known entities like ACM, Blackwell, Wiley Interscience, and IEEE, in addition to records for library-owned materials from OCLC's WorldCat. While big-name publishers are included, it seems that their publications are not comprehensively covered; Peter Jasco's review includes numerous examples to support his statement that "users would not have the faintest idea that only a small subset of the articles in many of these digital archives are known to Google Scholar." Search results might include full-text articles, links to web sites, library records, or citations culled from these other resources. Relevancy ranking for results is based on "the full text of each article as well as the article's author, the publication in which the article appeared, and how often it has been cited in scholarly literature." More than one reviewer has questioned Google's definition of or filter for "scholarly" material, while Google Scholar has also been criticized for apparently inflated "citedness scores" of results (i.e., the top results really weren't cited as many times as Google Scholar indicates). Searching Google Scholar is free, although Google often has crawled/searched full text of articles that users will have to pay to access or find in another way (i.e., library print holdings or electronic subscriptions).

A few quick searches were enough to make me crinkle my information-professional nose at the prospect of using Google Scholar again. Searching for an author with an unusual last name was something of an exercise in futility; there were several authors with the same last name, but I couldn't effectively limit my search to this last name with the correct first name or initial. Some of the results were questionable in terms of their scholarly quality (A list of a university's board of trustees? Okay, the URL includes the "edu" domain, but this is a stretch). As an experienced searcher, I felt extremely handicapped by the lack of search functionality or limits that I'm used to with commercial databases. In spite of the "relevancy" ranking of results, my reaction to the mixed bag of scholarly stuff I retrieved was something like Peter Jasco's: "Google's approach is like mixing in a gigantic bowl the appetizer, soup, entrée, salad, dessert, and coffee. It is not exactly a mouth-watering potpourri, even though there are many delicious ingredients in the bowl."

Continued on page 2



So, where does this leave us? If my experience is representative, library and information professionals will not turn to Google Scholar first or even often. But what about the communities we serve? Google is a household name and often the first- and last-resort source for many of our patrons. Robin Peek laments the prospect of cash-strapped institutions substituting Google Scholar for established commercial information resources. Shirl Kennedy and Gary Price give the library community a proverbial nudge (or kick) to turn the launch of Google Scholar into yet another opportunity to tell the world about the great resources available at our libraries:

As Google makes this announcement and word spreads about a “scholarly search tool” — ESPECIALLY in the academic community — we think the use of specialty databases (the ones university libraries offer and spend \$\$\$ for) will drop. It’s worth watching to see if people begin paying for material located via Google Scholar that they can get *free* from a specialty database they may not know is available via their public or academic library. **Might this be a golden opportunity for the library community to tell people — look, we have access to this stuff and MUCH MUCH MORE? We have better ways to search it, and you might not even have to pay for it? Well, yeah...but if what we’ve seen in the past is any indication, this is not going to happen. Maybe this time it will be different.**

For more information:

“A Googly New Year.” Robin Peek. *Information Today*, Jan 2005, p. 17 (full text available in EBSCO MasterFILE Premier).

“About Google Scholar.” <http://scholar.google.com/scholar/about.html>

“Google Scholar Beta.” Peter Jasco. <http://www.gale-group.com/servlet/HTMLFileServlet?imprint=9999®ion=7&fileName=reference/archive/200412/googlescholar.html>

“Google Scholar Offers Access to Academic Information.” Danny Sullivan. <http://searchenginewatch.com/searchday/article.php/3437471>

“Web Search—Google. Big News: ‘Google Scholar’ is Born.” Shirl Kennedy and Gary Price. <http://www.resourceshelf.com/2004/11/wow-its-google-scholar.html>

Upcoming Library Teleconferences

Library Marketing: Tips & Techniques

Friday, February 18, 2005, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM CST

Description: A discussion on techniques being used by innovative librarians to promote their libraries and services. Listen to the success stories of fellow librarians as they share their personal experiences in finding interesting and effective ways to mass-communicate and promote the value of their libraries.

Panelists: Buff Hirko, Statewide Virtual Reference Project Coordinator at Washington State Library; Howard McGinn, Dean of Libraries at Seton Hall University; Linda Wallace, Library Communication Strategies, Inc., formerly head of ALA’s public Information Office.

Reference Tools for the Information Age

Friday, March 11, 2005, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM CST

Description: This is the 3rd in the 2005 Soaring to Excellence teleconference series. Soaring to Excellence is a series of teleconferences that provides information and training to library support staff nationwide.

What are the best reference tools available, both in print and online? This final teleconference for 2005 covers a number of areas related to reference, and providing library staff with the best and most up-to-date tools available, with a special focus on consumer medical information.

Library as Place: Where People Want to Be

Friday, March 18, 2005, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM CST

Description: Discover what public and academic libraries are doing to transform their images from building with books into centers for their communities and campuses—to be the place where people want to be.

Panelists: William Miller, Director of Libraries at Florida Atlantic University; Douglas Zyskowski, Director of the Southfield (Michigan) Public Library.

Continued on page 3

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PLEASE NOTE

Although there are no fees for these events, registration is required as seating capacity is limited. To register, please visit <http://www-minitex.lib.umn.edu/train-conf/teleconference/>.

LOCATIONS

All teleconferences will be held in S30B Wilson Library, West Bank Area, Minneapolis Campus, University of Minnesota—Twin Cities, except March 18, 2005, location to be announced.

EBSCO's Business Source Premier to get facelift

EBSCO Publishing is announcing that in a few weeks, *Business Source Premier* database will be enhanced by the implementation of a brand new, completely separate *Business Searching Interface* (BSI).

While *Business Source Premier* will continue to be accessible via the EBSCOhost interface, the new (BSI) interface will feature many enhancements designed specifically for business researchers, resulting in a streamlined appearance and faster searching capability. There will be no additional charge associated with this new interface, which can be offered to users as an additional searching option on the *Business Source Corporate* listing.

Business Searching Interface (BSI) Feature Highlights:

- New source types will include Academic Journals, SWOT Analyses, Trade Publications, Industry Profiles, Company Profiles, Market Research Reports and Product Reviews.
- Easy access to search options for Company, Industry, Author, Subject, and Publication lists will be available from the Basic Search Screen.

- An optional *Pre-Selected Find Fields* Advanced Search Screen style will simplify researching by company, industry, author, or publication, separately or in conjunction with keyword searching.
- The popular Suggest Subject Terms feature will be available on the Advanced Guided Style and Advanced Pre-Selected Find Fields search screens.
- Users will be able to browse the Journal Authority file by publication type.
- Users will have the ability to switch interfaces on the fly, allowing for a database feature-specific search experience.
- Search and Journal Alerts created in EBSCOhost can be conducted using the BSI interface, and vice versa.
- The new Company Profiles display will be cleaner and easier to use, with added features such as related search links from the Company Profiles detail screen.
- Users will enjoy direct access to screens for browsing Company or Industry Profiles, Country and Market Research Reports.



Web Site Hit: Dietary Guidelines for Americans

<http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/>

Living through a Minnesota winter can often times mean putting on some extra, unwanted weight. Less physical activity and craving and eating heavier and richer foods throughout a Minnesota winter is all too common. This web site, *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, provides authoritative advice for people two years and older about how good dietary habits can promote health and reduce risk for major chronic diseases. They serve as the basis for Federal food and nutrition education programs. It includes current and past issues of the Guidelines and tips for using the Guidelines, which is a joint publication of the U.S. departments of Health and Human Services and Agriculture.

Users can access tips and information on physical fitness and activity, including information for kids and those over the age of fifty. There is a nutrition section that includes recipes and information on how to understand and use the nutrition facts panel on food labels. A helpful section on prevention and health screenings covers everything from cholesterol and blood pressure to colorectal cancer. This site stresses the hazards of alcohol and tobacco and urges consumers to make healthy choices about their diet. The actual Guidelines discuss food sources for selected nutrients like potassium, calcium, iron, fiber, and vitamins A, C, and E, as well as food groups to encourage, weight management, and food safety.

Computers in Libraries and Internet @ Schools East conferences: discounted registration through MINITEX

The Computers in Libraries conference and exhibition will be held in Washington, DC, March 16-18, 2005. MINITEX is coordinating a discounted group registration with a special rate of \$175 for the three-day event. The discounted rate for Internet @ Schools East (March 17-18) is \$99; a combined registration for both conferences is \$199. No discount rates are available for the pre- and post-conference seminars and workshops.

Request a registration form from Terry Beseman at MINITEX (612-624-0322 or 800-462-5348, besematc@umn.edu). We need to receive your payment (checks payable to Information Today, Inc.) and registration form **no later than February 4, 2005**. No registrations will be accepted after this date. Please indicate if you would prefer to have the registration fee taken from your MINITEX deposit account. For more information on the conferences, visit <http://www.infotoday.com/cil2005/default.shtml>.

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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).



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