

MINITEX

Reference NOTES

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

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Information Bits

"The Changing Face of Reference: New Spaces, New Services, New Content"
3rd Reference Service
Symposium Presented by U of MN Libraries and MINITEX .
October 14th, 2002, at the Earle Brown Center, St. Paul Campus, U of MN. Please go to <http://sdt.lib.umn.edu/reference/> for online information and registration form, or call 612-625-1077 and ask for a brochure.

Education Minnesota Professional Conference.

October 17th, 2002, at the Touchstone Energy Center, St. Paul. MINITEX Reference Services staff will be at booth #643 offering information and demonstrations of ELM resources. Tell your teachers and professional staff to visit our booth to learn to learn more about ELM electronic resources.



OCLC's ArticleFirst

ArticleFirst is OCLC's "table of contents" database. "TOC" databases differ from traditional subject/author access databases in that they are set up to allow a searcher to look at the table of contents of a particular issue of a publication, rather than sweeping across publications to find articles with a common subject heading or keyword. *ArticleFirst* does not contain full-text articles or abstracts, nor do *ArticleFirst* citations have searchable subject heading or descriptor fields. Citations retrieved will be brief (searchable fields included are title, author and source.)

So what is the attraction of a database like *ArticleFirst* for you or your users? When would you likely use what appears on paper to be a rather unglamorous resource?

If you need a full-text database to answer a question, you'll always bypass *ArticleFirst* (unless your library has an institutional subscription to OCLC's *Electronic Collections Online (ECO)*...more on this at the end of the article.) If, however, you find yourself or a patron in one of the following scenarios, *ArticleFirst* will be a good fit:

Citation verification. You need to look quickly in a very large database for keywords in an article title. The database contains over twelve and one half million records from over twelve thousand periodical publications. That's five thousand more titles than in the largest of the ELM full text databases, *InfoTrac Onefile*.

Multidisciplinary treatment of a topic. *ArticleFirst* covers business, humanities, medicine, science, social science, and technology-oriented publications. You can find out how a topic like "attention deficit disorder" has been viewed and treated by the pharmaceutical industry, the medical and social service communities, and educational policy makers. By comparing different scholarly and popular treatments, students can quickly gain an idea of how innovation in one scholarly field can impact research in related fields.

Scholarly treatment of a topic. The publications indexed in *ArticleFirst* are primarily scholarly. A list of titles in the database is accessible through the main search interface using the "Help" icon. If you are working with high school students or undergraduates and need to emphasize the difference between "popular" and "scholarly" treatment of a topic as part of an information literacy unit, *ArticleFirst* would be a great place to go to compare table of contents (Look up the keywords "obesity or weight loss" and compare the articles in *Healthy Weight Journal* and *The International Journal of Obesity and Related Metabolic Disorders* for length, vocabulary, and author credentials.)

Working with users who are interested in regular updates of a particular publication(s).

You may want to inform business people or faculty members in your community or institution about the content of a publication they can refer to for news, information or instructional ideas. You can mark and email an entire table of contents to a patron using *ArticleFirst* software.

Follow a particular author across publications and over time.

Once you have identified an author responsible for research and writing within a field, you can check for other titles that author has published in by running an author search. You can also get an idea about significant publications within a research field by looking at authors and the clusters of journal titles in which their names appear.

The utility of *ArticleFirst* is based on its size, depth, and the idea that certain communities of professionals, enthusiasts and students can quickly scan the contents of selected publications of consistently proven value. TOC databases have always been useful in the higher education community by faculty and graduate students looking for the latest published research in a given field or discipline. But don't count out using this database if you are working in a school or public library. Faculty, local politicians, business people, healthcare providers, and parents are all interested in the latest information that could benefit their classroom teaching and students learning, policy discussions, profit margins, or family dynamics.

If your library has full text access to *ECO*, OCLC's online full-text collection, you can set your administrative module to link *ArticleFirst* citations to the full text in *ECO*. **Please note:** ELM access to *ECO* will not deliver full text. *ECO* on ELM is bibliographic citations only. For more information on linking *ArticleFirst* to a local *ECO* subscription, contact Donn Hoffman, OCLC Rep for the MINITEX region, at 877-309-8625 or via email at hoffmand@oclc.org.

If you have any other questions about using *ArticleFirst*, please contact us at MINITEX Reference. Our email address is ref@othello.lib.umn.edu; phone is 1-800-462-5348 or 612-624-4150.

Give *ArticleFirst* a try: it's a great tool to have in your searching and instructional toolbox.

Gale's Discovering Collection

Are you frustrated by seeing students searching the open Web for authoritative, trustworthy information, only to get unsatisfactory results? If so, it's time you directed them to the *Discovering Collection*, an electronic resource that is part of ELM (Electronic Library for Minnesota.) This resource, appropriate for grades 5 through 12, is a "comprehensive cross-curricular reference source combining thousands of biographies, topical overviews, critical analyses, plot summaries, event essays, and multimedia elements into a single, easy-to-use resource." The *Discovering Collection* combines resources from Gale's DIScovering, Exploring, and U*X*L reference products, which are based on national curriculum standards in five core subject areas: History, Literature, Biographies, Science, and Social Studies. As such, the *Discovering Collection* gives public libraries a comprehensive homework center for students and provides high schools with one core curriculum reference product.

In a nutshell, the *Discovering Collection* provides access to more than:

- 21,000 biographies, essays, and overviews
- 13,000 criticisms
- 21,000 timeline events
- 500 primary source documents
- 14,000 images, including maps and flags
- 400 audio and video clips

The *Discovering Collection* is particularly rich in the subject area of literature. It provides biographical and critical information on the most studied and most popular authors of all time, character studies, thematic essays, and four full-text Shakespeare plays (Hamlet, Julius Caesar, MacBeth, and Romeo and Juliet). They can search Gale's *Encyclopedia of Literature*, as well as search for information on different literary eras, like the Beat Movement or The Angry Young Man Era. There are over 2,900 plot summaries available in the *Discovering Collection*, and the full-text of over 200 poems too.

Comprehensive biographies and historical era overviews are just some of the types of information available in the subject area of history. Timeline events relevant to key periods of U.S. and world history from 1 B.C. to present can be searched by keyword or date. The 543 primary documents include personal narratives, letters, court cases, declarations, reports, treaties, and much more.

To meet an increased need for comprehensive coverage in the field of science, the *Discovering Collection* provides thousands of entries that explore the history, people, inventions, discoveries, theories, life forms, and objects that make up the world of science. By performing a timeline event search for the keyword “computer,” you get information on the first calculating machine built in 1623 as well as an entry for the introduction of Java software in 1996.

The *Discovering Collection* offers broad coverage in the area of social studies by presenting a wide range of information including people, places, and facts and figures relevant to the study of world cultures. Maps, flags, and seals of countries worldwide can be found in the *Discovering Collection*, as well as state birds, flowers, and more. Some of the types of people included in the area of social studies are heads of state, dictators, emperors, prime ministers, and presidents.

The *Discovering Collection's* interface and functionality make it an easy-to-use tool for students researching class assignments, writing papers, creating projects, or delivering oral presentations. The Multimedia search option allows the user to limit their search to only multimedia elements. Choose between images, audio or video files, or maps, flags and seals. From the Classroom Topics search option, the user chooses a topic from Cultures, Geography, History, Literature, Science, or Health. Each topic can then be limited further using a drop down menu and entering a keyword. The Tool Box, available in all the Gale K-12 resources, gives students tools for organizing the information they have found into a cohesive research paper. The Tool Box contains “Tools for Getting Started” and “Tools for Wrapping it Up,” which include instructions and worksheets on how to judge information, choose a topic, write a topic sentence, cite a source, organize a report, write a these statement, and so on.

The *Discovering Collection* offers the user a variety of different search options, including Multimedia Gallery and Classroom Topics. The default home screen offers a subject search. Results include a listing of indexed terms that closely match the term entered, as well as selections for References, Primary Sources, and Multimedia. The Keyword search option searches the entire collection. The Person search option searches only for biographical information. You can search by name or identify a person or group of people by occupation, nationality, ethnicity, birth or death year, birthplace or death place, and gender. This same search is offered for biographical information about authors. Use the Timeline search

to find topics by a specific year, one or more decades, one or more centuries, or by timeline event text. The Advanced search allows you to enter search terms in up to three fields using Boolean operators. It also lets you limit a search by document type. For example, you can search specifically for the text of a poem or play, criticisms, country overviews, primary source documents, images, study questions, and more.

The *Discovering Collection* offers one-stop shopping for students ages 10 through 18. It is a comprehensive resource that contains in-depth reference content. If you haven't had the chance to use this product, we suggest you give it a whirl. If you still want more information on this ELM resource, you can visit <http://www.gale.com> where they offer Guided Tours, FAQs, and Navigation Guides through their Product Education link. It's about time that students had an authoritative Web-based resource that they can access 24/7 to help with their homework, research papers, class projects, and plain old curiosity.

A new look for *REFERENCE NOTES*

With this issue, MINITEX Reference staff have turned over production of our monthly newsletter to LithoTech, a Minneapolis publishing and printing firm that is responsible for the new look of other MINITEX publications, including the *MINITEX MESSENGER* and *RESOURCE SHARING NEWS*. We move from an in-house publishing model, where our reference staff did all of the layout work using desktop publishing software, to sending our articles out to be spruced-up by professionals. Beth and Heidi were quite proficient with PageMaker™, and may miss the monthly opportunity to take those four virtual white sheets and turn them into printed pages. Susan, on the other hand, lost plenty of content to ether during her editorial rotations. LithoTech appears just time, by her account.

We hope you like the improved layout, simple and clean masthead, and increased color and texture of fonts in the new *NOTES*. We think that the new look will draw your eye in to our content. We will continue to offer articles and information about topics, services and databases that we think are useful and interesting. If you have comments on what we write about or how our newsletter looks, feel free to share them with us via email at ref@othello.lib.umn.edu. We would like to hear from you.

Enhance your technical skills from your desktop at your own pace with MindLeaders!

The OCLC Institute and MINITEX have partnered with MindLeaders, a leader in distance education, to bring you low-cost access to online technical education.

More than 600 technical courses are now available in four topical course groups, from desktop applications to systems administration and Web development.

Here's what's being offered:

- End User Desktop Computing Group (180 courses in 39 series)
- Technical General Group (194 courses in 31 series)
- Technical MCSE Group (147 courses in 37 series)
- Technical Web Development Group (81 courses in 16 series)

One-year subscriptions provide plenty of time to master the content you need, when you need it.

End User Desktop Computing Group
(180 courses in 39 series) \$59.95

Technical General Group
(194 courses in 31 series) \$119.95

Technical MCSE Group
(147 courses in 37 series) \$119.95

Technical Web Development Group
(81 Courses in 16 Series) \$119.95

Subscriptions to MindLeaders are designed for individuals, but discounts are available for multiple licenses purchased by an institution.

For more information, visit the MINITEX CPERS web site at <http://www.minitex.umn.edu/cpers/mindleaders/> or contact Karen Docherty at 800-462-5348 / 612-624-2927 / kdochert@umn.edu.

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



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