

# REFERENCE NOTES

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

## January 2001

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## INFORMATION BITS

### Computers in Libraries 2001

Washington, DC, March 14-16.

MINITEX is coordinating a discounted group registration for CIL (\$139) or for a combined CIL and Computers in School Libraries (\$169). Contact Tim Johnson at MINITEX (612-626-0885 or 800-462-5348) to register **no later than February 9, 2001**. For more information on the conference, go to <http://www.infoday.com/cil2001/>.

### Database Training

MINITEX Reference staff will offer training on the following databases:

#### ***Bell & Howell National Newspapers 5***

Friday, Feb. 2, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Monday, Feb. 5, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

#### ***InfoTrac and GaleNet Basics***

Monday, Feb. 5, 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 9, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

All sessions will be at Wilson Library, University of Minnesota. Call 612-624-4002 or 800-462-5348 to register.



## Black History Month: It's for Everyone

“Whatever else the true American is, he is also somehow black.”

Ralph Ellison, *What America Would Be Like Without Blacks*

Black History Month isn't just for students writing history papers or members of the African-American community. It is an opportunity for **everyone** to learn about and reflect on our collective American experience and the extraordinary presence of African Americans in shaping that experience.

There is always some controversy surrounding the concept of an “awareness month.” The debate focuses on how the rich texture of a group's experience—be it black people, people with disabilities, women—receives a month's scrutiny and is then put back on a shelf for eleven months. The origin of Black History Month is a testimony to the level of struggle that it took to claim even twenty-eight days for study and celebration. Begun as Black History Week in 1926 by the black fraternity Omega Psi Phi, it was promoted nationally thereafter by the noted historian Carter G. Woodson. Woodson devised educational kits containing stories and pictures about notable African Americans for public school classrooms. “Looking over the courses of study of the public schools, one finds little to show that the Negro figures in these curricula...” He continues, “Even in Black schools one finds invariably that they give courses in ancient, medieval, and modern Europe. Yet Africa has contributed as much to the progress of mankind...” (Gates and West, *The African-American Century*, p. 77). It wasn't until 1976 that the week was officially expanded to the full month of February, a month that included both the birthdays of Fredrick Douglas and Abraham Lincoln and the first Greensboro lunch counter sit in.

The fact that the focus for learning about black history has expanded from a week to a month doesn't obscure the fact that the black experience, past and present, is still being created, observed, and written about every day, year round. Reference librarians can play a valuable role connecting readers, educators, and learners with this ever-expanding circle of stories, analysis, information, and creative works produced by and about blacks. Web sites like those highlighted on the next page proliferate with information about how American life, including science, technology, business, and culture, has been shaped by blacks. New books about blacks in American life are being published at a consistently expanding rate. The opportunity to know more about the intertwined stories of Americans of all ethnicities has never been greater than it is today.

A powerful passage in *The African-American Century* by Henry Louis Gates and Cornell West suggests the heroic dimensions of the black struggle for expression and justice in the twentieth century. It addresses squarely the integral place blacks have in the invention and reinvention of America. It is a good place from which to launch your library's exploration of African-American History Month:

“Remember: in 1900, blacks were systematically banned from full and equal participation in larger society. No African American could serve in a position of authority over soldiers or fight side-by-side. No black could participate in baseball, the national pastime. The classic blues and jazz had not emerged as the defining forms of American music. African Americans were routinely lynched with impunity. ‘Separate but equal’ was the institutional law of the South and the de facto law of the land...” (continued on page 2)

**Black History: Exploring African-American Issues on the Web**

<http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/BHM/AfroAm.html>

The original purpose of the Black History Month Website was to support students participating in specially arranged videoconferences sponsored by Pacific Bell Education First. (These previous events are described and linked.) This year, the Museum of Television & Radio and KCET in Los Angeles will allow classrooms across the country to participate. The site is made up of “six Web sites that were created as models to suggest ways to integrate the World Wide Web and videoconferencing into classroom learning.” The creators have arranged separate Web formats designed to support different kinds of learning. The Black History Hotlist serves as a starting point for anyone studying African-American issues. The Interactive Treasure Hunt allows users to test their knowledge of African-American history. The Subject Sampler helps users engage in a topic so that they can explore parts that are of personal interest. Web Quests is made up of two Web sites, *Little Rock 9, Integration 0?* and *Tuskegee Tragedy*, where students can learn about the nine African-American teens who chose to attend an all-white high school in Little Rock, Arkansas, and the syphilis study conducted in the early 1930s by the U.S. Public Health Service, respectively.

**Black History: The African American Journey**

<http://www.worldbook.com/fun/aaajourney/html>

In honor of Black History Month, this site has been assembled by *World Book* editors to provide a comprehensive look at African-American history. It covers topics including the slave trade, the antislavery movement, the Civil War, emancipation, reconstruction, and the civil rights movement. The material is gathered from the *World Book Multimedia Encyclopedia* CD-ROM. This *World Book* site allows you to access African-American historical information chronologically, starting in Africa and ending with the modern civil rights movement. The section entitled *Charting the African American Journey* takes the user to a *World Book* slideshow that shows the routes African Americans took from slavery to freedom. Links to several relevant and related sites like the National Civil Rights Museum, the NAACP home page, and an historical analysis of the Emancipation Proclamation are also available.

**Black History Month Resource Center**

<http://www.gale.com/freresrc/blkhstry/>

This site by the Gale Group--directed more towards teachers and librarians than students--provides everything from historical information and biographies to educational activities and quizzes. The section on biographies provides links to essays from the *African American Almanac* of eighty prominent African-American men and women. The timeline offers a 400-year chronology that highlights milestones in African-American history. The literature section contains brief plot summaries and explains the relevance of books from the *Schomburg Center Guide to Black Literature*. The activities section contains information on classroom activities ranging from black dance troupes, black award winners, the latest books by black authors, and more. The featured titles section contains a list of books relating to African-American history. It also offers a link for ordering the titles through the Gale Group.

**African-American Mosaic**

<http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/african/intro.html>

This Web exhibit is a “Library of Congress resource guide for the study of black history and culture.” The Mosaic spans the full range of the Library’s collection including books, periodicals, prints, photographs, music, film, and recorded sound. The Mosaic includes only a portion of the Library’s African-American collection, but it also works as a guide to LC collections. This exhibit covers African-American colonization, abolition, migration, and participation in the WPA (Works Projects Administration). The Library chose to represent these four topics because they give a broad sampling of its holdings. Within each page of the exhibit the user can view historical maps, photographs, letters, and more.

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**Black History Month: It’s for Everyone, continued**

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, by contrast, we cannot imagine a truly American culture that has not, in profound ways, been shaped by the contributions of African Americans. Who could imagine the American Century without the African-American experience at its core? When we listen to the century, there would be no Louis Armstrong. No Duke Ellington. No Billie Holiday...no jazz...no blues...no rock and roll. When we read the century, there would be no Ralph Ellison. No James Baldwin. No Toni Morrison. When we think about what democracy would mean in such a century there would be no W.E.B. DuBois. No Thurgood Marshall. No Martin Luther King, Jr. When we reminisce about the sports heroes of the century there would be no Jesse Owens. No Jackie Robinson or Althea Gibson. No Muhammad Ali. When we laughed about the century there would be no Bill Cosby. No Richard Pryor.

Such a century would not seem very American, would it?” (p. xii-xiii)

## FirstSearch: Connecting to a World of Information

If you're a regular reader of *Reference Notes*, you've seen our features on Electronic Library for Minnesota (ELM) and two of its database options, the Gale Group Periodical/Reference package and Bell & Howell Information and Learning's National Newspapers 5.\* This month, we conclude the tour of ELM with a look at OCLC's FirstSearch.

Statewide access to six FirstSearch databases—The OCLC Collection—is available as part of ELM. Like the other database groups, users can access these resources via the vendor's interface (<http://newfirstsearch.oclc.org/>) or through the MnLINK gateway (<http://www.mnlink.org/>). If your library has not yet registered for access to ELM, use the Web form at <http://www.minitex.umn.edu/eit/registrationform.asp>. This brief form requests information about your institution and its Internet access. With one form, you can activate access to all of the ELM databases.

### WorldCat

WorldCat is the OCLC union catalog, containing over 45 million records for items owned by libraries around the world. Materials in all formats (books, sound recordings, videotapes, musical scores, computer data files, computer programs, films and slides, journals, magazines, manuscripts, maps, websites) and over 400 languages are represented, with new records added daily. Flexible search options include limiting by language, format, publication date, and library symbol.

### NetFirst

NetFirst offers a collection of authoritative Internet resources. Each record includes an abstract describing the content of the site, a hot link to the resource, and subject headings to help users expand their searches. The FirstSearch interface allows you to explore an Internet resource without breaking your connection to FirstSearch. NetFirst resources are selected based on quality and permanence by trained editors, who strive for a database that includes information in all subject areas and is appropriate to a wide range of users.

### ArticleFirst / ContentsFirst

Although they are two separate databases, ArticleFirst and ContentsFirst cover the same title list of over 12,500 serials. ArticleFirst is your typical periodical index, offering citation-level access to individual articles. ContentsFirst provides table-of-contents information for full issues of serials. While the shared title list leans toward academic and

professional journals, popular magazines are also covered. To review the title list, connect to [http://www2.oclc.org/oclc/fs/fstitle/index\\_db.asp](http://www2.oclc.org/oclc/fs/fstitle/index_db.asp).

### Union Lists of Periodicals

If you're a fan of MULS, you may also want to become familiar with the Union Lists of Periodicals. This database offers access to a compilation of the union lists provided by OCLC member libraries, helping you identify libraries that hold specific journal issues and other items. Over 8 million holdings records are included, with new records added semiannually.

### Electronic Collections Online (ECO)

ECO is an index to a growing collection of journals (approximately 3,000) that are available in full-text, electronic format. Bringing together titles in the full range of academic fields, ECO allows you to search for articles in all titles and gain access to abstracts/full text for those to which your library subscribes. Please note that the ELM license to ECO does not cover full-text access; individual libraries purchase any full-text coverage.

As you can see, FirstSearch helps your library "connect to a world of information." While ELM licenses six databases, the full FirstSearch service offers almost 80 databases from many different vendors. For descriptions of FirstSearch databases and documentation for the service, connect to <http://www.oclc.org/firstsearch/>.

\* For further information, see Electronic Library for Minnesota (November 2000); Bell & Howell (August 2000); and Gale Group (November 2000). Back issues of *Reference Notes* are available at [http://www.minitex.umn.edu/reference/reference\\_notes/](http://www.minitex.umn.edu/reference/reference_notes/).

## Reference Notes

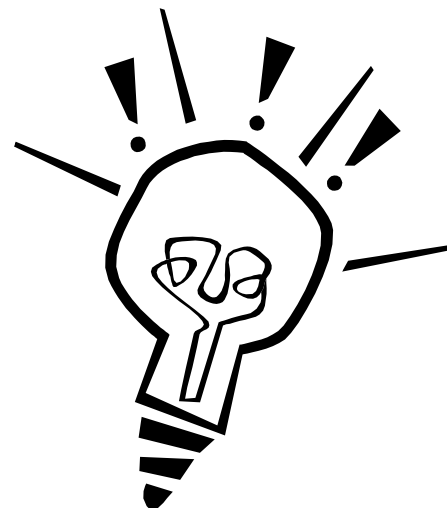
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222 21st Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55455-0439

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Main Website.....www.minitex.umn.edu  
Reference Email.....ref@othello.lib.umn.edu  
Office Hours.....Mon-Fri., 8:00am-4:30pm  
Reference Intake Form.....  
.....http://kinglear.lib.umn.edu/reference/refdb

## **REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE**

Occasionally, MINITEX Reference Services receives a request for a poem, quotation, picture, story, or something that cannot be found by checking standard sources. The Reference staff would like to appeal to the collective memory of MINITEX participants for assistance. Please forward any leads on the following questions to Reference Services at: **612-624-4150 or 800-462-5348**. Here is what we are looking for:

Patron would like information on a book published sixty years ago about a girl named Winifred, who got her hand stuck in a cookie jar while stealing cookies. (536)



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### **MINITEX Library Information Network**

University of Minnesota

15 Andersen Library

222 21st Avenue South

Minneapolis, MN 55455-0439



# do you think about *Reference Notes*?

great reference books



topics you would like addressed

fantastic web sites



spotlight on your  
reference library

We would like to know what you would like to see in upcoming *Reference Notes*. Please either call us at 800-462-5348, send us an e-mail (see page 2 for addresses), or fill in your comments below and mail this form to MINITEX Reference.

Terrific web sites, reference books, and other sources you use:

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Comments / Suggestions:

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Name: (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Library: (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

**Reference Services  
MINITEX Library Information Network  
University of Minnesota  
S-33 Wilson Library  
309 19th Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55455-0414**

## **1999 EVENTS CALENDAR**

- June 5-10      **Special Library Association** will be holding their annual conference at the Minneapolis Convention Center. Please see their web site for more information: [www.sla.org/conf/99conf/index.shtml](http://www.sla.org/conf/99conf/index.shtml)
- June 16      **Academic Library Advocacy Day** at St. John's University in Collegeville, MN
- July 2, 1999      **National Literacy Day** Contact: Focus on Literacy, Inc., P.O. Box 504, Laurel Springs, NJ 08021