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The Reference Collection: From the Shelf to the Web

The Reference Librarian
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William J. Frost

Getting It Right–The Evolution of Reference Collections 5
Margaret Landesman

Reference works were present in the earliest libraries; and their numbers have grown inexorably ever since. They consume an increasing share of library acquisitions budgets. This article traces the evolution of reference collections, drawing on experiences at the author's library. The author concludes that while reference questions will always be with us; it is perhaps less certain that they will always be answered from "reference works" in collections labeled "reference."

KEYWORDS. Reference collections, history of reference works, reference media

Out of the Stack and into the Net: International Perspectives on Academic Reference Resources 23
Gaynor Austen
Carolyn Young

The transition of academic library reference resources from print to electronic format has been characterised by a growing level of strategic decision making by librarians, as mediated searches were replaced by end user CD-ROM formats, only to be superseded by online user access. The experience of Australian university libraries, which were early adopters of these changes, is outlined. Particular factors which impacted on this transition in other English-speaking countries (the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, and South Africa) are also described. The formation of purchasing consortia has been crucial in all countries in facilitating this transformation of reference collections.

KEYWORDS. Reference collections, electronic resources, library consortia

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Electronic vs. Print Reference Sources in Public Library Collections 39
Jeanne Holba Puacz

The evolution of electronic sources has had a significant impact on reference collections in libraries, and public library reference collections are no exception.

Evaluating, selecting, and organizing sources to meet the needs of public library users has always been a fundamental role of public librarians. However, now they have the added responsibility of evaluating electronic resources and deciding whether the electronic sources will supplement or replace traditional paper reference sources. Issues of authority, accessibility, cost, comfort, and user education must be carefully weighed during this evaluative process.

KEYWORDS. Reference collections, electronic sources, public libraries, virtual libraries

Digital versus Print: The Current State of Reference Affairs in School Libraries 53
D. Jackson Maxwell

This article examines the current state of digital versus print reference collections in school libraries. Issues addressed include an overview of adoption practices, acceptance and use of digital materials, and implications for the future. The article compares findings from multiple sources to provide an in-depth examination and understanding of the qualities and characteristics that school libraries share. The sources include current literature, research findings, and the observations and experiences of an information specialist in the role of participate observer. Survey and analysis of this data will provide a triangulation of information that will form the basis of the study.

KEYWORDS. Reference, reference books, digital resources, electronic resources, library, digital libraries and school libraries

Reference Publishing in the Age of Also 69
John M. Morse

Reference publishing is in an era of competing technologies: print and electronic. For large multivolume reference books, the transition from being primarily a print resource to being primarily electronic is well advanced, perhaps nearly complete. For many smaller reference books, such as dictionaries, thesauruses, and almanacs, the transition is less advanced; in fact, it seems likely that print and electronic editions of such works may coexist for years to come. There are good reasons for this to happen, but this situation also poses challenges to librarians, publishers, and patrons. This article reviews some of the aspects of this transitional era in terms of what has been learned so far and what may develop in the future.

KEYWORDS. Dictionaries, reference works, online dictionaries, print technology, Merriam-Webster dictionaries

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From the Womb to the Web: Library Assignments and the New Generation 83
Necia Parker-Gibson

Subject faculty members and students often have different expectations for selection of appropriate sources for assignments, and the Internet makes this problem that much more complex. Community, context, and content all play roles in the evaluation of information. Distinguishing search engines from databases and understanding jargon play a part in students' successful negotiation of evaluation, citation, and integration of information of all types. Campuses are receiving pressure to increase information literacy among students. Exacting description of assignments, definitions of terms, and collaboration between subject faculty and librarians are considered key to success of programs.

KEYWORDS. Evaluation, citation, faculty, graduate students, undergraduates, assignments, expectations, community

Cyberplagiarism and the Library: Issues and Solutions 103
Jennifer R. Sharkey
F. Bartow Culp

Plagiarism by students in academic institutions is an old but continuing problem facing teachers and librarians. Although studies disagree on the Internet's effect on student plagiarism, the easy availability of electronic information creates a challenge for librarians, who must be ready not only to detect and deter plagiarism, but also to educate their patrons about it. The purpose of this contribution is to summarize briefly the nature, extent, and causes of plagiarism in its academic aspect, especially as it has been influenced by electronic information sources, and to review measures of its detection and deterrence.

KEYWORDS. Plagiarism, academic dishonesty, Internet, online reference tools, paper mills, electronic information sources

Structures and Choices for Ready Reference Web Sites 117
Steven W. Sowards

The structure of ready reference Web sites in American public and academic libraries reflects answers to consistently encountered design questions. A survey of 100 Web sites shows widespread agreement about naming these resources, using subject categories, and relying on free unlicensed Web sources for content. Opinions are divided about the optimum number of listed sources and the best ways to organize hot links. Guides and explanations rarely are provided for users. Librarians have not built these sites around commercial products, although advanced search features could make the purchase of ready reference tools more appealing. Further study of user behavior would help librarians meet the needs of their clientele.

KEYWORDS. Ready reference, Web page design

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Federated Search Tools: The Next Step in the Quest for One-Stop-Shopping 139
Stephen C. Boss
Michael L. Nelson

The emergence of federated search tools for the library market represents a significant step toward the longstanding goal of a common searching interface in the reference environment. These systems aim to provide integrated access to library resources of all types. This article describes and evaluates federated search tools from four vendors. It suggests criteria that may be useful for libraries attempting to compare and contrast this type of access tool.

KEYWORDS. Federated search tools, integrated searching, metasearching, library gateways, library portals, OpenURL resolvers, Z39.50

Internet Reference Sources in the Humanities 161
Dennis Dillon

Discusses collection development issues involving humanities Internet resources with a particular focus on sustainability, and highlights a few of the major Internet vendors and resources.

KEYWORDS. Humanities, collection development, electronic information, World Wide Web, Internet

Science Reference on the Internet 175
Lori Bronars

In the sciences, there is a wide assortment of information in electronic form and accessible to anyone with the computer communications, hardware, and software prerequisites. For those in search of literature citations, numerical values, commonly accepted facts, word-for-word of published text, and even sound reproductions and to some extent still or living images, the Internet-posted formats have much to offer. In this paper, especially useful or interesting Web sites for reference in any of the basic science fields are identified.

KEYWORDS. Science reference Internet sites, science reference Web sites

Medical Reference Sources on the Internet: An Evolving Information Forum and Marketplace 197
Gary A. McMillan

Some of the best standard medical reference works have migrated to the Internet. Corporations, professional organizations, and the federal government have taken advantage of the distribution and public education capabilities of the Internet to launch free or fee-based resources (or a combination thereof offering limited information as a teaser to encourage purchasing or subscriptions). Core medi-

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cal/health reference works are identified and briefly described, with an emphasis on sites which are comprehensive, up-to-date, and, most importantly, offer information based on credible, evidence-based, scientific sources.

KEYWORDS. Medical reference, consumer health information, health statistics

Web-Based Reference Resources for the Social Sciences 211
Brian Quinn

With the growth of the World Wide Web has come a proliferation of online reference sources. Some of these are electronic versions of already existing paper sources, while others have no paper counterpart. Many of the best reference resources found on the Web are subscription-based, but a surprising number of quality resources are available free. The vastness of the Web makes it difficult to provide a comprehensive and exhaustive survey of all the resources that are currently available. This article attempts to identify some of the most significant resources across the social sciences. It includes six disciplines: anthropology, communications, history, political science, psychology, and sociology.

KEYWORDS. Web, reference, social sciences, psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, communications, history

Briefcases and Databases: Web-Based Reference Sources for Business Librarians and Their Client Communities 235
Gail M. Golderman
Bruce Connolly

Drawing upon work done by a select group of business libraries and business library associations as well as their own electronic collection development, reference, and searching experience, the authors identify and assess the content and capabilities of the premiere business reference products available in the current market.

Additionally, they review a secondary group of highly recommended (if more modestly configured) business indexing and abstracting tools, examine subscription-based sources of economic indicators and forecasting information and of financial and company information. A directory of the best of the freely-available academic, government, and commercial business Web sites is appended.

KEYWORDS. Web-based business resources, full-text databases, Internet resources, business library Web sites

Internet Reference Sources in Education 263
Linda C. Weber

With so many Internet sites devoted to education for educators, administrators, and librarians, it can be a daunting experience trying to find needed resources. There are special sites devoted to teachers, children, and parents. The government provides free access to database searching, statistics, and full-text publications.

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State and local levels of government also host valuable data and reports. More and more journals are appearing online in full text format escalating user expectation to assume all journals will be available via the Internet. Tapping into higher education and academic library sites connects to content rich links. While this is not an exhaustive listing of educational Web sites, it leads to a myriad of valuable resources.

KEYWORDS. Education, education resources, higher education, Internet resources, reference, Web sites

100 Best Free Reference Web Sites: A Selected List 279
Lori Morse

A listing of 100 free Web sites with brief annotations that are useful for almost all reference librarians, regardless of whether they are in an academic, public, school, or special library setting.

KEYWORDS. Free Web sites, reference Web sites