

Database Searching at the Cheng Library

One glance at the list of databases on the Library's web site will surprise and delight you. The Library now provides access to nearly 100 proprietary databases, the content of which is not freely available on the Internet. This extensive collection of resources assures that students and faculty have access to at least one database for each discipline taught at the University — and sometimes more than one. But this wide-ranging selection of electronic resources was not always the case.

A decade ago, the Cheng Library's database collection consisted of a few indexes in CD-ROM format. These electronic versions of their more-familiar print counterparts reproduced the content of the paper indexes and duplicated the searchable access points. As technology evolved, these products offered enhanced searching capabilities and keyword-in-context searching for textual fields. Library users considered these advancements a quantum leap over the process of using the printed indexes.

Defined as "an unusually large collection of data organized especially for rapid search and retrieval" (Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary), electronic databases consist of millions of data elements assigned to numerous fields. The database's retrieval process enables searching within these fields for relevant items based on the user's query.

Users can search vast quantities of information in milliseconds, and the results can often be customized to the user's preferences and appear ranked by relevancy, reverse chronological order, alphabetized by author,

and many other options.

During the late 1990s, the advent of web-based technology completely restructured the mode of delivery of existing databases and enabled access to large files of text and additional links to sound and images. For certain types of databases, these sound and image links are now the standard, and even simple, web-based dictionaries now contain pronunciation sound clips.

Music databases often contain sound files and art resources offer images of artistic works. One database, ARTstor, is exclusively an image database and is prized for its extensive collection.

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Increasingly, publishers and database vendors are creating new products with no print equivalent - and hence no established tangible resource in the searcher's mind. In these cases, users must first become familiar with the content and coverage of these new products.

To complicate matters further, sometimes the name of a database does not convey its complete or true content. Quite often, these valuable resources are overlooked. For example, our most comprehensive busi-

ness database does not contain the word "business" in its title, but is named ABI/Inform. The acronym ABI refers to Abstracted Business Information, but uninformed users are not likely to make this association.

Many users now expect that all periodical databases contain the full-text for articles. Indeed, the purpose and value of an indexing and abstracting source is completely lost on a new generation of searchers accustomed to the full content available via the Internet. However, in order to provide access to the text of articles, database providers must first license the content from the copyright holder, usually the publisher. Some publishers are willing to provide this permission and are more flexible in conducting financial negotiations with database vendors. For all publishers, however, electronic access may portend reduced subscriptions and therefore, a subsequent loss of revenue.

Many publishers now provide electronic access to their journals via subscription portals and consequently may be reluctant to license their full-text content to a database producer. In many databases, these items appear in citation and abstract format - with no full-text links. In these instances, users often incorrectly fault the database providers — or even the Library — for not providing the text. However, the issue of full-text access remains the legal right of the copyright holder.

With such complexities and variations among electronic resources, the assistance of a knowledgeable librarian is essential. In order to use the databases effectively, one needs to

(Continued on page 4)

Margaret Auguste Appointed Reference Librarian



Margaret Auguste joined the Cheng Library's reference department on January 10, 2005 as a refer-

ence librarian. Margaret has earned a master's degree in Library Science from Indiana University, and a master's in Psychology with an emphasis in Marriage and Family Therapy from Pepperdine University.

Before joining William Paterson University, Margaret worked as a computer specialist librarian at the Highland Park Public Library and as a software trainer for Data Research Associates.

Margaret will work with the Access and Information Services department where she will assist with providing reference services and

teach in the Library's user education program. Margaret will also assist with information literacy initiatives and complete course and subject web pages for the Library's Internet site. Margaret is excited about the opportunity to work with her new colleagues and to further the goals of the Library.

In her free time, Margaret enjoys spending time with her husband and children. Margaret also volunteers as an advisor to new mothers of multiples and is the support group coordinator for the Raritan Valley Mothers of Multiples.

National Customer Service Survey Completed at the Cheng Library

During February and March 2005, the Cheng Library conducted a web-based, national satisfaction survey. The survey was sent to the University email accounts of randomly selected students, faculty and staff.

Anne Ciliberti, Library Director, reports that she is pleased with the number of respondents, and she extends her thanks and appreciation to the 405 individuals who took the time to complete the survey. This figure represents a 15% return rate which is about average for web-based surveys of this kind.

While the analysis of the survey data will not be available until May or June, preliminary results show that more than one-third of the respondents completed the open text comment section of the survey. Ciliberti noted that this feedback about the Library's resources and services provides an especially rich source of data for understanding the needs, preferences and priorities of the respondents. She also stated that the results of the survey will be widely disseminated in the fall.

The survey, known as LibQual, was developed by the Association of

Research Libraries and has been administered widely in academic libraries around the world. This semester, more than 47,000 people completed the survey worldwide. The extensive use of this survey will enable comparison of the results of the Cheng Library with those of comparable universities.

Ciliberti describes this project as a successful collaboration between the Library, Information Systems and the office of Institutional Research and Assessment, and she extends special thanks to Rich Varron, Sherry Xu and Jane Zeff.

Professional Activities

Jane Bambrick attended the *Freedom of Information Day Program* on March 15, 2005 at the New York Public Library.

Anne Ciliberti, Richard Kearney, Kathy Malanga, Susan Sabatino, Ray Schwartz, Nancy Weiner and **Bob Wolk** attended the *VALE Users' Conference* on January 6, 2005 at Rutgers University in Piscataway, NJ.

Anne Ciliberti, Richard Kearney, Yvonne Roux, Ray Schwartz and **Nancy Weiner**

attended the *American Library Association's Midwinter Conference* on January 14-16, 2005 in Boston.

Amy Job presented a workshop on book-mending at the *Educational Media Association of New Jersey's Fall Conference* on December 2, 2004 in East Brunswick, NJ.

Susan Sabatino attended the *Association of College and Research Libraries National Conference* on April 7-11, 2005 in Minneapolis, MN.

Nancy Weiner was a panelist for the "QandA NJ Academic Queue" session at the *VALE Users'*

Conference on January 6, 2005 at Rutgers University in Piscataway, NJ.

Kurt Wagner attended the *Computers in Libraries Annual Conference* from March 16-18, 2005 in Washington, DC.

As co-chair of the New Jersey Digital Highway Education Committee, **Bob Wolk** helped organize a week-long summer seminar for secondary school teachers at Rutgers University. The *2005 Summer Educators Seminar* will take place from July 5-9, 2005 in New Brunswick, NJ.



THE FRIENDS OF THE CHENG LIBRARY

A Letter from the Chair



When he died in 1985, Philip Larkin, Head Librarian at the University of Hull, was among the most venerated literary figures in the United Kingdom. This, despite his stark poetic vision. He once said that desolation was for him what daffodils were for Wordsworth. And, indeed, reading his *Collected Poems*, one senses that for Larkin there is little left but ruins. He can discern among them traces of an absent metaphysics, as well as of something else largely in the past: lives led, beliefs held, actions undertaken, vows made. Like Wordsworth, he has intimations, but not of immortality. Indeed, they are of an utter and inescapable, and thus deeply dreaded, mortality. One occasionally feels echoes of Wordsworth in his poetry, but they are muted, somber, sepulchral.

But if we consider his librarianship, we can recognize, I think, a Wordsworthian tone that is altogether different: more resonant, more hopeful, and – how he would have resisted the thought – more benign. It was, after all, his life's work. He came to it early and reluctantly. Frustrated in his ambition to write novels, and having failed twice to obtain a Civil Service position, he entered the profession in 1943 at the age of 21. He wanted a job, and a job is just what he got – a post as Librarian in a village in Shropshire. Larkin later recalled that he did just about everything there, including lugging logs to the library's fireplace. He claimed, however, to have drawn the line at sweeping the floors. In 1949 he became an Associate of the Library Association, having successfully completed his studies by correspondence. After stints in academic libraries at Leicester and Belfast, he arrived at Hull in 1955. He would remain there the rest of his life.

At Hull, Larkin encountered a scene less desolate than disheveled. The library was small, unattended, and scattered. (In 1967 it was named for Brynmor Jones, vice-chancellor of Hull from 1956 until 1972. Larkin once quipped that meeting Sir Brynmor Jones in the Brynmor Jones Library was like catching a train at the St. Pancras station in London and meeting St. Pancras.) He was brought in to change things. During his thirty-year tenure, he oversaw two major renovations and expansions. When he arrived, the library held 120,000 volumes and was supported by 11 staff. When he died, it had grown to 750,000 volumes and employed over 80 staff. The library came to be seen as more than merely a place to house books; it came to symbolize the University's burgeoning capacities.

As a poet, he well knew the worth of a symbol. As librarian, he endured the torments of his commitment. Those who knew him have recalled how he chafed at the constraints the administration imposed. How he quarreled with department heads. How he grew increasingly bitter, and briefly considered taking a sinecure at Oxford. But they also remember that he finally determined to stick it out. They don't say why. I think he was conscious of a debt, which for him may have passed for duty, but which to me seems somewhat closer to love. Ironically, what was gloom for the poet became grist for the librarian. Wordsworth in his youth perceived what the ailing Larkin learned somewhat later in life: by its nature, such love is liminal and constitutive. It consists in that "best portion of a good man's life." And it is expressed through acts which are barely detectable – Wordsworth describes them as "little, nameless, and unremembered."

They are, of course more than gestures. And it strikes me that this is the ostensibly simple but crucial work librarians do. In such unlikely but important ways, they help form the bonds of a culture's memory and clear its path of transmission. This is something I think that Larkin, even at his most angst-ridden, understood and prized. And it is something that we, as Friends, with a spirit that Larkin himself might have grudgingly approved, are resolved to sustain.

John P. Koontz
Chair, Executive Committee

Two Student Assistants Receive Awards

The Cheng Library's Annual Student Assistants' Recognition and Awards Reception was held on April 21, 2005. Two students were selected to receive the Library's Outstanding Student Assistant Award for 2004-2005.

The awards were presented at a reception held in the Paterson Room. This annual reception gives the Library staff an opportunity to express their appreciation to all of the student assistants who help with the daily operations of the Library in the public service and technical processing areas.

Naa Ayorkor Abordo was recognized for outstanding work in the Collection Development Department. Naa is a nursing major who has worked in this department for three semesters.

Naa likes music, singing, shopping, and going to church. The Collection Development staff enjoy her quiet manner and appreciate her assistance in processing new books.

Deryck Fraser received the Outstanding Student Assistant Award for Lending Services. Deryck is a junior and has been a student assistant in the Lending Services Department since January 2004. Last fall, he won the Top Shelver Award for shelving more than 5,000 books.

Deryck is a business major and hopes to form his own company after graduation. His outside interests include getting together with friends, reading, listening to music and collecting sneakers!

Congratulations to Naa and Deryck, and a big "thank you" to all of the Library's student assistants.

The Friends of the Cheng Library Sponsors Lecture on Photography

James Hauser, Professor of English at William Paterson, gave a lecture and slide presentation at an event sponsored by the Friends of the Cheng Library. The lecture, entitled "Camera Lucida: How the Photograph Speaks," was held in the Cheng Library Auditorium on December 5, 2004.

John Koontz, Chair of the Friends of the Cheng Library, introduced Jim Hauser, who began studying photography in 1980 and has lectured extensively on literature and film since then.

Mr. Koontz attended many of these presentations. He commented, "It has been a fond and sustaining memory over the years to think back on these lectures." In seeking to describe the work of Hauser, Koontz

used the phrase "sweetness in life" to embody the sentiments and drama captured in Hauser's photographs.

Jim Hauser opened his lecture with the question, "How do we find meaning in a photograph?" From this starting point, the lecture, and the slide presentation, explored the messages conveyed by selected photographs, including several by Bill Brandt and Edward Weston among others.

The audience participated in this analysis and suggested many nuances perceived by the images presented. Jim Hauser explained that the apparent pattern of dark and light points which creates the black and white photographic image, can contribute some ambiguity to the final photograph.

The presentation also considered the role of the photographer. One manifestation of this role could be to portray something foreign or unfamiliar. Another expression might be to take a familiar object and present it in an original way. Photographs can invite us in, but they can also estrange us. They can take something ordinary and present it in a new and challenging light, possibly attracting or alienating the viewer.

In closing, Jim Hauser made the simple but profound observation: "In photographs we put one thing next to another, and from things juxtaposed, get meaning."

Following the lecture, a reception was held in the Paterson Room of the Library.

Database Searching at the Cheng Library *(Continued from page 1)*

know their content and capabilities. Neither of these attributes is readily apparent. Whether at the reference desk, during a library instruction session or via telephone or email, the librarian can explain fundamental features of the database and clarify questions of organization, content and display.

Remote access remains a highly valued feature of web-based resources. Students and faculty appreciate the ease and speed with which

they can search and print journal articles previously only available at the Library or via Interlibrary Loan.

Whenever possible, the Library negotiates with vendors to provide remote access to its electronic resources.

For a complete list of the Library's databases, connect to the Li-


brary's web site (www.wpunj.edu/library) and click on "Databases."

The staff of the Library invites users to try one or more of these resources, and, as always, if you have any questions, please contact the Library's Reference Desk at 973-720-2116.

Library Receives Grant to Archive Martini Papers

The Library has received a \$10,000 grant from the Nicholas Martini Foundation to organize and preserve the papers of Nicholas Martini, former mayor of Passaic and Passaic County Freeholder. This grant will also finance a conference focusing on local politics and government which will be planned for Fall 2005. More information will be forthcoming as this collection is organized and the conference plans are formulated.

The Cheng Library is excited to have been selected to archive these historic papers and will announce the availability of the collection to researchers once the materials are accessible.




CONNECTIONS

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Visit the Library's Webpage at
www.wpunj.edu/library for more information
about the Library's services and resources.

