



ONLINE DATABASES

Moving History Forward

By Carol Tenopir

CURRENT EVENTS, CURRENT awareness, and faster news mean the immediate present often dominates our worldview. But for many researchers, history informs the latest hot topic.

ABC-CLIO redesigns

Last year, ABC-CLIO celebrated its 50th anniversary and redesigned its search system to include increased full-text linking. Subscribers to Historical Abstracts and America: History and Life can now link to a wider range of materials, including ProQuest's Dissertations & Theses Database and relevant JSTOR journals from 1838 to 2005. In 2006, ABC-CLIO's two databases indexed 2000 journals and provided 350,000 full-text links. This is especially welcome, since fewer history journals have been digitized than in the sciences and social sciences.

JSTOR has back runs for over 600 journal titles, including sciences, social sciences, arts, and history. It covers not only history journals but also history itself by digitizing past issues of journals in all subjects, sometimes back to Volume 1.

Controlled vocabulary is important to history because date ranges, time periods, or names of events often differ. For example, when a user searches for A-26 (aircraft), the subject headings are disambiguated. Precoordination also provides more precise searching through subject headings like "World War I (armistice terms)" or "World War II (naval operations)." CLIO Notes locates appropriate subject headings based on historical time period. Subject heading suggestions for the 1960s include Civil rights movement, Elections (presidential), and Kennedy, John F. Searches can be limited by articles, reviews, dissertations, etc.

Other enhancements include direct interlibrary loan requests, customized search results pages, citation manager export, and cross-search alerts for both

databases. Cross-database searching will be added this year.

Some new public library history products are also available from ABC-CLIO, including United States at War: Understanding Conflict and Society. This database includes multimedia primary and secondary sources, expert analysis, and weekly news. The new History Reference Online offers full-text access to approximately 300 history reference books on topics ranging from social and cultural history to political and military history. ABC-CLIO's ebooks collection now features nearly 500 titles.

ProQuest Historical Newspapers

ProQuest continues to build its Historical Newspapers collection, with special collections and newspapers including the *New York Times*, *Wall Street*

historically and to the present, and the Genealogy Center lets libraries build customized ProQuest reference products.

Digitizing history

Also important are large-scale projects like the Library of Congress's (LC) American Memory Project and National Digital Newspaper Project. American Memory brings photos, sounds, moving images, and primary objects from every state to the web (memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html). By doing so, LC took the first steps in building a national digital library. Combined with QuestionPoint's Ask a Librarian and reference chat, American Memory has become an essential history tool, especially for small public and academic libraries.

The National Digital Newspaper

History itself has never been better, and the past is indeed becoming present in our libraries

Journal, *Washington Post*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and others back to the 1800s. In 2005, the *Boston Globe*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *Los Angeles Times* were digitized and added to the collection. ProQuest has also digitized the oldest continuously published newspaper in America, *The Hartford Courant*, back to 1764. Papers can be searched separately, together, or browsed page by page.

For historians, the layout and advertisements may be just as important as the story itself. ProQuest newspapers are digitized in full, including page layouts, graphics, photos, and advertisements. High-quality PDFs enhance the exact look of the paper as it appeared historically. Other ProQuest products emphasize a thematic approach. The Latin American Newsstand provides access to Spanish and Portuguese-language papers, the Black Studies Center focuses on "the black experience" both

Project, a joint project of LC and National Endowment for the Humanities, aims to digitize and preserve historically important local papers.

Phase 1 projects are now underway, with the first newspapers to be available in September. Phase 1 papers will be historically or regionally significant titles published between 1900 and 1910. Phase 2 will expand the collection, and applications are due in fall 2006 (www.loc.gov/ndnp).

Between these large grant-funded projects and the expansion of historical databases and commercial products, our reach to articles about history and history itself have never been better. The past is indeed becoming digitally present in our libraries.

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