

péter's picks & pans



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WorldCat, Sociological Abstracts, and e-psyche

One of this issue's picks is the WorldCat catalog of OCLC, which I have been using and praising (in my "Digital Ready Reference Shelf" column) as a unique feature long before it got worldwide attention by virtue of making a deal with Google. The other pick is an impressive (though just fledgling) implementation of Sociological Abstracts that shows a model of the future for abstracting/indexing databases through its intelligent backward and forward linking within and outside of the database. It displays very informative clues about the "citedness" of the item with links to the citing items. The pan is the e-psyche database, which was long on promises and very short on delivery, grossly shortchanging its customers. By cutting corners, it has been digging its own grave and has reached the point of no return.

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the picks

OCLC WORLDCAT

OCLC's WorldCat, its Union Catalog for member libraries, is well known to librarians around the world. Outside our profession, however, it's a secret. Its deal with Google—to offer a subset of WorldCat records on Google for free—will be good for end users and the profession. Perhaps it will provide the same boost for OCLC's name recognition as LexisNexis received when Ross Perot mentioned its name as an information source during a presidential candidate debate. I picked WorldCat, however, for another reason—a unique data element that can be a very useful decision support criteria if used with common sense. The data element I refer to is the number of libraries (out of the more than 40,000 OCLC member libraries) that have a copy of a specific book, video tape, DVD, or journal subscription. I'm referring here to the classic WorldCat, not the Google subset.

When I want to know which are the most widely subscribed-to journals in, say, social psychology, I do a subject search, as anyone else would, and I let the system rank the results by default, which probably most users would do. This lists

the items by the number of libraries that hold them, in a decreasing order. Unfortunately, this is not really the correct order. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (with 1,024 libraries), for example, is listed after *Social Psychology Quarterly* (with 1,015 libraries). This is not a significant difference, but very often it is significant. What's more, it is confusing to the user. However, you can use the sort option, which gets the rank order right.

This feature makes WorldCat an ideal tool to answer such evergreen questions as, "Which is the best book on (fill in the subject)? If you ask the sales person in the bookstore or computer store, your friends, or the librarian for the best book about JavaScript, you get very subjective answers, if any. OCLC immediately gives you the information: Flanagan's *JavaScript: The Definitive Guide* is held by more than 1,000 OCLC member libraries, while the next most widely held titles on JavaScript show only library holdings of 300-400, with one held by about 600 libraries. This information allows you to make a much more educated choice more than anything else. Of course, a book on JavaScript which was published only a month ago is at a disadvantage until libraries add it to their catalogs.

The extra beauty of this data element, added by the online service provider on the fly, is that OCLC cleverly uses it in its own databases (such as PAIS) as well as in most of the ones that it licenses. When you search, for example, on *euthanasia*, you retrieve a results list of 148 items from PAIS, sorted in reverse publication date order as default. While you may pick the first item from *Free Inquiry*, which is (or was) subscribed to by 303 libraries, or another one from the *Croatian Critical Law Review* (held by 24 libraries), it's better to sort the set by number of libraries. You will then see not only the well-known magazines top-ranked on the results list, such as *U.S. News and World Report* or *The Economist*, but others previously unknown to you. These may whet your appetite because more than 2,000 libraries subscribe(d) to them. Examples include *Humanist*, *Hasting's Center Report*, and *CQ Researcher*.

If OCLC would get the default ranking to work perfectly as the default

1. **Journal of abnormal psychology.**
 Publication: [Washington] American Psychological Association, 1965-
 Document: English : Serial Publication : Periodical : Quarterly (every 3 months)
 Libraries Worldwide: 1758 UNIV OF HAWAII AT MANOA
 More Like This: [Advanced options...](#)
 See more details for locating this item

2. **Journal of personality and social psychology.**
 Publication: [Washington] American Psychological Association, 1965-
 Document: English : Serial Publication : Periodical : Monthly
 Libraries Worldwide: 1665 UNIV OF HAWAII AT MANOA
 More Like This: [Advanced options...](#)
 See more details for locating this item

3. **Journal of social issues.**
 Publication: Maiden, MA [etc.], Published by Blackwell Publishers for the Society
 Study of Social Issues [etc.] 1945-
 Document: English : Serial Publication : Periodical : Quarterly (every 3 months)
 Libraries Worldwide: 1609 UNIV OF HAWAII AT MANOA
 More Like This: [Advanced options...](#)
 See more details for locating this item

4. **Social psychology quarterly.**
 Publication: Washington, D.C. : American Sociological Association, 1979-
 Document: English : Serial Publication : Periodical : Quarterly (every 3 months)
 Libraries Worldwide: 1015 UNIV OF HAWAII AT MANOA
 More Like This: [Advanced options...](#)
 See more details for locating this item

5. **Advances in experimental social psychology.**
 Author: Berkowitz, Leonard, Publication: New York, Academic Press, 1964-
 Document: English : Serial Publication : Monographic series
 Libraries Worldwide: 1024 UNIV OF HAWAII AT MANOA

Results list with information about holdings by OCLC member libraries.

Sort Related Subjects Related Authors Limit E-mail Print Export Help PAIS results for: kw: euthanasia
 Records found: 148

Prev Next

1. **Physician-assisted suicide, pro and con.**
 Source: *Free Inquiry* 23:28-36 no 2 Spring 2003 Doc. Type: Periodical Article Libraries Wo
 See more details for locating this item

2. **Let death be my dominion: medical advances have thrown open the debate
 voluntary euthanasia for the terminally ill; this, in turn, will challenge attitu
 general.**
 Source: *Economist* 353:89-92 no 8141 O 16 1999 Doc. Type: Periodical Article Libraries V
 UNIV OF HAWAII AT MANOA See more details for locating this item

3. **Right to die or right to life? the public on assisted suicide.**
 Author: Benson, John M.; Hermann, Melissa J. Source: *Public Perspective* 10:15-19 no 4 1e
 Periodical Article Libraries Worldwide: 173 See more details for locating this item

4. **Physician assisted suicide under Dutch law.**
 Author: Van Dijk, Pieter Source: *Croatian Critical Law Review* 2:105-17 nos 1/2 1997 Doc.
 Article Libraries Worldwide: 24 See more details for locating this item

Holdings clue attached to records from indexing/abstracting databases.

Sociological Abstracts ↓8
 Web Resources Related to the Social Sciences/Humanities →1

Records

Save/Print/Email Records View Marked Records Save Search/Alert
 Save to RefWorks ?

1 of 8/Rank: [View Record](#)
 482
 TI: **Criminal Violence** on Prime Time TV and MTV
 SO: Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP), 1989

2 of 8/Rank: [View Record](#)
 452
 TI: Aggressive Cue Prominence and Gender Participation in MTV
 SO: Journalism Quarterly, 1989, 66, 1, spring, 148-154,229

3 of 8/Rank: [View Record](#) [Cited by 3](#)
 229
 TI: Social Implications of **Music** Videos for Youth: An Analysis of the Content and Effects of MTV
 SO: Youth and Society, 1986, 18, 2, Dec, 177-189

4 of 8/Rank: [View Record](#)
 209
 TI: Beavis and Butt-Head: No Future for Postmodern Youth
 SO: YOUTH CULTURE IDENTITY IN A POSTMODERN WORLD, Epstein, Jonathon S. [Ed].
 Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998, pp 74-99

5 of 8/Rank: [View Record](#) [Cited by 7](#)
 117
 TI: **Violence** and Sex in **Music** Videos: TV and Rock 'n' Roll
 SO: Journal of Communication, 1986, 36, 1, winter, 79-93

Bibliographic records with citedness cues acting as a hotlink to retrieve the citing records.

[View Record](#)

DN: Sociological Abstracts
 TI: Violence and Sex in Music Videos: TV and Rock 'n' Roll
 AU: Sherman, Barry L, Dominick, Joseph R
 SO: Journal of Communication, 1986, 36, 1, winter, 79-93

The following records describe publications within the current Social Sciences subject group that have cited the item above.

7 Records

Save/Print/Email Records View Marked Records Save to RefWorks

/Rank: 0 [View Record](#)
 DN: Sociological Abstracts
 TI: The Gender Role Paradox in Youth Culture: An Analysis of Women in Music Videos
 SO: Michigan Sociological Review, 1999, 13, fall, 46-64

/Rank: 0 [View Record](#) [Cited by 4](#)
 DN: Communication Studies: A SAGE Full-Text Collection
 TI: The Use and Experience of the New Video Media Among Children and Young Adolescents
 SO: Communication Research, vol 17, no. 1, pp. 107-130, February 1990

/Rank: 0 [View Record](#) [Cited by 5](#)
 DN: Communication Studies: A SAGE Full-Text Collection
 TI: The Influence of Sex and Violence on the Appeal of Rock Music Videos
 SO: Communication Research, vol 17, no. 2, pp. 212-234, April 1990

/Rank: 0 [View Record](#) [Cited by 2](#)
 DN: Communication Studies: A SAGE Full-Text Collection
 TI: Schematic Information Processing of Heavy Metal Lyrics
 SO: Communication Research vol 18, no 3 pp 373-411 June 1991

The short results list of the citing articles.

rank parameter, and if the search could be limited to active and/or currently held journals, which can be easily derived from the underlying MARC records, this very good feature would become an excellent one

SOCIOLOGICAL ABSTRACTS ON CSA

Sociological Abstracts has been around for more than 30 years. Why should I choose it as a pick now? The answer is: It shows the prototype for the most intelligent backward and forward linking from and to a traditional indexing and abstracting database. This appears exclusively on the CSA system, which happens to be also the content provider. Publishers' archives offer some of these features, but in the arena of indexing/abstracting databases, the level and scope of linking have been implemented poorly (as in CINAHL), miserably (as in e-psyche), or only within the confines of the database (as in PsycINFO) or the family of databases (as in the impressive and mighty Web of Science, which has been the mother of all citation indexes for decades in various incarnations).

When you search Sociological Abstracts on CSA, you see features (on a small subset of records, yet) that are unavailable in its other implementations. The short results list shows in the header of articles how many other items have cited the articles. Clicking on the "cited by" figure will bring up the records for the citing articles, which in turn also may be cited by other sources.

The long version of the abstracting and indexing record may include the list of cited references from the cited articles with a hotlink to the abstract if it is available in Sociological Abstracts, and some other databases in the CSA stable (although not in PsycINFO, which prefers to remain in shortsighted isolation, even though it would enhance its value), or in one or more of the SAGE collections of full-text articles and abstracting/indexing records—depending on the type of subscription the user has.

Of equal importance, the number of times some of the items in the list of cited references were cited is also attached as a hotlink. This means you not only see this very informative number that helps you to select the most cited

(hence likely to be the most valued) articles, you can also launch a search to see those citing articles.

I must emphasize that these features are available only for a small subset (about 1 percent) of the 615,000 records in Sociological Abstracts. CSA is not yet touting this feature, but the company has an excellent track record for enhancing its records, along with good overall credibility for presenting true claims in its PR materials and delivering on them.



the pan

E-PSYCHE

This database came in as a lion and apparently goes out as a lamb to the slaughterhouse. The claims about what e-psyche *will* offer were delivered through several PR outlets for years, in spite of the fact that the content providers must have realized that what they claim as fact is merely fiction. More than 2 years ago, after the launch of the e-psyche database, I wondered if it was a better mousetrap [www.infotoday.com/it/dec00/jacso.htm] than the one offered by PsycINFO. I welcomed the challenge to PsycINFO by the promised incorporation of cited references, but rang the alarm bell about the unrealistic targeted journal base of 4,000 titles, the processing of which for extracting cited references would devour an enormous amount of venture capital very quickly. I suggested the company spend the money on the promising citation data.

Well, e-psyche never expanded its source base to the extent it promised, and then claimed as a fact in its promotional materials and managerial interviews. It has not even come close to it. Even the list of targeted journals, which includes periodicals in the most esoteric languages published in countries where fighting famine is more important than mental health, could never come up with more than 3,550 journals. John Kuranz, an industry

[View Record](#)

DN: SociologicalAbstracts
 TI: Violence and Sex in Music Videos: TV and Rock 'n' Roll
 AU: Sherman, Barry L; Dominick, Joseph R
 SO: Journal of Communication, 1986, 36, 1, winter, 79-93

The following records describe publications within the current Social Sciences subject that have cited the item above.

7 Records

[Save/Print/Email Records](#) [View Marked Records](#) [Save to Ref](#)

/Rank: 0 [View Record](#)

DN: SociologicalAbstracts
 TI: The Gender Role Paradox in Youth Culture: An Analysis of Women in Music Videos
 SO: Michigan Sociological Review, 1999, 13, fall, 46-64
 RE: 1. Barry, V. T. □. (1994 □). *Feminine or Masculine: The Conflicting Nature of Female Rap Music*. Pp. 183-201 in Cecilia Reclaimed: Feminist Perspectives on Gender and Sexuality. Ed. by Susan C. Cook and Judy S. □.
 2. Boorstin, D. □. (1961 □). *The Image: A Guide To Pseudo-Events In America*. New York: Basic Books. □. [Cited by 2]
 3. Butler, J. □. (1990 □). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge. □.
 4. Butler, M. □, & Paisley, W. □. (1980 □). *Women and the Mass Media: Sourcebook and Action*. New York: Human Science Press. □. [Abstract]
 5. Coleman, J. S. □. (1961 □). *The Adolescent Society*. New York: The Free Press. □. [Cited by 23]
 6. Colford, S. W. □. (1985 □). 'D.C. Wives Aim at MTV, Ads Next?' *Advertising Age*. □.
 7. Douglas, S. J. □. (1994 □). *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Media*. New York: Random House. □. [Cited by 4]

List of cited references with citedness cues acting as a hotlink to abstracts and/or the citing records from various sources.

	eps	WoS	
	1,292	3,372	Cited references for items in <i>Annual Review of Psychology</i> 1999
1	123	196	Lifespan psychology: Theory and application
2	127	214	Mapping biobehavioral contributions to health and illness
3	22	112	Current issues and emerging theories in animal cognition
4	33	68	The suggestibility of children's memory
5	135	219	Emotions
6	93	206	Neuroethology of spatial learning: The birds and the bees
7	36	92	Interventions for couples
8	64	178	Somethesis
9	72	137	Conflict in marriage: Implications for working with couples
10	51	102	Cognitive development: Children's knowledge about the mind
11	30	102	High-level scene perception
12	78	155	Deductive reasoning
13	76	172	Individual psychotherapy outcome and process research
14	54	119	Trust and distrust in organizations: Emerging perspectives, enduring questions
15	20	233	Survey research
16	44	117	Peer relationships and social competence during early and middle childhood
17	12	57	Quantifying the information value of clinical assessments with signal detection theory
18	8	55	On knowing a word
19	nr	155	Psychopathology: Description and classification
20	91	162	Social, community, and preventive interventions
21	40	127	Interpersonal processes
22	13	49	The psychological underpinnings of democracy
23	nr	109	Single-gene influences on brain and behavior
24	70	145	Organizational change and development
25	nr	101	Influences on infant speech processing: Toward a new synthesis

Inferior coverage of the 1999 volume of the top-ranking Annual Review of Psychology by e-psyche.

	eps	WoS	Cited references in a mix of articles in e-psyche (eps) and Web of Science (WoS)
	621	5,674	
1	nr	47	Dose-response effects of methylphenidate
2	89	112	Association between childhood physical and emotional abuse . . .
3	10	109	Dietary variety, energy regulation, and obesity
4	10	82	A meta-analytic review of gender differences in perceptions of sexual harassment
5	10	63	Role-specific feelings of control and mortality
6	67	98	On the malleability of automatic attitudes
7	nr	200	Five-Factor Model of Personality and Job Satisfaction: A Meta-analysis
8	nr	nr	Fibromyalgia
9	nr	811	The developing human brain.
10	10	378	Job-satisfaction-job performance relationship
11	10	240	Relationship of core self-evaluations traits--self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, locus of control, and emotional stability--with job satisfaction and job performance: A meta-analysis
12	nr	452	Nicotine as an addictive substance
13	nr	709	Endogenous opiates: 2000
14	42	355	Influences on socioeconomic status
15	nr	869	Victimization and substance abuse among women
16	365	487	Women, sex and HIV
17	nr	170	Culture in whales and dolphins
18	nr	363	Empathy: Its ultimate and proximate bases
19	8	54	Five-Factor Model of Personality and Absence
20	nr	75	Five-Factor Model of Personality Leadership

Cited references for a mix of journal articles from prestigious psychology journals.

veteran and president of Database Access Group, LLC, the producer of e-psyche, claimed in an interview [www.igroup.com/access/number36/subject11.cfm] in March 2001 that "e-psyche includes over 4,000 journals, and PsycINFO about 1,500." In his dreams, perhaps. In reality, e-psyche had less than 850 journals covered, sporadically, at that time, and even by the end of December 2003, covered only 1,135 titles, even more sporadically. The database still could have been a contender. But as my systematic and random tests have shown, coverage of many essential psychology journals was dropped, or done with entirely too much selectivity, apparently to save expenses.

I selected 10 of the top-ranked periodicals of the 422 titles listed in the Psychology sections (Clinical, Applied, Experimental, etc.) of the most current edition of the Journal Citation Reports (JCR), then checked the coverage of the source items and the cited references in e-psyche against the Social Science Citation Index on the Web of Science platform for the past few

years. The e-psyche database performed terribly on both counts.

For example, e-psyche covers *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* (the #1 journal in JCR in psychology). To be

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exact, it covers the first issue of 1999, and then nothing more. Tellingly, none of the 58 records from that issue had a single citation in e-psyche. ISI Social Science Citation Index lists 1,176 cited references for that single issue alone. The #2 journal, *Trends in Cognitive Science*, lasted longer (until 2002), but again, not one of the 281 records has a single cited reference. The #3 (and across 3 decades, the overall #1), *An-*

nual Review of Psychology, has no records for volume 54 (2003), and misses 10-15 percent of the chapters in some other volumes. While it has an entry for each item in the 2002 volume, the number of cited references in these volumes shows an example of the biggest disappointment in this database: the large-scale omission of cited references. One-fourth of the 3,365 references identified by the Social Science Citation Index for the same volume were absent from the e-psyche records, which totaled 2,559 cited references. The 1999 volume of this key periodical fared worse in e-psyche, which omitted 62 percent of the cited references listed in WoS, and did not even have a record for three of the 25 chapters in that year.

Space does not permit me here to show further evidence about the absolute irresponsible coverage of the top 10 sources (and others), and especially of the cited references, but I will post on the Web some other results from my findings. The puny information label provided about the database to EBSCO claims that "records within e-psyche are enhanced to include the references or citations as found in the original source." If all this was not enough, look at the above figure, which is a summary for some of the articles from a variety of prestigious journals, showing how e-psyche compared with the coverage of WoS. (The nr code indicates that there was no record for the article or the journal.)

If you think that the frequent occurrence of 10 citations in e-psyche is very odd, then you are right. Cutting more corners than imaginable, e-psyche got to the point where its managers decided that no more than 10 citations would be included per record. Don't ask which 10 are selected. My opinion about this policy is not fit to print, so let me just say, it is time for this database to disappear from the scene, lest it become another dead body left out on the field.

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Comments? E-mail letters to the editor to marydee@xmission.com.