

PÉTER'S PICKS & PANS



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This month, the two picks include an impressive Spanish-language reference collection from the Gale Group (for which I write monthly reviews, one of which was on this product), and an excellently edited and presented bibliography about scholarly electronic publishing by a real information professional, Charles W. Bailey, Jr. Although I have never met him personally, I have been using his database for many years to stay up-to date and informed. The pan is JournalSearch.com, which claims to be a leading information research service for retrieving journal and magazine articles, but could not convince me that this was so.



the picks

CONSULTA

The Gale Group, in partnership with the Spain-based publisher, the Océano Group, offers a mighty online collection of about a hundred Spanish-language encyclopedias, dictionaries, and almanacs. With its unprecedented breadth, it dwarfs the small pockets of Spanish reference works offered by Grolier, MicroNet, and Microsoft. The individual items range from the small *Diccionario de Astronomía* to the 10-volume *História Universal* and the 20-volume *Gran Enciclopedia Interactiva Océano*. Multi-volume series such as the *História del Arte*, the *Razas Humanas* (Human Races), and *História Natural* fall, by size, in the middle. The topical coverage is equally comprehensive, with volumes ranging from art to zoology, plus medicine, science, business, psychology, and religion.

The geographic scope of Consulta covers all Latin American countries, each of which—except for Panama, Cuba, and Dominican Republic—has its own encyclopedia in the collection. Although the Dominican Republic and Cuba are Caribbean geographically, as is Haiti, these countries are as much Latino and Hispanic (there is a reason for calling the region Hispaniola) as the Spanish-speaking countries of Central and South America and deserve their own encyclopedia in Consulta. (A Spanish translation of the *Encyclopedia of Cuba* published in early 2003 by Greenwood Press would be a perfect shoe-in.) Many of the titles are Spanish translations of Gale reference works, but encyclopedias and dictionaries of Océano, its imprints (like the Gallach Institute), and other publishers (like the Italian publishing powerhouse, Bompiani), also grace the collection. [Editor's Note: A Gale spokesperson points out that Panama, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic, although lacking an encyclopedia, are covered in volume 5 of *Geografía Universal*, with essays/sections devoted to them.]

Certainly, there are overlaps among the individual works. In libraries having the print versions, patrons may not be inclined to thumb through each title to find something more about, say, Frida Kahlo. The beauty of being digital and allowing the quick discovery of even a passing mention of a person, country, or painting is multiplied when you can do so in so many volumes with a single search. While the biography of Kahlo in the *Diccionario de Biografías* may be

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Frida y el surrealismo

La apariencia onírica de sus imágenes propiciaba la relación de su simbología con el surrealismo, algo que ella misma negaría rotundamente: «Se me tomaba por una surrealista. Ello no es correcto, yo nunca he pintado sueños, lo que yo he representado era mi realidad.»

Pero Frida no sólo rechaza el carácter surrealista de su pintura, sino que profesa una profunda aversión hacia los representantes del movimiento. Había conocido a Breton en México en 1938 y al año siguiente pasó varios meses en París, donde tuvo ocasión de entrar en contacto con los otros surrealistas. La opinión que le merecían la expresó sin cortapisas en una carta que escribió desde allí a Nicolás Muray: «No puedes imaginarte lo joputas que son esta gente; me hacen vomitar. Son tan condenadamente intelectuales» y degenerados, que ya no los aguanto más.»

Los numerosos símbolos que Frida Kahlo introduce en sus cuadros poseen significaciones precisas, son producto de la actividad consciente. Lejos del automatismo psíquico de los surrealistas, su pintura se deriva de un proceso constante de reflexión sobre sí misma, es manifestación voluntaria de lo anímico, forma tangible del dolor y la esperanza. El carácter simbólico de su pintura da cauce a la expresión vehemente de una personalidad apasionada para la que el arte es desafío y combate, lucha violenta contra la enfermedad, pero también repliegue ensimismado hacia su yo interior y huella del reconocimiento doloroso de su identidad maltrecha.

The quote from Frida Kahlo in the Grandes Personajes leaves no doubt that she did not consider herself a surrealist painter.

shorter than the one in Grolier's *Cumbre* or in Microsoft's Spanish-language *Encarta*, Consulta has a long entry about the artist in both the *Grandes Personajes* (Great Persons) and in the *Historia del Arte* that really gives a well-rounded picture. For example, Kahlo's quote in the *Grandes Personajes* ("They considered me surrealist. That's wrong, I've never painted dreams, what I depicted was my reality.") and the following paragraph leaves no doubt about this issue. The *Diccionario de Biografías* only alludes to it, in almost mincing words sound-

ing like a politically correct press release. This latter source, however, deserves credit for being very current in incorporating his 2003 Golden Globe Award in its entry about director Pedro Almodóvar—only days after the event.

Beyond the traditional reference works, there is also a full-text archive of 60 Spanish-language journals (mostly arts and humanities and general interest) and about 1,600 classic literary works and historical documents. These open yet another perspective about a topic, such as the

Nombre completo: Frida Kahlo

Nacionalidad: México

Fecha de nacimiento: 1907 Coyoacán (México)

Fecha de fallecimiento: 13/ 07/ 1954 Coyoacán (México)

Aunque se movió en el ambiente de los grandes muralistas mexicanos de su tiempo y compartió sus ideales, creó una pintura absolutamente personal, ingenua y profundamente metafórica al mismo tiempo, derivada de su exaltada sensibilidad y de varios acontecimientos que marcaron su vida. A los dieciocho años sufrió un gravísimo accidente que la obligó a una larga convalecencia, durante la cual aprendió a pintar, y que influyó con toda probabilidad en la formación del complejo mundo psicológico que se refleja en sus obras. Contrajo matrimonio con el muralista Diego Rivera. En 1932 tuvo un aborto que afectó en lo más hondo su delicada sensibilidad y le inspiró dos de sus obras más valoradas: *Henry Ford Hospital* y *Frida y el aborto*, cuya compleja simbología se conoce por las explicaciones de la propia pintora. También son muy apreciados sus autorretratos, así mismo de compleja interpretación: *Auto-retrato con monos*, *Las dos Fridas*. Cuando André Breton conoció la obra de Frida Kahlo dijo que era una surrealista espontánea y la invitó a exponer en Nueva York y París, ciudad esta última en la que no tuvo una gran acogida. Nunca se sintió cerca del surrealismo, y al final de sus días decidió que esa tendencia no se correspondía con su creación artística. En su búsqueda de las raíces estéticas de México, realizó espléndidos retratos de niños y obras inspiradas en la iconografía mexicana anterior a la conquista, pero son las telas que se centran en ella misma y en su azarosa vida las que la han convertido en una de las figuras más destacadas de la pintura mexicana del siglo XX.

The same issue as covered by Diccionario de Biografías minces words on the subject.

detailed journal reviews of several Almodóvar movies. These examples are not the exception; you can find such complementary and multifaceted articles and historical document about many other topics, such as the extradition of Pinochet.

For libraries in universities with courses in country studies or the Spanish language, and for public libraries with large Latino community, Consulta is a highly relevant database. Bringing together so many resources is a great achievement. Now the software also must be improved, not only to fix some annoying glitches—such as the misinformation about and mishandling of phrase searching—but also to integrate the sources, rather than just aggregating them through cross-linking. Gale showed how to do this when it perfectly integrated its *Biographical Dictionary* soon after the acquisition of the Information Access Company (IAC) databases a few years ago.

SCHOLARLY ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING BIBLIOGRAPHY

I have been long overdue in singing the praises of this excellent bibliography, Scholarly Electronic Publishing Bibliography (SEP), created by Charles W. Bailey Jr. at the University of Houston [http://info.lib.uh.edu/sepb.html or http://info.lib.uh.edu/sepb/sepb.pdf]. I have been using it regularly since 1996. Other must have been doing the same—SEP reports there have been more than 1 million requests for HTML, Word, or PDF files hot-linked in its database. SEP is compiled

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The items are classified using the author's perfect classification system developed for this project.

Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology 54, no. 2 (2003): Includes "A Profile of Faculty Reading and Information-Use Behaviors on the Cusp of the Electronic Age" and other articles.

January 14, 2003

Bowman, Lisa M. "EFF Blasts Controversial Copyright Law." CNET News.com, 10 January 2003. Discusses the new *Unintended Consequences: Four Years under the DMCA* report from EFF.

"Hundreds of Univ. of Calif. Press Books Now Available on the Web." Press release on SEPTEMBER98-FORUM says: "More than 500 University of California Press books are available online free of charge through an ongoing partnership between UC Press and the California Digital Library."

Learned Publishing 16 (January 2003): Includes "Authors and Electronic Publishing: What Authors Want from the New Technology," "Challenges to the Role of Publishers," "Consortial Licensing vs. Tradition: Breaking Up Is Hard to Do," "E-books and the Academic Market: The Emerging Supply Chain," "Open-Access Journals—Nice Idea, Shame About the Numbers?," "Text Retrieval: An Overview," "What Will Happen to Peer Review?," and other articles.

The SEP citations to the journal Learned Publishing have no links to the source documents even though about 350 articles of this excellent journal (from 1997 onward) are available free of charge from the generous publisher.

with utter professionalism. It reminds me of the work of the best artisans who know not only every item that leaves their workshops, but each component used to create them—providing the ideal quality control, something that cannot be said about the assembly-line processing of some commercial abstracting/indexing database where, to put it mildly, the public relations role of the editor is more prominent than the editorial one.

Now at version 47, SEP has about 2,000 entries from a variety of scholarly and professional journals, both traditional journals (like *JASIS&T* or *ONLINE*) and ones born on the Web (such as *Information Research* or *First Monday*). Most of the citations are to articles published since the mid-1990s.

The items are classified using the author's perfect classification system developed for this project. This is really conducive to browsing the bibliography. I only wish the software would highlight the matching term.

The selection of items is impeccable. I have yet to find journal articles irrelevant to the scope of the bibliography. SEP could be used as a benchmark in evaluating abstracting/indexing databases that proudly claim to have coverage of electronic publishing, but do not come close to SEP.

The bibliography is updated monthly, and a Web log keeps you really current about the important articles. In my experience, the blogs are updated about 4 times a week. Again,

that's quite a feat when for many abstracting/indexing services, it takes several months to publish a citation (with or without abstract) after the publication of the primary document.

The citations are linked to the full text of the article—if it is available free of charge to anyone. I found only one omission, the SEP citations to the journal *Learned Publishing* have no links to the source documents even though about 350 articles of this excellent journal (from 1997 onward) are available free of charge from the generous pub-

lisher. Of course, some document delivery services don't notify you about this (and to its credit, Ingenta does), just happily ship it to you for a \$12 service fee, \$3-8 royalty (depending on the number of pages), and a \$10 rush fee, if you don't know that, with a click, you can have the article for free and instantaneously. This outstanding tool should be in every information professional's toolbox, as electronic publishing will have an effect on all of us.



the pan

JOURNALSEARCH.COM

As I understand from its home page, "JournalSearch.com is the Internet's leading information research service for retrieving journal and magazine articles ... providing you with content that is focused and relevant, unrivaled by other search engines on the Internet." That is quite a claim, so I could hardly wait to see the results for my search about Angkor Wat, the awesome architectural and religious monument group in Cambodia. Knowing from travel books that skinny dipping is not highly appreciated in

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3. **Nude beaches around the world**
Description: Nude beaches around the world: Our expert offers tips on where to bare it all, plus cell phones in Spain and honeymooning in Oaxaca.
Publication: [Available to registered users](#)
Category: News

4. **What's an MBA Really Worth?**
Description: It will cost more than \$100,000 to earn a degree at an elite business school. Just one problem: There's little real evidence that it will enhance your career.
Author: Raskin, Andy
Date: 2002-07-01
Publication: [Available to registered users](#)
Category: Business

5. **What's an MBA Really Worth?**
Description: It will cost more than \$100,000 to earn a degree at an elite business school. Just one problem: There's little real evidence that it will enhance your career.
Author: Raskin, Andy
Date: 2002-07-01
Publication: [Available to registered users](#)
Category: Business

I was surprised to see that my search on Angkor Wat yielded one article titled "Nude Beaches Around the World," and another entitled "What's an MBA Really Worth?"

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The screenshot shows the JournalSearch website interface. At the top, there is a search bar with the text "angkor wat" and a "GO" button. Below the search bar, there are navigation links for "Home", "About", "Contact", "Help", and "LOG". The main content area displays search results for the term "angkor wat". The results are listed in a numbered format. The first result is "3. Nude beaches around the world" with a description, publication information, and category. The second result is "4. What's an MBA Really Worth?" with similar details. A promotional banner in the center of the results area reads "Now only \$9.95 for 30 days! Click Here".

The search term Angkor Wat did not actually occur in the article text; it was in a related article from Salon mentioned to the left of the article.

South-East Asia and having just returned from Cambodia, I was surprised to see that my search using the two words as an exact phrase yielded one article titled "Nude Beaches Around the World," and another entitled "What's an MBA Really Worth?"

In spite of my devotion to writing this column for *ONLINE*, I did not feel comfortable paying \$59.95 for a monthly subscription to see these articles. Instead I Googled the articles to find out what they had to do with Angkor Wat. Well, there are no nudist beaches at the lake near Angkor Wat, but there was an article on *Salon* magazine's Web site about the dreaded road trip from Thailand to Angkor Wat and that article was close to the nudist beach article on the screen. Apparently, the "unique technology" of searching that JournalSearch boasts about is not very smart. The focused and relevant content was not immediately obvious to me. The other article did not provide focused and relevant content either, once I read the article in *Business 2.0* which mentioned Angkor Wat only as an analogy.

To be fair, my first search actually yielded not 2 but 6 results. However, the search engine showed the nudist beach citation 3 times, as it did with the MBA one. Triplicate records showed up in all the other test searches, too. Quite oddly, the exact phrase search for `con artist` yields 484 articles, while the

Boolean AND search (using the ALL option) finds only 121 records (including the triplicates in both cases). I realize that it is an exact quadruplicate, but in other searches the difference was smaller; however, every phrase search returned more results than its AND counterpart.

Recently the monthly fee was cut to \$9.95, but I still did not feel motivated enough to charge my credit card. I thought to call the company to find out more about the service, but a search on the Web for the 1-877-690-4900 number brought up not only this venture, but also some more traditional professions and businesses in new formats, including the most traditional one with a focus on fetishism—although at different extensions. On the one hand, it gave me cold feet; on the other hand, I thought it might be progress that an information service is deemed to have as much profit-making potential as the spam e-mails I get about debt relief, credit repair, and hidden Nigerian fund transfer services that share the same toll-free number as Journal Search.com's. I suggest you not use your credit card for any of these.

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