



## ebrary Discover, LISTA, *Information World Review Archives*

One of the picks is the ebrary Discover service, which offers the option of free reading (viewing) of nearly 30,000 books from renowned publishers. The other pick is the entirely open access LISTA (Library and Information Science & Technology Abstracts) database from EBSCO, which dwarfs the subscription-based A&I databases in the field of library and information science and technology. The pan is the *Information World Review* archive of VNU Business Publications, in which the names of the real authors in many articles "disappeared." To add insult to injury, *IWR* claims that those articles were written by its own staff members. Beyond the legalities, this blatant disregard for the authors' rights to be identified as authors is immoral. This is particularly egregious coming from an information industry company based in Europe, where copyright law has always included specific provisions for the so-called moral rights, not just the pecuniary ones, of authors. Oddly, real *IWR* staff members get bylines for their contributions.



### the picks

#### EBRARY DISCOVER

Among the publishers of e-books, ebrary [www.ebrary.com] is a key player, primarily serving libraries through direct contact. Indirectly, ebrary provides e-books to registered library patrons. Had I not read a Nov. 21, 2005, review of e-book services by Gary Price [<http://searchenginewatch.com/searchday/article.php/3565566>] about the Discover service of ebrary, I would have not known of ebrary Discover, intended for those whose libraries are not ebrary customers. No one mentioned Discover when I visited the ebrary booth at the ALA conference. The Discover service [<http://shop.ebrary.com> or <http://discover.ebrary.com>], which was apparently originally thought of by ebrary as a shopping service, just does not seem to have the PR enjoyed by many, far less worthy, digital resources. It is not even mentioned in ebrary's About page, which offers a useful multipart Flash demo and summarizes the services thusly: "We currently provide eBook technologies and services to more than 900 customers in 100 different countries, representing 5.5 million end users. ebrary's partners include more than 220 of the world's leading publishers."

Indeed, many of the partners are leading publishers and include most of the largest commercial ones, such as Cambridge, Oxford, Wiley, Putnam, SAGE, Palgrave, Taylor & Francis (including all of its imprints, like Routledge), Springer



(including Kluwer), as well as the best-known university presses, such as Harvard, Stanford, and MIT, and smaller but excellent publishers, such as Nolo Press. In my test I saw that the collection grew by 50 percent since Gary's review, so its free services are even more appealing.

If you are a direct end user (one of those individuals who is not a card-carrying patron of a library with an ebrary contract), you can still have open access privileges (at least at the document-viewing level) to 30,000 e-books. These are not outdated weight loss and psychobabble books that you would find at garage sales, but substantial and rather expensive books currently in print.

True, you can't store the entire book on your hard drive, nor can you print it for free, but do you really want to do that? I am perfectly happy with the free reading privileges (and with copying or printing a page for a quarter). This is especially true for reference books when I want to look up a biography or an article in a *reliable* encyclopedia. (I mention this emphatically to contrast it with Wikipedia, which benefited mightily from many of the traditional reference sources, "adapting" articles from those without acknowledgement, but also from the pseudo-scientific comparison with *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. This much-touted comparison was organized, conducted, and summarized by reporters of *Nature* magazine. These reporters enjoy the clout of *Nature*, but, in light of the factual and substantial response by competent and responsible professionals [http://corporate.britannica.com/britannica\_nature\_response.pdf], they seem to be unprepared and unqualified for the job—at best.)

The software of ebrary Discover offers Boolean operators, exact phrase searching, and proximity operators, along with multicolor highlighting options (which can be useful) and a variety of sort and other output features. It undoubtedly deserves to be a pick even though it has one blatant error in the Help file, suggesting you "use Boolean searches to include plurals or other word forms [if your results are too few]." Then it kicks sand in your face by using the insane example "(airplane AND airplanes rather than just airplane)." Being confused about Boolean is not limited to ebrary. I've found that Google Scholar sometimes has problems processing a Boolean OR operator. Too frequently, albeit inconsistently, it produces fewer records with the OR than it does with separate searches on the singular and plural forms of a word. Call me old-fashioned, but I prefer sticking to the orthodox logic.

## LISTA

EBSCO [www.ebsco.com] has been treating the librarians and other information professionals well by offering them a free and substantial A&I database of library and information science and technology documents, Library Reference Center (LRC), which I applauded in the November 1999 issue of *Information Today* ("Fee or Free? The Next Level of Competition," p. 34).

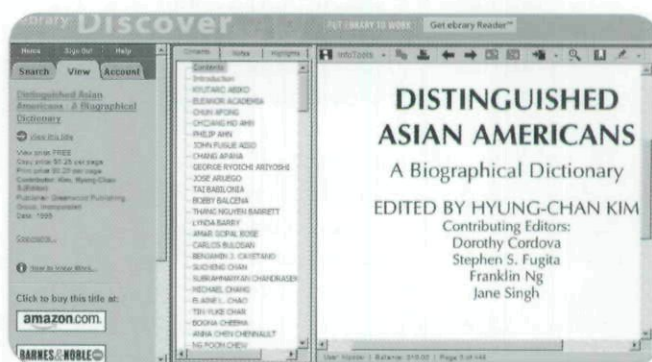
Last November, EBSCO replaced LRC with the even better, and still free, LISTA database [http://libraryresearch.org].

It deserves a much more detailed evaluation and comparison with the fee-based alternatives, and I will do one later in Peter's Digital Reference Shelf. Suffice it to say here that the database had 918,700 records at the end of March 2006, which is larger than all the fee-based LIS databases combined.

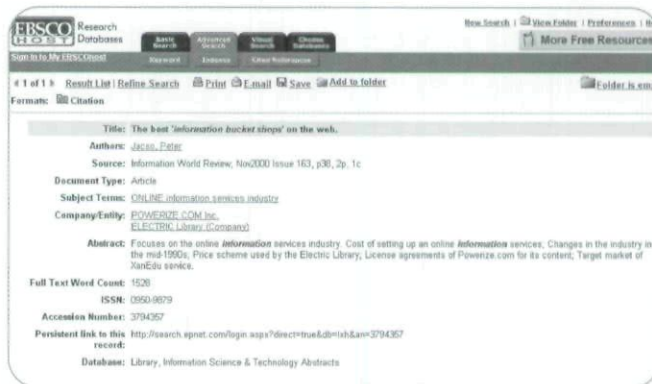
More than 117,000 of the records are for articles published in academic journals and 532,400 in professional journals (much appreciated by the practitioners in the trenches). Among the primary sources covered, there are about 5,200 records for conference papers, and nearly 50,000 records for monographic materials.

More than half of the records (501,500) have summaries, many of them qualifying as informative abstracts (as defined by the NISO standard about abstracts). More than 4,000 records are enhanced with cited references. Although this is a very small proportion, even within the academic journals subset (where cited references are a must), it is an important value added for resource discovery.

EBSCO has cleverly recognized that, by extracting partial records from its own huge subscription-based databases, such as Academic Search Premier and MasterFile Premier, it can offer for free a large A&I database for those who spend a significant part of their time and budget selecting and acquiring similar databases for scholars, practitioners, and students of other disciplines—for the librarians and other



Sample page from an e-book in ebrary Discover service



A sample record from the open access LISTA database

information professionals. They deserve such a substantial and free resource for their very own use.



## the pan

### VNU INFORMATION WORLD REVIEW ARCHIVE

At first glance, this open access archive [www.iwr.co.uk] might qualify as a pick. It includes the full text of a few thousand articles published in *Information World Review* (the British counterpart of *Information Today*), which comprehensively covers the European information industry. It was acquired a few years ago, along with the legendary Online Information conference, by VNU Business Publications from Learned Information Limited. This in itself would not necessarily have been bad news, although *IWR* became a very small fish in the large pond of VNU properties.

The first bad impression of the *IWR* archives came as I was preparing for an invited presentation to the U.K. Serials Group about endangered database species. I could not find an article that I wrote several years ago for *IWR*, which predicted the types of databases I thought would be the most endangered, using specific databases as examples. Actually, this still *could* have been a positive impression, if I assumed that the new owner of *IWR* respected my agreement with the previous publisher (as it should, and as MCB Publishing (now Emerald) correctly did, to leave my articles out of its digital archive).

The real surprise came when I *did* find my article, but without my name as the author. No wonder using my name in the search yielded nothing, while a search for topic words did. The same is true for a couple of my other articles in *IWR*, although there are a few cases where they somehow forgot to remove my name.

If this page does not print out automatically, select **Print** from the **File** menu.

#### The best 'information bucket shops' on the web

It's lucky that I am writing this column for a British publication. Bucket shops have a negative connotation in the US and pejorative definitions in the American dictionaries - Merriam-Webster, American Heritage and Random House - that I consulted for verification. Even some British dictionaries, such as Longman, have that school-masterish disapproving tone in the definition.

Information World Review Staff, Information World Review 01 Nov 2000

The Cambridge International Dictionary of English, however, does justice to the word by defining it as "a travel company that sells aircraft tickets at a low price".

I have had only good experiences with bucket shops in London, Bangkok and Penang. I found them as reliable as the full-service travel agencies but much kinder to my wallet.

The real author is yours truly  
[http://www.vnunet.com/articles/print/2083018].

This quickly got my attention, and I started to explore the pattern further. Stephen Arnold fared better than I did, as he is credited as a bylined author for nine articles. Before you applaud, this represents at best only one-quarter of the articles he wrote for *IWR* in the time period covered by the archive. For many of his articles, the byline identifies "*Information World Review Staff*" as the author. At least his name was not consistently removed from the ending or the leading paragraphs. It tells you something about the not-so-splendid isolation of the persons involved in butchering the original articles that in some of those records he is acknowledged as writing from Harrods.

Before you believe that Arnold has set up shop at Harrods next to the cosmetics department to ease the burden of writing his columns, let me tell you that he sends his contributions from Harrods Creek, Ky., U.S., which is where he prefers to have his office address. The name of the town was transcribed in the *IWR* archive as Harrod's Creek, then apparently shortened to Harrod's. There is no limit to human ignorance once it gets into power.

Marydee Ojala got the rawest end of the stick. Her name was removed from all of her columns (but not her review of the 1994 EUSIDIC conference) and replaced by *Information World Review Staff*. In her case, the cleansing job was perfect—you don't even find an allusion to her authorship anywhere in the good dozen records I checked, giving the perfect illusion and delusion that *IWR* staff members were the authors. [Editor's note: The byline for my *IWR* column remains extant in ProQuest's ABI/INFORM database, although the EUSIDIC report is missing from that file, for reasons that remain mysterious to me.]

The full extent for this "authorcide" is difficult to determine without knowing the exact titles of the articles of the real authors. Even when you know some, the search is painful because of the utterly primitive search engine of the large VNU archive [www.vnunet.com], which even the software of a digital mom-and-pop store outperforms. This is the smaller of the embarrassments of the leading information company—neither illegal, nor immoral, just plain pathetic.

It was to my great satisfaction that the record for Donald Hawkins' letter—in response to my (nonattributed) endangered

#### Setting the database record straight

[News]  
ISA is far from an "endangered species of the database world," as Jacsó has claimed.  
[ By Donald T. Hawkins | Thu, 01 Feb 2001 | Show Similar Results ]

#### A look at the endangered species of the database world

[News]  
Occasionally, you encounter databases that get on the endangered list of species through a series of self-inflicted wounds, and are likely to...  
[ By Information World Review Staff | Fri, 01 Dec 2000 | Show Similar Results ]

#### IT manager 'an endangered species'

[News]  
IT managers will soon no longer have overall control of a company's IT strategy and systems, according analyst Gartner's programme director...  
[ By Steven Mathieson, Computing | computing | Thu, 23 Nov 2000 | Show Similar Results ]

#### The best 'information bucket shops' on the web

[News]  
The Cambridge International Dictionary of English, however, does justice to the word by defining it as "a travel company that sells aircraft...  
[ By Information World Review Staff | Wed, 01 Nov 2000 | Show Similar Results ]

Some authors do get credited, if not exactly vindicated.

species article—credits him as the author and includes a sentence indicating that I wrote the original one. Some guys have all the luck. It is another question that the ISA (later ISTA) database (acquired some time ago by EBSCO for spare parts in its stable of databases) is practically extinct, or clinically dead. The most current record is for a few January 2005 articles. The size of the database is 150,000 records. No PR-talk or editorializing would resuscitate it, and who would subscribe to it, when the LISTA database of EBSCO with nearly 1 million records is available for free? Was it really “far from endangered” as its editor claimed?

It adds insult to injury when authors are identified as *Information World Review* Staff. This is what happens when accountants and CEOs from outside the industry find themselves at the helm of an information company, messing with authors' inalienable and nontransferable rights—inalienable and nontransferable, except for those written in the capacity of employee—or should I use the term staff member? (I know these adjectives only because I wrote my doctoral dissertation about digital copyright matters.) Rest assured, none of us were ever staff members of *IWR* by any stretch of the imagination.

Oddly, those who are indeed *IWR* staff members do get fully credited. Take Helen Jezzard, who was writing her debut piece as incoming editor of *IWR* about the time I wrote about endangered database species. Apparently, she has become quite productive since—you find her name in the byline for 123 contributions, mostly news articles. I vividly remember her telling me in an e-mail the education staff members received from lawyers about legal matters, which I assume includes authors' rights.

I don't know who is responsible for this butcher job, but he or she must have missed those training sessions. Accidentally omitting the author's name can occasionally happen in an A&I database when the record is created, but it's not an innocent mistake when it happens as a systematic action. According to The Berne Convention, “the author shall have the right to claim authorship of the work and to object to any distortion, mutilation or other modification of, or other derogatory action in relation to, the said work, which would be prejudicial to his honor or reputation.” A court case on behalf of the authors affected could clarify the details. Uncover had its day in court in 1998 for copying and selling articles without the consent of the authors, which included myself. Granted, the issue is a bit different; this time, it's copyright rather than the moral right to attribution. Uncover lost, and the authors were compensated.

The additional twist is that some of these articles, such as the archive of *Personal Computer World*, appear also in other archives of VNU without appropriate author attribution. Even more interestingly, some are also part of the huge Global Reporter database, File 120 on Dialog, without the appropriate credit, so the avalanche effect is spreading. Setting aside the legal aspects, let me just ask VNU the common-sense moral question: How dare you?

## A CLARIFICATION OF U.K. COPYRIGHT LAW

By Charles Oppenheim

Under U.K. copyright law, the Moral Right to be identified as an author exists. Although this piece of U.K. copyright law is subject to a number of limitations, its key point is that, under certain circumstances, authors have the right to sue if their names do not appear associated with a piece of text that they created. This particular law was implemented in 1989, so articles that were published before then do not have such rights associated with them.

As *Information World Review* is a U.K. publication, one would have hoped that it would respect both the letter and the spirit of this law by ensuring that all articles written by a particular individual and appearing with that individual's byline in the printed copy would have the same byline in the online version. I checked on *IWR* articles written by me—I have written seven feature articles for *IWR* over the years. Three of these are not in the online archive at all, three are correctly ascribed to me, and one is incorrectly ascribed to *IWR* staff. It is ironic that on the back page of the latest (April 2006) copy of *IWR*, which looks at some previous issues of *IWR*, it is noted, “Charles Oppenheim on the implications of a new EC directive” as one of the features from its March 1992 issue, yet this article is not in the online archive at all.

There is another legal issue. In the online article by me that now has the byline of *IWR* staff, my name still appears at the very bottom, thereby implying that I am (or was at the time) an *IWR* staff writer. That, arguably, is defamatory, as I am (and was at the time) a learned and eminent professor.

I suggest that anyone who is aggrieved about the online version of *IWR* having removed his or her name should write to the editor and the publishers requesting that their names be restored, as required under Clause 77 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 of the United Kingdom.

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