

DATABASES FREE vs. FEE-BASED

Quotation collections: very popular

By Péter Jacsó

Three years ago in this space, I started the column "Online AND/OR/NOT CD-ROM" to review and compare online and CD-ROM versions of the same database to help the reader to decide which one is more appropriate for them.

All these were fee-based databases, of course, but there was a significant difference between the versions, and the adage "that you get what you pay for" did not apply. The less expensive version of a database was often far better than the other version.

Now there is an even more important consideration: Can you find similar information for free on the Web that is offered for a price on CD-ROM or on fee-based services? I will compare fee-based and free alternatives of reference sources in this re-titled column, but its purpose remain the same: to help you find the alternative that provides the most bang for the buck. I start with a very popular type of reference publication: quotation collections.

Quotation dictionaries and compilations are among the most popular reference publications. A search in *Books In Print* in November found 890 books that had the word quotation (in singular or plural form) in the title. More than 70 were published in 1998. Searching by the Library of Congress Subject Heading "Quotations" brought up 1,812 titles, 200 of them from 1998. Some of the most revered compilations are also available in digital format.

Traditional online databases

Only Lexis and DIALOG offer quotations databases. Although it is a common belief that professional online services can provide the most current information, this definitely is not true of the quotations databases. Lexis has *Simpson's Contemporary Quotations* that is anything but contemporary. It is the digital version of the first edition whose most current quotation is from 1988. There is a new print edition for \$35 that was published in 1997. Not only is it far more current, but with its 20,000 quotations it is twice as large as the edition available on Lexis. You are better off with its CD-ROM version that is still available through some mail-order companies and is discussed below.

DIALOG also carries a rather outdated quotations database, the 3rd edition of the venerable *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* from 1979. The database has never been updated even though the 4th edition was published in print in 1996, and the number of quotations increased from 14,000 to 17,000, featuring 2,500 poets, playwrights, novelists, philosophers, and public figures.

If you don't care for contemporary quotations, and if you have an unlimited usage plan, OQD on DIALOG can be a good source because its record content is first class and is excellently browsable and searchable by authors' name, time period, and any words in the quotations. The attributions are precise and as complete as it gets. You can even find the original Latin or French saying before the

translated version very often. It could be better only if searches could be done by broad topics assigned by the editors, instead of just by keywords.

CD-ROM versions

CD-ROM publishers have been quite good in quotations databases. Microsoft, Time

Warner, Corel, Mindscape, and Grolier have offered them either as a stand-alone CD-ROM or as part of a ready-reference collection at one time or another.

Mindscape and Corel don't have a quotations database in their current offerings, but mail-order companies still carry Mindscape's Reference Library and Corel's Bookcase that include among the reference sources the first edition of *Simpson's Contemporary Quotations* that I reviewed in the 1995 November/December issue of *Link-Up*. While I was not impressed with either reference collection, they may be worth the going price of \$8-\$10 if you crave well-attributed quotations from the 20th century (up to 1998) and don't want to limit yourself to only high-brow quotes.

There are, however, far better deals on CD-ROM such as the 2nd Expanded Multimedia CD-ROM edition of *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*. The first edition was published by Time Warner; this second one is published by Voyager and Learn Technology Interactive, Inc. Although the software is not perfect (the windows cannot be resized and the hit-list and result list windows cannot be juxtaposed for efficient navigation, truncation is not possible in keyword searching, and search terms are not highlighted in the results), you may search 22,000 quotations from 2,550 authors by topics, keywords, authors, date range,

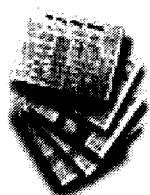
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THE TOP 100 U.S. NEWSPAPERS (BY CIRCULATION)

The Wall Street Journal*	Denver Post	San Antonio Express-News	Syracuse Post-Standard/Herald-Journal
USA Today	St. Petersburg Times	Hartford Courant	Nashville Tennessean
The New York Times	St. Louis Post-Dispatch	Richmond Times-Dispatch	Record
Los Angeles Times	Baltimore Sun	Oklahoma City Oklahoman	Toledo Blade
The Washington Post	Denver Rocky Mountain News	Los Angeles Daily News	Akron Beacon Journal
New York Daily News	San Jose Mercury News	St. Paul Pioneer Press	Grand Rapids Press
Chicago Tribune	Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel	Seattle Post-Intelligencer	Chicago Daily Herald (Arlington Heights)
Newsday	Sacramento Bee	Cincinnati Enquirer	Salt Lake City Tribune
Houston Chronicle	Boston Herald	Austin-American Statesman	Allentown Morning Call
Chicago Sun-Times	Kansas City Star	Rochester Democrat & Chronicle, Times-Union	Wilmington News Journal (coming soon)
San Francisco Chronicle	Buffalo News	Philadelphia Daily News	Tacoma News Tribune
Dallas Morning News	New Orleans Times-Picayune	Memphis Commercial Appeal	Columbia State
Boston Globe	Orlando Sentinel	Florida Times-Union	San Francisco Examiner
Arizona Republic/Phoenix Gazette	Detroit News	Arkansas Democrat-Gazette	Spokane Spokesman-Review
New York Post	Columbus Dispatch	Providence Journal-Bulletin	Knoxville News-Sentinel
Philadelphia Inquirer	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Sun-Telegraph	Des Moines Register	Albuquerque Journal
Newark Star-Ledger	Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel	Riverside Press-Enterprise	Lexington Herald-Leader
Atlanta Journal & Constitution	Charlotte Observer	Tulsa World	Worcester Telegram & Gazette
Minneapolis-St. Paul Star Tribune	Investor's Business Daily	Palm Beach Post (coming soon)	Charleston Post & Courier (coming soon)
Detroit Free Press	Fort Worth Star-Telegram	Dayton Daily News	Madison State Journal, Capital Times
Cleveland Plain-Dealer	Louisville Courier-Journal	Las Vegas Review-Journal	Jackson Clarion-Ledger
San Diego Union-Tribune	Tampa Tribune	Asbury Park Press	Long Beach Press-Telegram
Orange County Register	Seattle Times	Raleigh News & Observer	Honolulu Advertiser (coming soon)
Miami Herald	Omaha World-Herald	Fresno Bee	Roanoke Times & World News
Portland Oregonian	Indianapolis Star	Birmingham News	Washington Times

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DOW JONES

DATABASES FREE vs. FEE-BASED

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and multimedia elements—all combined if you wish to do so. The source attributions and footnotes are excellent and informative.

Some birth dates of quoted persons appear brutally wrong, so when you are searching for quotations from the 1900s you will get Louis XIV as his death date is identified as 1910. There are a few such typos, and the software does not shine in copying and printing a list of quotations longer than the size of the window at once, but for \$15 (from the publisher directly at <http://www.learnstech.com>) it is an excellent database.

For my test searches of two dozen names, this Bartlett edition consistently outperformed OQD except for Horace, Kipling, Shakespeare, Milne and Shaw. This very same database is also available as part of the excellent Grolier 1999 Reference Suite that makes it an even better deal. Don't be confused by the fact that Grolier keeps referring to this Bartlett as one that takes all the quotations from the original book (that was published in 1855!). It has far more than the original book included, as it is based on the 16th print edition of 1996. The latest quotes are from 1994.

Another CD-ROM gem with better software and 18,000 quotations is the Columbia Dictionary of Quotations (not to be confused with the next item) that is part of the 1999 edition of Microsoft Bookshelf that in turn is part of the Microsoft Encarta Reference Suite (that I have the privilege to use on a DVD-ROM). Earlier versions of Bookshelf are available at computer exhibits and from mail-order companies for about \$20—that is a steal, as is the suite after the rebate.

In my tests, Bookshelf's Quotation Dictionary outperformed the Oxford Quotations Dictionary and the 16th edition of Bartlett's in 20th century quotes by American authors, and surprisingly also in quotes by Somerset Maugham and George Bernard Shaw. The only deficiency of the software is that it does not allow the printing of a list but only a single quote at a time. The size of these quotation dictionaries are dwarfed by the CD-ROM edition of *Columbia World of Quotations* from Columbia University Press that features 65,000 quotes from 5,000 authors—and a \$350 price tag. Nice product with impeccable attributions and good software, but only the most well-off university libraries can afford it. Check it out if you are nearby one.

Police & crime genre covered

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APB's editorial division—APB News—focuses exclusively on the whole criminal justice system, from headline news, to in-depth coverage of major cases, to interactive profiles of famous unsolved crimes, to public policy, to crime prevention and personal safety.

"We've assembled some of the finest crime reporters and criminal justice experts in the country," says Mark Sauter, executive vice president of content. "Our reporters are augmented by a cadre of award-winning contributors around the country and a professional advisory board that includes academics, law-enforcement personnel, and even a former FBI profiler."

Free Web quotation files

Given the popularity of quotations books, as we saw from the *Books in Print* search, it is no surprise that there are thousands of Web sites that have quotations. Just the Yahoo! directory lists several hundred of them, and the Quotation Ring home page identifies 267 sites.

However, quantity does not make quality. I am an avid proponent of using high-quality free Web databases—but not at all costs. The majority of these sites have files (not databases) that are a waste of your time. Many people collect quotations, include their favorite quote or aphorism in the e-mail signature, and now publish their collection on the Web. Most of these are unorganized, rife with spelling errors, and make you wade through page after page of sloppily cited quotations. Many promising collections listed in the Yahoo! directory are not accessible anymore. The very few good ones are searchable and at least provide minimal attribution as for the source.

Luckily, one of the best at <http://www.sterlingtech.com/quotes> by Michael and Laura Mancur offers not only a good annotated list of other useful sites but makes them searchable from their home page quoted above. These well-selected and searchable collections are definitely worth searching, especially for contemporary quotations from all walks of life, not just literary quotes. The search software is very simplistic. It merely scans the text and does not seem to use an index, so the term "anger" finds quotations not only about anger but also about danger, stranger, etc.

If you don't need 20th century quotes, the digital version of the 9th edition of Bartlett (based on the 1901 edition) is available at <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/bartleby/bartlett>. It is well designed, eminently browsable chronologically by authors, and searchable by keywords. The Bartleby Project that is not affiliated with Columbia University anymore was among the first free Web resources that gave the Web a good name for reference purposes. Its attributions, footnotes, and overall precision exude professionalism and take us back to the roots of quotations dictionaries. Even though it does not have any quotations from the 20th century, it is a delightful source.

Future installments of this column will introduce other high-quality and free Web sites that outperform their fee-based competitors. This column will spare you the task of having to kiss a lot of frogs to find the princely Web sites—and you can quote me on this. ♦

- APB Online launch programs include:
- ◆ APB 911 News: national-to-neighborhood headline news, including Missing, Wanted, and Bumbling Crooks
 - ◆ APB Major Cases: constantly updated, in-depth coverage of the nation's most important cases, with original documentation
 - ◆ APB Unsolved, with John Douglas: interactive profiling of the most infamous unsolved cases with the famed FBI profiler, accompanied by exclusive reports from leading crime writers
 - ◆ APB Media Patrol: previews and reviews of police and crime TV shows, books, and movies; critiques of reporting on the criminal justice system
 - ◆ APB Safe Streets: personal, family, and community anti-crime and safety information; bulletin boards for advocacy and policy discussions. ♦

CYBERSPORTS

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40-minute audio tape (\$18, shipping and handling included) to his Web page. It's a combination of common-sense-like golf etiquette (Tips: Don't walk too close behind a 9-year-old with a 9-iron and don't bleed on your ball) and some offbeat but meaningful ideas from a collection of golfing experts.

As the page is still under construction, Judd may have heard the cry of anguish when we got to the next common-sense lesson and discovered it wasn't loaded yet. But if the rest of his tips are as simple and meaningful as the first group, we may have to order the tape (and that's probably the idea, right?).

Even if Judd is angling to get you to order the tape, all his free information makes it more than worthwhile. He has info about good 'n' cheap courses (including a pitch-and-putt adjacent to Pebble Beach where you can play all day for \$15) and offers a monthly online newsletter with even more tips.

Your tour guide is what Judd calls his "Little Guy," a logo that could have been your tourguide on his last outing (love those plus-fours).

Tee off at: www.golfjudd.com

And now, for fun

There once were two Minnesotans condemned to spend the afterlife in hell. Olaf and Sven showed up wearing their heaviest winter gear. The devil saw them and asked why they were so bundled up. "Hey, compared to a Minnesota winter, this is great," Sven said. So the devil turned up the thermostat. And, still, Olaf and Sven wore their winter gear. Perturbed, Satan cranked up the heat a little more. Olaf and Sven unbuttoned their coats, then laughed and told the devil that it was still better than a Minnesota winter.

So the devil decided he'd fix them. He turned the thermostat all the way down. Snow began to fall. The boiling brimstone turned to ice. And there were Olaf and Sven, wearing their heavy winter gear, dancing and high-fiving, laughing and carrying on.

"What's the deal?" Satan asked.

"Hey, they said it would take hell freezing over for the Vikings to win the Super Bowl," Olaf said.

If you're not quite ready to experience fire and brimstone, you can at least dream of your Vikings wearing your best purple and gold gear, thanks to Proteam.com.

Gear for all the major pro sports teams is just a click away. Caps, T-shirts, kids' baseball uniforms, real and replica batting helmets (you wouldn't throw it quite so far if you knew how much it cost) are here, ready for you to heat up your plastic.

For the long-suffering Edmonton Oilers fans, there's a miniature Stanley Cup, complete with logo, in case you've forgotten what the Cup actually looks like. If you've got the yen for Dallas Cowboys stuff, it's here (sorry, nothing from the Dallas County Jail, though). There's even Beanie Babies knockoffs for every NFL team (and what exactly does a soft and fuzzy San Diego Charger look like?)

If you're into the NASCAR thing, there's what appears to be almost eerily appropriate items, including a Jeff Gordon ceramic plate (just \$49.99) and at least three styles of gimme caps for each of the racing teams. Proteam.com also has golf and soccer sections, although no athlete-specific items (and we were hunting for the Fuzzy Zoeller ceramic plates, dog-gone it). For golfers, there's your own authentic cup and flag set (so you can brag to your friends that you're just a chip away from hole No. X) and "training aids," a phrase we'll just let slide by.

The prices are surprisingly low (anything with an "officially licensed" tag under \$30 is a bargain in our book), although one recent addition might make you drop your Grape Nehi: On a page with the official World Series program (\$10) and Yankees Championship Locker Room T-Shirt (\$20) is a little item that sent us looking for the plastic—a 1957 Ted Williams game jersey.

Price tag: \$38,809.50. Guess we'll need to raise that credit limit. Go www.proteam.com ♦

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