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Assessing the Diversity of the E-collection of the William H. Hannon Library; a Phased Project

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FINAL REPORT:

Assessing the Diversity of the E-Collection of the William H. Hannon Library; a Phased Project

Introduction

The American Library Association's 1982 statement on Diversity in Collection Development reminds librarians of our professional responsibility "to select and support the access to materials on all subjects that meet, as closely as possible, the needs, interests, and abilities of all persons in the community the library serves. This includes materials that reflect political, economic, religious, social, minority, and sexual issues." The William H. Hannon (WHH) Library's vision statement¹ affirms that the library views itself as Bridge, Gateway, Agora, and Enterprise. To ensure that our materials collection aligns with our institutional vision and meets the research needs of our diverse campus population, the project team proposed an assessment of our electronic collection through the lens of diversity. The assessment was to determine if the library's online databases (most often the first point of research consultation for our students and faculty) are adequately "bridging disciplines" (Bridge) and "representing diverse topics and perspectives" (Gateway). What the team learns will inform the library collection strategy, to ensure that it builds collections that deliberately and positively contribute to an inclusive campus climate.

Alignment with LMU's Strategic Plan

This project clearly aligns with the theme of Commitment to Local and Global Citizenship, especially as it relates to providing LMU student participants with a way to engage with the library collection while considering it from a wider perspective. The project team was also inspired by the theme of Promoting Competitiveness and Accountability by enhancing the reputation of the university by publicly sharing our project methodology and findings; this transparency of process can build trust with our wider community.

Grant Application

The project team was motivated by the work of academic librarians Ciszek and Young (2010),² who identified ways in which large academic libraries evaluate the diversity of their book collections over time. In particular we noticed their creation and assignment of "diversity codes" (p. 157) for all new acquisitions collected at Pennsylvania State University (PSU) Library until 2007. Three examples of the codes and descriptions created at PSU are AA, African American; AD, Disabled/challenged; AG, Ageism.

The William H. Hannon Library's Serials & Electronic Resources Librarian initiated the project, after considering that an assessment of the diversity of the library's electronic collection would align with the strategic plan. This librarian joined with four other library staff members to conduct that assessment. The project team included the Instructional Design Librarian, the Librarian-in-Residence, the Librarian for Collection Development and Evaluation, and the Archives & Special Collections Processing Assistant.

¹ <http://library.lmu.edu/aboutthelibrary/libraryvisionmission/>

² Ciszek, Matthew P., and Courtney L. Young, (2010), "Diversity collection assessment in large academic libraries", *Collection Building*, Vol. 29 Iss 4 pp. 154 – 161.

This mix of Librarians and staff from different functional areas of the library was intentional, to provoke broad discussion of the topic of diversity in the library's electronic collection.

Budget

The team applied for a grant to assist in the assessment, from the University's Office of Intercultural Affairs. The proposed budget to conduct the work included:

1. Incentives (an honorarium separate from any work-time compensation) for library student employees to participate in the project as proposed. Approx.: 10 students X \$100 = \$1,000.00
2. A lunchtime presentation session describing our process and sharing our findings, likely with the Faculty Library Representatives (FLR) in attendance. These representatives are annual appointments of full-time faculty by department and have regular contact with subject Librarians about the collections. Each FLR will learn about our process and methods and provide feedback from each academic unit. We expect the cost for this session to be above \$1000.00 but have earmarked one-third of the award for this important information-sharing session. Approx.: \$1000.00 for Sodexo-catered lunch and promotional materials.
3. Poster presentation of our process and findings at a regional conference (cost to create poster and pay for the attendance of group member at the conference). Approx.: \$1000.00

Timeline

The team was awarded the grant to begin in June 2017, with a completion deadline of October 2018.

Methods

The project team completed an initial literature review, to familiarize itself with work completed related to assessment of library collections. The team found few published items on the topic and expanded its search to include library websites and listserv archives. The literature consulted for this project is included in the Bibliography section. The team decided to adapt the idea of the diversity codes in Ciszek and Young (2010), identifying six major categories to evaluate. A noted weakness of the Ciszek and Young model was the loose application of the codes to the print collection at their library. The project team defined their diversity categories for this project to make concrete distinctions between categories. Because of the limited published research about the assessment of the diversity of a library collection, the team decided to approach this as an exploratory project to be built upon in further research.

The team compiled a list of all of the library's databases and reviewed it to determine which to retain in the assessment. The team removed from consideration e-book collections, data sets, indexes, single-title newspapers, and some primary source collections like Oxford Music Online. It was decided that most of the materials within these databases was too specific (classical music) or too broad (newspaper coverage) in format or type to provide worthwhile results about diversity. The resulting set of databases assessed included 181 electronic databases.

To probe those resources, the team developed a set of keyword search strings for each category, resulting in 33 separate keyword search strings. For example, the diversity category "Religion" contained keywords often searched or associated with religious research including Muslim, Catholic, Jewish, and Christian. The team wrote step by step instructions for how to use the keyword strings in the search of

each database, and how to record the results. Some searches required the use of advanced search strategies like connectors (and, or, etc.), quotations, and employing asterisks. A sample worksheet for recording keyword search string results and instructions for use is included as Appendix A.

The team intended to include student library employees in the process of the database evaluation and disseminate findings beyond the institution, and so submitted an application to the university's Institutional Review Board. Upon approval of the protocol, ten student employees were recruited to participate in the project; the employees completed their evaluations during their normal work shifts, wrote brief responses to reflective prompts throughout the process, wrote a final paper about their efforts on the project, and were awarded a \$100 gift card.

The team conducted a training session with all ten student employees to explain the purpose of the project, to ensure that the procedural instructions were clear, to encourage critical thinking about the results of their searches, and to provide a point of contact throughout the project. The student employees completed their work within six weeks.

Findings

The library's student employees reviewed 181 databases as part of the assessment. For analysis of the results of their reviews, the project team decided to remove 11 aggregator databases, since the keyword results were so large that it skewed the assessment. The databases removed are: ABI/INFORM, Academic Search Complete, MasterFILE Premier, OmniFile Full Text Mega, JSTOR, MEDLINE, EBSCOhost, Nexis Uni, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, Business Insights: Global, and ProQuest Research Library. One-hundred seventy databases are included in the final analysis.

Overall, diversity markers are fairly well represented in the current database collection in the library, with 119 of the 170 having above the average number of search results across all categories (M=6,581.01 SD=46,589.40). On average, the category of *Religion* returned the most keyword search results, the category of *Disability* returned the least. See Table 1 for calculations of all categories.

Category	Total search results by category	Mean (SD)
Disability	559,276	657.97 (3,825.61)
General multicultural perspective	6,957,423	8,185.20 (37,206.60)
Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender LGBTQ+	1,525,397	2,243.23 (10,481.51)
People of Color	10,201,393	6,667.58 (48,603.04)
Religion	13,156,053	19,375.63 (93,904.99)
Women's Studies	1,150,453	2,260.22 (9,414.38)

Twenty six of the databases returned keyword search results that were above average in all six categories. They are listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Databases with above average keyword search results in each of the six categories
American Periodicals
ArticleFirst
Business & Industry (RDS Business Suite)
Business Source Complete
Children's Literature Comprehensive Database
Contemporary Women's Issues
Current Contents Connect
Education Full Text (H.W. Wilson)
Ethnic NewsWatch
GenderWatch
Health Source: Nursing/Academic Edition
Library Information Science & Technology Abstracts
Music Periodicals Database
OAlster
OCLC Electronic Collections Online
Periodicals Archive Online
PsycINFO
RDS Business Suite
Readers' Guide Full Text Mega (H.W. Wilson)
Regional Business News
Religion Database
SciELO Citation Index
Social Sciences Citation Index
Social Sciences Full Text (H.W. Wilson)
Sociological Abstracts
Worldwide Political Science Abstracts

Conversely, we looked to see which databases returned below average keyword search results in all six categories. The 68 databases are reported in Appendix A.

We also examined within the six categories, to determine the diversity of each. The category with the largest number of databases returning above average keyword search results is *People of Color*, with 82 of 170. The category of *General multicultural perspective* had 71 that returned above average keyword search results. In the category of *Disability*, 45 databases returned above average keyword search results. The category of *Religion* had 67. The category of *Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBTQ+)* had 58. The category of *Women's Studies* had 54.

To understand how each category contributes to the total number of keyword search results, we calculated the percentage of search results for the categories, in relation to the total number of results. As shown in Figure 1, the largest contribution comes from the category of *Religion*, at 19.61%. Contributing the least is the category of *Disability*, at 0.83%.

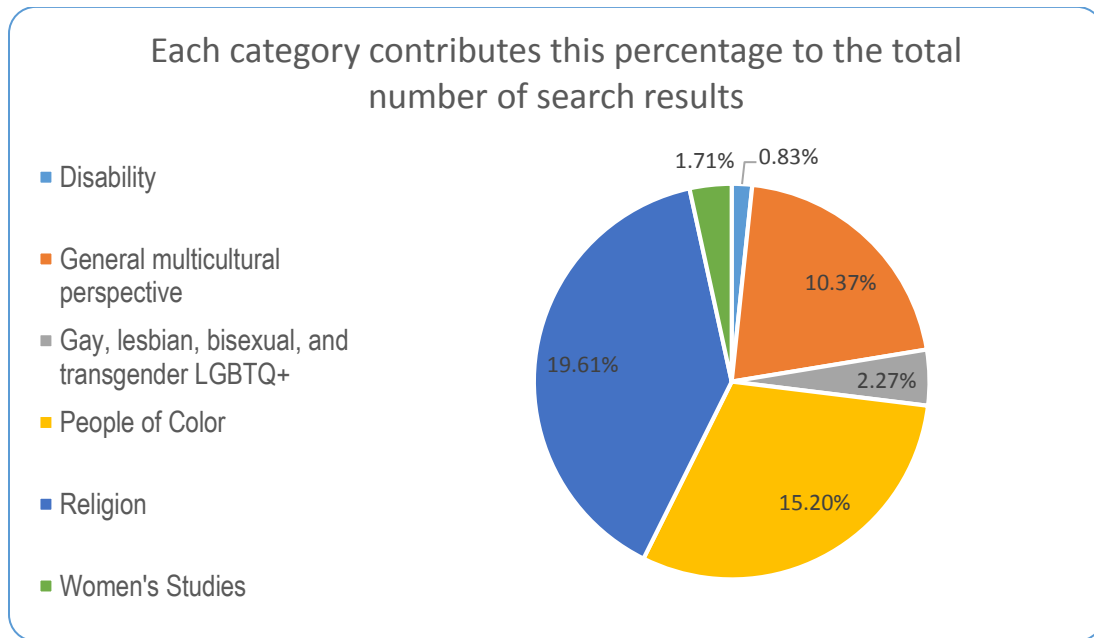


Figure 1

Discussion

This assessment was conducted to discover the diversity of the library's current licensed database collection. The assessment team imagined that the assessment might bring attention to areas of the collection that had gaps in content, providing an opportunity for future acquisitions. As it exists in the snapshot presented in Figure 1, the current database collection is most heavily weighted in the areas of *Religion* and *People of Color*. The categories of *Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender LGBTQ+*, *Women's Studies*, and *Disability* are minimally represented in the total collection. Based on this assessment, the library's liaisons and Collection Development Committee may want to pursue the acquisition of databases that address the gaps in those areas.

Impact

Impact on the library's collection. Since this kind of assessment has never been completed at the WHH Library, the team envisions some immediate benefits for conducting this work. The work of this group has also spurred the development of a diversity statement for the collection, to soon be drafted by the Librarian for Collection Development and Evaluation (who is also a member of the project team).

Impact on project participants (the library's student employees). For some of the student employees who participated, this project appears to have made a positive impact. In one reflection, a student wrote, "I think the work that's being done here is thought-provoking and essential to an equal environment for all types of students." Another student employee embraced the prompt to think critically about the keyword search results from the databases they were charged with evaluating,

stating, “After conducting this research I have realized that it is really important to scrutinize the academic bodies of work that we use in our own research--they can easily skew our perspectives.”

Due to the numerical data produced in this study, most students defined diversity by numbers. Many specifically pointed out that because some of the categories had zero search results, the database was not diverse. One student used a numeric method of assessing diversity by stating, “A diverse database should include at the very least 400 sources/results for each topic, which this database does not.” Most students, however, were analytical of low search results within the context of a specific database. They noted that low search results were due to the limited scope of the database. Students overwhelmingly defined diversity as the representation of marginalized groups, stating so in their brief reflections on individual databases. In their longer personal reflections, some students described diversity based off their individual backgrounds. One student remarked, “[...] diversity did not need to include things like “girlhood,” as a result of how I was raised.”

Limitations and Future Research

Because this project is exploratory in nature, there are some clear limitations to how the results may be interpreted. The categories are not exhaustive, so as a result the database collection was not thoroughly evaluated for all possible categories of diversity.

As the team developed the keyword search strings for each category, it needed to decide how many search strings to create. Given that the library’s student employees were manually conducting the searches, the team did not want to make that task onerous or take more time than was reasonable for a student to complete. The team created enough search strings per category that it felt would sufficiently probe the resource for that category. But in developing the search strings, the team did not create the same number of keyword searches for each category, which may have resulted in some categories being over- or underrepresented. The student employees suggested other keyword search strings that the team may want to use in further evaluations of the collection, for example adding “Black” as a search keyword in addition to “African-American”.

The keyword search string depth-of-concept is uneven. Some of the search strings are specific keyword searches (in the category of Disability, *sleep disorder*) and so one can expect fewer results than another keyword search that is broader (in the category of Religion, *Muslim*).

The team also acknowledges that some categories may not be well represented in a database model but may be more effectively addressed in alt formats like e-books, e-journals, or streaming videos. Without also evaluating other library content with the same process one cannot say with certainty that the diverse content is not held in the collection.

Regarding the metrics used in the analysis, the level of certainty is not known. The team does not have data on how many items are in each of the databases evaluated, so the results presented here as percentages are only an estimation.

The team expects to share its work within the Library, to spur discussions about the kind of content collected. As proposed in the grant application, the first public space where they shared the project results was at the Fall 2018 Faculty Library Representative luncheons, on October 2 and 3, 2018. The team will also present its work in the poster session of the national meeting of the Library Assessment Conference (Houston, TX, December 5, 2018).

The team recommends that this kind of work be continued at the library, in some form. A possible future phase could use the model developed in this work and apply it to a collection where the total number of items is known (like e-books). In this way, a true percentage per diversity category could be known. The library could also examine the request logs of the Interlibrary Loan department, to discover if materials being requested (that is, not held in our collection) fall into a diversity category. Other libraries have created diversity committees, to consider diversity topics throughout the library, not just about the collection; a committee similar to that of University of Oregon Library (see <https://library.uoregon.edu/diversity-committee>) could be formed at LMU.

Conclusion

This project was designed to assess the library's database collection through the lens of diversity. Over the course of a year the team developed a strategy to probe the databases with keyword search strings, and use the resulting data to determine which selected categories of diversity were well represented in the collection. The team identified three categories that were minimally represented and will recommend to the library's Collection Development Committee that it consider acquiring databases in those areas.

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APPENDIX A: SAMPLE WORKSHEET FOR RECORDING KEYWORD SEARCH RESULTS

Name of the database you are evaluating:

ABI/INFORM Collection

Date:

Time to complete evaluation:

THIS EVALUATION INCLUDES A REFLECTION SECTION

Category	Definition	Keyword search phrases	How many results did you get for your keyword search in this database?	Total results for this category	Code	Notes
Disability	There are views represented in this database that address concepts of disability.	"physical disabilit**"			DIS1	
		"neurocognitive disorder**"			DIS2	
		"neurodevelopmental disorder**"			DIS3	
		"psychiatric disorder**"			DIS4	
		"sleep-wake disorder**"		0	DIS5	
General multicultural perspective	There are views represented in this database that address multiculturalism and related concepts.	"multiculturalism"			GEN1	
		"inclusion"			GEN2	
		"anti-racis**"			GEN3	
		"cultural studies"			GEN4	
		"diversity"		0	GEN5	
Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender LGBTQ+	There are views represented in this database that address an exploration of sexuality and gender.	"queer"			LGBT1	
		"lesbian**"			LGBT2	
		"LGBT**"			LGBT3	
		"transgender"		0	LGBT4	
People of Color	There are views represented in this database that include people of color.	"Hispanic"			POC1	
		"Latino"			POC2	
		"Latina"			POC3	
		"African American**" OR "African-American**"			POC4	
		"American Indian"			POC5	
		"Alaska Native"			POC6	
		"Asian"			POC7	
		"Native Hawaiian"			POC8	
		"Pacific Islander"		0	POC9	
Religion	There are views represented in this database that are religious in nature.	"Muslim"			REL1	
		"Jewish"			REL2	
		"Catholic"			REL3	
		"Christian"		0	REL4	
Women's Studies	There are views represented in this database that include women's perspectives.	"girlhood"			WOS1	
		"feminis**"			WOS2	
		"intersectional**"		0	WOS3	

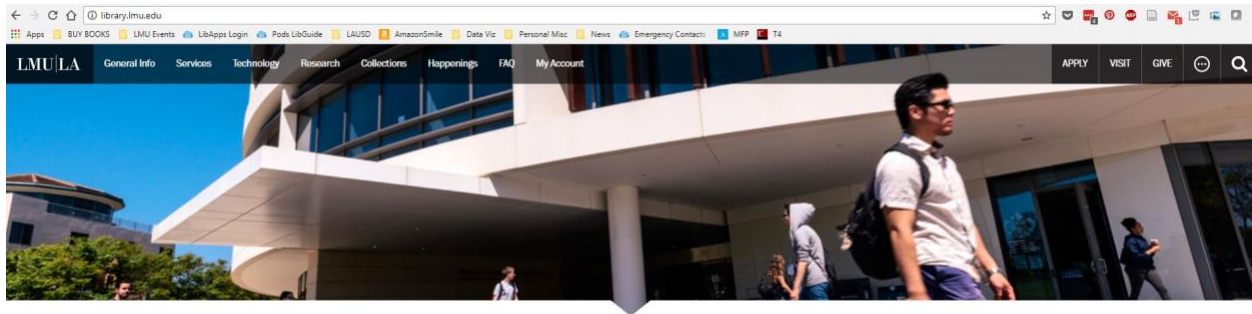
Reflection section. 1. Based on the search results, do you consider the database to be "diverse"? What does that mean to you, in this case? 2. Would you recommend this database to someone doing research about diversity or inclusion, in your major? Why or why not?

Database diversity evaluation instructions

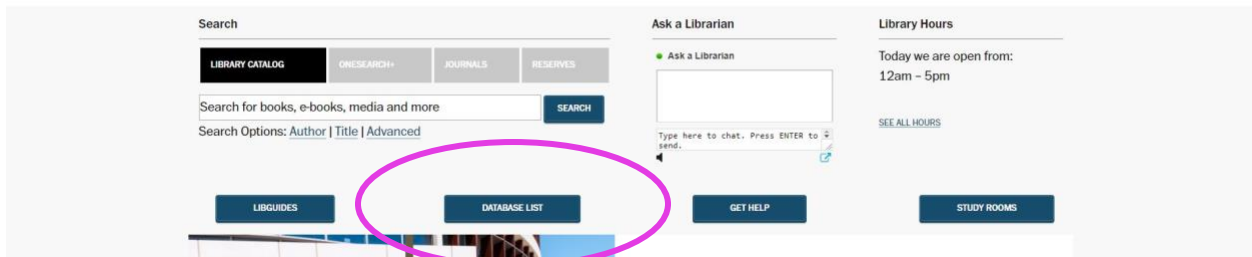
Use these instructions to evaluate each database that has been assigned to you.

Observe

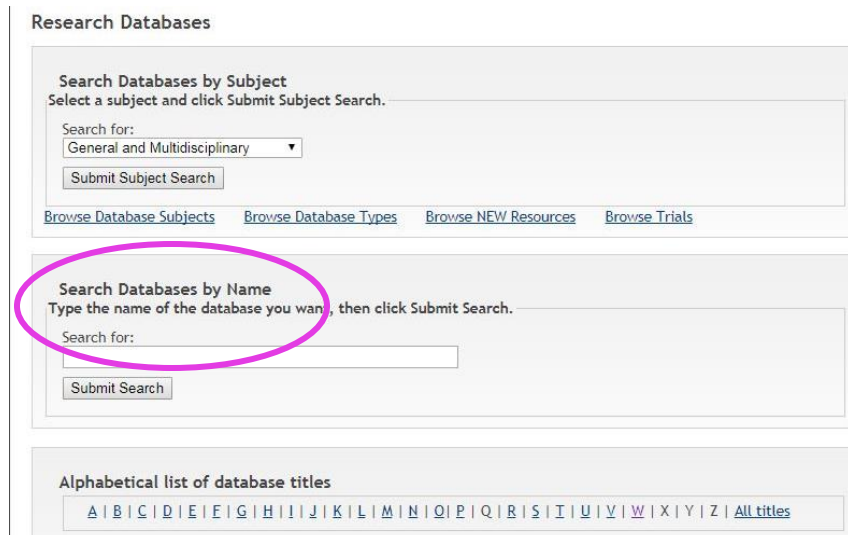
1. Look at your Database Evaluation spreadsheet to understand how it is organized. Carefully read the definition of each category.
2. Beginning at the main library web page, navigate to the database you will evaluate.



William H. Hannon Library



- a. From <http://library.lmu.edu>, click on the Databases button, and then in the “Search Databases by Name” text box, type in the name of your database.



3. Read the **description** of the resource.
4. Notice which **subjects** the resource has been assigned. Ask yourself: based on the description and the subjects, would you expect to find diverse content in this database?
5. Click the **name** of the resource to go to the database.

You are logged into staff mode at

[Staff View](#)
[Add to Bag](#)
[Another Search](#)

RESOURCE NAME ▾ ARTstor Loyola Marymount University ▾ System Sorted ▾ Search Save as preferred search

Limit search to available items

Resource Home **ARTstor**
 Resource Alert
 Resource Name ARTstor
 Alternative Name Art Stor
 Description ARTstor is a digital library of more than one million images in the arts, architecture, humanities, and social sciences with a suite of software tools to view, present, and manage images for research and pedagogical purposes.
 Publisher ARTstor (Organization)
 Resource Type Image Database
 Resource Format Images
 Subject **All Databases**
 All History
 Architecture
 Art History
 Arts and Humanities
 Classics
 Databases A
 Images
 Mobile-Friendly
 Primary Source Collections
 Theological Studies
 Theology and Religion
 Visual Arts
 Mobile-friendly URL **ARTstor Mobile** (iPad, iPhone, iPod Touch)

Search

1. **Copy** the text (include the quotation marks in your search) from the *Keyword search phrases* column in the Database Evaluation spreadsheet into the default search box.
2. **Record** the number of search results in the *How many results* column in the Database Evaluation spreadsheet.
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 for each keyword phrase.

	disability.	"psychiatric disorder" "sleep-wake disorder"	
General multicultural perspective	There are views represented in this database that address multiculturalism and related concepts.	"multiculturalism" "inclusion" "anti-racis" "cultural studies" "diversity"	
Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender LGBTQ+	There are views represented in this database that address an exploration of sexuality and gender.	"queer" "lesbian" "LGBT" "transgender"	
People of Color	There are views represented in this database that include people of color.	"Hispanic" "Latino" "Latina" "African American" OR "African-American" "American Indian" "Alaska Native"	

Filtered Search

Collection Type

Public Collections (154)
Artstor Digital Library (109)
Institutional Collections

Geography

› Europe (8)
› Central America and the
Caribbean (1)
› South-East Asia (1)
› North America (113)

Classification

[Clear](#) "queer" Search within results

[Advanced Search](#)

Sort: Relevance Images/page: 24 263 results for "queer"

[Clear](#) Select



S

A

A

A

Reflect

1. Based on the search results, do you consider the database to be "diverse"? What does that mean to you, in this case?
2. Would you recommend this database to someone doing research about diversity or inclusion, in your major? Why or why not?

Appendix B: Databases returning key word search results that are below average in each of the six diversity categories

AccessScience
AdForum
African American Communities
African American Music Reference
African Writers Series
Alt HealthWatch
American Civil Liberties Union Papers, 1912-1990
American History in Video
American Indian Histories and Cultures
American National Biography Online
American Song
American West
Art Index Retrospective (H.W. Wilson)
Benezit Dictionary of Artists
Cabell's Directories of Publishing Opportunities
Colonial America
Columbia International Affairs Online (CIAO)
ComAbstracts
Communication Institute for Online Scholarship
Counseling and Therapy in Video
CountryWatch
CQ Almanac
CQ Press Congress Collection
CQ Press Electronic Library
CQ Press Public Affairs Collection
CQ Press Supreme Court Collection
CQ Researcher Plus Archive
Dance Online
Digital Library of the Catholic Reformation
Docuseek2
Drama Online
Early American Imprints First Series
Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800
Education in Video
eHRAF Archaeology
Empire Online
European Views of the Americas: 1493 to 1750
Everyday Life & Women in America, c1800-1920
Film Scripts Online

Filmmakers Library Online
Gerritsen Collection of Aletta H. Jacobs
Global Commodities: Trade, Exploration and Cultural Exchange
GPO Monthly Catalog
Jazz Music Library
Jewish Life in America, c1654-1954
LitFinder
Making of America Journals (Cornell)
MLA Directory of Periodicals
New Day Digital
New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics Online
OECD iLibrary
Old Testament Abstracts
Oxford African American Studies Center
Oxford Art Online
Oxford History of Western Music
Past Masters
PhilPapers
Popular Medicine in America, 1800-1900
PsycBOOKS
Race Relations in America
Rock's Backpages
Smithsonian Global Sound for Libraries
Social and Cultural History: Letters and Diaries Online
Socialism on Film
Theatre in Video
Twentieth Century North American Drama
Victorian Database Online
Victorian Popular Culture