

Online

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Institute of Physics

The Institute of Physics have digitised their journal collection back to 1874. This means that over 110, 000 articles are available digitally as PDF documents that can be cross searched and contain linked references. The archive is available as a one off purchase or on a subscription basis. <http://journals.iop.org/>

JSTOR

A new search engine has been released for JSTOR. This new search engine has been developed to improve the speed ability. The basic search will now search across all the content which includes articles and reviews. Other features available in the basic search are Boolean operators, phrase searching and field searching. When a Boolean operator is not entered the automatic default is AND. <http://www.jstor.org/help/search.html>

Ulrich's Resources Linker

Bowker have recently announced their Resource Linker for serials in the library. There is an A-Z listing of journal titles and a search facility that searches the journal title and articles. It is also possible to subject browse. The Resource linker is hosted by Bowker, who will set-up, maintain and update the link server, which will update any catalogue changes made to the collection. <http://www.resourcelinker.com>

Google Scholar

This search engine is provided by Google and is the beta version. A search entered will retrieve books and abstracts for any articles found. If an open access journal appears in the results the full text will be available. The Google Scholar search engine searches scholarly journals and any peer-reviewed literature. <http://www.scholar.google.com>

People's Network Online Enquiry Service

This service will be available to the public in March. It provides a free information service twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. The public can submit a question via the online form. The service is provided by MLA (Museums, Library and Archives Council) who are currently piloting the scheme. They are asking library and information staff to submit a question to help test the service. <http://www.peoplesnetwork.gov.uk/>

Internet News

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Googlizing the Library?

Google announced in December 2004 that "it is working with the libraries of Harvard, Stanford, the University of Michigan, and the University of Oxford as well as The New York Public Library to digitally scan books from their collections so that users worldwide can search them in Google" ¹. This precipitated newspaper articles both here and in the U.S. trumpeting the liberation of students and researchers from "musty library catalogues", along the lines of the Guardian's "endless journeys to the library could become a thing of the past" ².

The Scope of the Project

So, what exactly is the scope of this project? At first glance one's initial reaction is that this new project is certainly a Herculean task. Yet when I tried to find out, actual numbers seem somewhat thin on the ground – whilst the University of Michigan is contributing seven million volumes and the Bodleian Library one million volumes ³, other participants are more guarded about the scope of their contributions. Stanford University has a collection of over eight million volumes but its FAQ on the new project says "The agreement with Google is open-ended; it neither targets specific collections nor specifies a minimum or maximum number of books to be digitised". ⁴

Similarly, the New York Public Library's press release makes no mention of how many books will be scanned, it is participating on the basis of a "pilot program that will make a subset of its books available" ⁵. There is another pilot project at Harvard University; initially 40,000 of its 15 million volumes will be digitised. Interestingly their selection criteria for materials to be included in the project is to randomly select entire shelves of materials at the Harvard Depository, which will provide a diverse range of items in terms of age, topic and language mainly because the books are shelved by size! ⁶

How will it be done?

Google seems to be taking a two pronged approach to the digitising process, Stanford University will send books direct to Google's headquarters in California, whilst the other four libraries will digitise in-house. Google will establish local units which will carry out the digital scanning and processing using proprietary, high-speed scanning stations, which once fully operational will be able to produce as many as 10,000 electronic books per week. Once the book has been scanned, the resulting images will be sent to Google's central facility for quality control and conversion to text. The contributing library will receive a copy of the digital file for their own use. Whilst Google appears to be