

Books and Bytes

January 2014

A Newsletter of the Hiram College Library

Volume 8, Number 6

OhioLINK Updates

The new year brings a number of changes to OhioLINK. Among them are:

- **Renewals of Media** - OhioLINK's Library Advisory Council has approved a recommendation from the organization's Intercampus Service Committee to allow OhioLINK media items (videos and CDs) to be renewed up to 3 times if no one at the loaning library places a hold on the material. The changes becomes effective on January 13, 2014.

Previously, OhioLINK loan rules allowed media to be borrowed for seven days with no renewals. This change brings OhioLINK into line with SearchOhio rules on loaning and borrowing media. The circulation policy for Hiram College Library media remains unchanged.



OhioLINK

Ohio's Academic Library Consortium
An OH-TECH Consortium Member

- **A New OhioLINK Web Site** – All of the familiar search features and resources are still there. The new site is designed to highlight more information about OhioLINK (while keeping the search functions) and to change the look to match the style of other Ohio government sites.
- In late December, Lake Erie College joined OhioLINK as the 91st member. The membership now includes 16 public/research universities, 23 community/technical colleges, 51 private colleges and the State Library of Ohio.

New ISI Web of Science Look and Features

The ISI *Web of Science* database has a new look and some new features. The search page has been redesigned to make it easier to use. You will see more white space and a plainer look.

The most important new feature is the ability to search all of the library's ISI databases at once using the "All Databases" feature. That option includes all of the ISI citation indexes, *Biosis Previews* (an enhanced version of *Biological Abstracts*), and the ISI version of *Medline*. You can also search the combination you want. All of the old features, such as cited reference searches, are still available. Check it out.

Coming to the Library in February

Friends of the Library Book Sale – Tuesday, February 4, through Saturday, February 8, from 8 a.m. (9 a.m. on Saturday) to 5 p.m. (and until 9 p.m. on Tuesday and Wednesday) each day. The book sale is located just inside the entrance. Hardcover are \$1 and paperbacks are 50¢. Videos and CDs are also included at 50¢ each.



Library Forum – Wednesday, February 12, at 4:15 p.m. in the Pritchard Room of the Library. Dr. Erin Lamb, Assistant Professor of Biomedical Humanities, will speak.

Library Forum – Wednesday, February 26, at 4:15 p.m. in the Pritchard Room of the Library. Dr. Jennifer McCreight, Assistant Professor of Education, will speak.

Nature, Scientific American Now Available Online

The library is pleased to announce that the journals *Nature* and *Scientific American* are now online and available from your desktop. The library's subscription includes the current year, plus a four-year, rolling backfile so that this year you will have access to everything from 2010 to the most current issue. Please note the subscription does not include all of the other *Nature* titles, such as *Nature Cell Biology* or *Nature Neuroscience*. *Nature*, back to 1997, as well as many of the other *Nature* titles, are available online in the *Academic Search Complete* database, albeit with a one-year embargo on the full-text.



Just go to <http://www.nature.com> or <http://www.scientificamerican.com> to access these two key titles. Indeed, the publisher of *Nature* considers the online version to be the official publication as it contains additional materials not found in the print edition, as well as blogs and videos.

Off-campus access should be available shortly through the library's AtoZ Periodical List (under the Find – Find Journals, Periodicals, and Magazines link on our Web page).

Library Matters

First-Year Students, Research Skills, and the Library

As we get ready for the spring-12 term, I have been preparing for some of the library sessions I will be doing for first-year seminars. At the same time, I have been pondering what we have been doing in the library sessions for both colloquium and first-year seminars and whether we are being successful in getting students ready for more in-depth research later in their Hiram College careers.

Part of my thinking has to do with the sense that students are coming to college less prepared on how to use a library and how to do research. At one time, for example, I would have assumed that a concept like a call number was known by first-year students. Now, I am not so sure that is the case in this digital age.

In early December, Project Information Literacy released a new report that looked at this issue (1). To some extent, it confirmed at least some of what I had been thinking. It also gave me a lot more to think about. Among the report's findings (p.3):

- Freshman soon discovered their college library was larger and more complex than their high school library had been. In the study's small sample, the college library had 19 times as many databases and 9 times as many books and journals.
- The freshmen surveyed found it daunting to conduct online searches. Nearly three-fourths admitted to struggling with selecting keywords and formulating efficient search strategies. More than half were stymied by the large number of irrelevant results retrieved in their searches.
- Just over half of the sample found it difficult to negotiate a complex environment of both print and digital sources.
- Most of the sample indicated their research competencies from high school were insufficient for college work.
- Many were in the process of trading out Google searches for more specialized library databases, although some indicated they still relied on Google and Wikipedia, a practice that had been acceptable for papers in high school.

Several other findings are also worth noting. The report states, "As a whole, many freshmen felt at a disadvantage from

- (1) Head, Alison J. "Learning the Ropes: How Freshmen Conduct Research Once They Enter College." Project Information Literacy Research Report, December 4, 2013. Available online at http://projectinfolit.org/pdfs/PIL_2013_FreshmenStudy_FullReport.pdf.

the start because of the limited research skills they brought with them. Most admitted they had only written one paper that qualified as a 'real research paper' in high school." (p. 12)

The report looked at this lack of experience and noted that students tended to fall into three groups. Some had no idea what a research paper entailed and had never set foot in their high school library, assuming their high school even had one. A second group had written several papers, more like essays or reports than a research paper, and relied on the public Web and sites like Wikipedia to do their research. The third group had written one or two research papers in high school, but the papers were on a much smaller scale than what they were asked to do in as college freshmen. (p. 18).

Students also had trouble reading, comprehending, and summarizing the materials they did find. The report notes "Many had never seen, let alone read a journal article or an abstract before." (p. 17)

The report does caution against viewing the results as comprehensive due to a limited sample size, but rather to look at the survey as an exploratory first step in the research on how freshmen negotiate library research at the college level.

By David Everett, Library Director

The opinions expressed here are his and do not represent the views or opinions of Hiram College (or even the other library staff!).

On Display

Check out the library's three displays. The front display features football cards from the first season of the American Football League, which would eventually merge with the National Football League and lead to the first Super Bowl.

The two cases in the back feature two well-known comic strips: *Pogo* and *Bloom County*. The books on the top of the counter may be checked out.

Under the clock on the first floor, you will find a display of books that show some of the best writing from 2013. Among the books you are welcome to check out, are titles featuring the best American essays, the best American travel writing, the best American sports writing, and the best American business writing. And there are more coming!

These three displays change on a fairly regular basis so keep an eye out for new displays coming soon. Among the displays planned are ones on the 1954 Indians and the ALA book winners, such as the Newbery and Caldecott winners.

Hiram College Library: Learning Unshelved