

### Database: BGMI (Biography & Genealogy Master Index)

The database on sight looks very easy to use and rather straightforward. However, it is difficult to easily find information. For a successful search, one needs more information than a high school student will initially have in a search. Also without the information and feeling frustrated by the results, a student would then automatically go to a search engine trying to find the information to put in the fields. To succeed, one must know the "tricks" of searching such as +, quotes, etc. The database does give search tips and a link is displayed prominently at the top of the first screen. BGMI does have a wealth of information concerning people, however, full-text is not included and the site merely takes the searcher to other sources increasing the amount of time to gain answers. Even abstracts would be helpful in this site to aid the researcher in the best sources under a given name. The search results given for a common name such as George Washington are vast and it would take a long time to wade through all the search results to find the first President of the United States. The information is both accurate and current (John Travolta to Plato), however, it does not meet the needs of a high school library. There are other sources that are easier to maneuver and more straightforward. BGMI only gives references for further reading as a true index will do. An index of this sophistication would not have a place for day-to-day use in a high school library.

### Database: Biography Index

Since there is no sort order, this database would be more difficult for high school students to use. Some knowledge of the topic is needed in order to get the most out of searches using Biography Index. One must have some searching skills in order to successfully find books and periodicals that would be beneficial for a paper. It does have the ability to search other databases at the same time through the FirstSearch interface. FirstSearch times out after a certain amount of time and this is not conducive to setting up online databases at computers for students. By the time a student might take advantage of the database it would be timed out. In my experience, the FirstSearch interface is used by Librarians in the school setting. The entire database is for further reading and there are full-text articles, however there are not articles about each person detailed in the database. Images are not included in the database. The index cites articles and does not necessarily include them all as full-text items. Normally a class has a limited amount of time in which to research so full text information is extremely important.

### Database: Current Index to Statistics

The items in index in this database would not have much use in the High School Library. Statistics is taught in a very limited way in high school and very few papers are written on the subject. As the Current Index to Statistics says, "The Current Index to Statistics is a bibliographic index to publications in statistics, probability, and related fields." High Schools

deal more with the writing of English and History papers rather than mathematical treatises. Again full-text is not offered by the index but there are some sources with abstracts. Full-text are much more helpful in high schools. The format is very straightforward though with many search fields and the database is updated for the current year. The database is not one that a student could browse for topic ideas which students sometimes need.

Database: STAT-USA

STAT-USA has a rather confusing search page. Also, in order to understand the results one must have at least a working knowledge of statistics and what they are looking for. Due to the fact that most high school students do not take statistics, a general statistics driven database would not be the best use of resources. Search capabilities are limited to by date, database, and a keyword. The homepage is littered with unimportant information that does not help in trying to search for items. The sorting of documents is not very organized and would be more helpful if they were in order of importance. The site primarily contains primary sources which are not always helpful for first time researchers.

Database: GEOBASE

The database is multi-disciplinary and covers a wide variety of issues in the scientific world. However, the database only has abstracts so again, a full-text database is preferable. Subjects are much more advanced than would be needed for a high school. The average high school student would not yet have the skills to totally understand some of the subject matter covered. The database is linked to the FirstSearch interface which also tells the student if the library has the book or article. This database would be helpful for science teachers, however, they are a small minority of the overall body of a high school. The database is updated annually and works very hard to be extremely accurate. GEOBASE can also sort by a keyword in the search boxes. One can search for only full-texts documents which is a positive, however, the amount of information is rather limited as it is primarily concerned with ecological issues. A science in general database would be more beneficial for a high school.

Database: GeoRef/S

A major benefit to this database is that it is updated bi-monthly and is therefore extremely accurate. However, high school students would not necessarily use it frequently. It does include maps and such which can be helpful for Geography classes. However, research of that kind is usually done with atlases or in the textbook during class time. Although there are full-text articles, there are not as many as other databases. That could be due to the nature of the topic and it is evident that the vendor has included any and all related articles. The database is a rather selective one as it primarily deals with geological issues. A more multi-disciplinary database would be more beneficial to our students. The search function is rather good and really looks for the search terms in all fields. Yet the needs of the user are paramount and the resources in GeoRef/S are not sufficient due to its narrow topic.