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# A guide to selected and freely searchable bibliographic and full-text databases on the Web

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## Abstract

There is a wide variety of information resources on the Internet. Most of these resources are globally accessible free of charge. However, Internet users are overwhelmed by the enormous amount of information on the Web and consequently, retrieving the right piece of information at the right time has become difficult, especially for new users. This paper briefly introduces the Internet and its services; and describes a number of selected freely searchable bibliographic and full-text databases on the Web, including their URLs. The well-known databases, such as AGRICOLA, AGRIS, ERIC, MEDLINE and others, are included. The paper can serve as a reference guide to the databases that help Internet users find relevant literature, including indexes, abstracts and, in some cases, full-texts, on various subject areas. The databases were selected based on their size, dependability, and coverage in terms of geographic areas.

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## Introduction

The Internet, a vast global network of computer networks that all use the TCP/IP protocols (or rules), provides people with superb opportunities of accessing and exchange of information worldwide. In other words, it is a resource tool that combines information dissemination, retrieval, and communication capabilities in one package. These are achieved through, but not limited to, the World Wide Web (WWW or "the Web"), e-mail and discussion groups, telnet or remote login, file transfer protocol (FTP), and Gopher – an early text-only method of accessing documents on the Internet. "The Internet is probably the largest intellectual resource in the world" (Addyman, 1994). Thus, it is not uncommon to hear people referring to it as the "Information Super Highway".

Replacing Gopher, the Web has become the largest and fastest growing activity on the Internet and it is the main repository of a huge amount of information through the use of hypertext format, which allows the Web contents to be connected with hyperlinks. Information on the Web is organized into pages, each with its own address known as a uniform resource locator (URL). Muchin (1999) points out that the Web contains over 50 million pages of information. Addyman (1994) categorizes this information into three; namely, computer files (commonly software), people, and information published in some structured way.

Most of this information is accessible free of charge; however, a number of companies and organizations provide information on the Web for a fee. Muchin (1999) highlights seven areas where one can make a good use of free Internet sites and services to save time and money, mainly for managers and administrators of libraries. These areas include: news sources and online newspapers, business and corporate information, online shopping, Internet Scheduler, online reference books (dictionaries, encyclopedias, thesauri, etc.), white and yellow pages, and government documents.

Access to most databases on the Web is fee-based and users need to pay subscription fees to use them. Some of them are very expensive for individual users. But, there are a



large number of databases that can be searched at no cost. Interestingly, many fee-based databases are also accessible free of charge on some Websites. This paper is, therefore, to be used as a guide to various freely searchable bibliographic and full-text databases on the Web. It was originally prepared as a reference guide to online bibliographic databases for users of the National University of Lesotho (NUL) Library. The paper provides information about the databases, plus their URLs. Covering a wide variety of subject areas, they were selected based on their size, dependability, and extent geographic areas covered. While the databases may be of interest to many, they are more useful for reference librarians, researchers, academics, and students.

Several search engines such as About.com, AltaVista, Excite, Google, HotBot, Lycos, Webcrawler, and Yahoo were used to come up with the free databases that were searched and thoroughly verified. The information about the databases was mostly adopted from their respective "about database" information. The databases are in alphabetical order as follows.

#### **African women's database**

<http://www.africabib.org/databases.html>

Indexes, books, government documents, articles appearing in edited books, journal and magazine articles, Masters theses and PhD dissertations, as well as a few BA theses and honors papers, conference papers, and videocassettes. It is the outgrowth of a three-volume work published in 1989 by Greenwood Press that indexed materials on African women published during the International Women's Decade, 1975-1985. In November 1999, the ability to index hyperlinked documents from the Internet became a reality in the database, increasing its scope and allowing the indexing and viewing of documents from the Internet. The database indexes materials published in English language only. It currently contains over 22,000 citations on African women, from 1986 to the present.

#### **AgeLine**

<http://research.aarp.org/ageline/home.html>

Contains over 60,000 abstracts and content summaries of current literature on aging; as well as health, research, and consumer information

for and about adults of age 50 and above. It indexes books, journal and magazine articles, and research reports. Produced by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), its contents come from the gerontology collection of AARP's Research Information Center, as well as selected articles from magazines and journals. All references include original abstracts. It is updated regularly and includes material from 1978 on, with selected coverage of the years 1966-1977. The database covers English-language literature from many countries.

#### **AGRICOLA (agricultural online access)**

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/ag98>

Features citations to the agricultural literature created by the National Agricultural Library (USA). Covering materials in all formats, the database describes publications and resources encompassing all aspects of agriculture and allied disciplines, including animal and veterinary sciences, entomology, plant sciences, forestry, aquaculture and fisheries, farming and farming systems, agricultural economics, extension and education, food and human nutrition, and earth and environmental sciences. It has two datasets that contain citations to books, audiovisual materials, serial publications, journal articles, book chapters, reports, and reprints, state extension and experiment station publications, other documents. Its coverage is from 1970 to the present and updated daily.

#### **Agricultural biotechnology patents**

[http://www.nal.usda.gov/bic/Biotech\\_Patents/](http://www.nal.usda.gov/bic/Biotech_Patents/)

Contains a fairly extensive bibliography of articles and monographs related to biotechnology patents, and is a service of the National Agricultural Library of the US Department of Agriculture. Its dates of coverage vary. Full-text biotechnology patents are available for the years 1994 and 1995.

#### **AGRIS**

<http://www.fao.org/agris/>

Is an international information system for agricultural sciences and technology. It identifies worldwide literature (both conventional and non-conventional; the so-called "gray" literature), dealing with all

aspects of agriculture. Its coverage is between 1975-1999 and the database is divided into 1975-1995 and 1996-1999. It is published by the FAO and contains keywords in English, French and Spanish.

### **AIDSLINE and other HIV/AIDS-related databases**

<http://igm.nlm.nih.gov/>

AIDSLINE, which is one of the NLM online databases, contains references to published literature on acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). It covers biomedical, epidemiological, health care administration, ontological, clinical, and social and behavioral sciences. Currently over 198,000 citations to journal articles, meeting abstracts and papers, government reports, and newspaper articles from 1980 to the present are included. It is updated weekly. Other HIV/AIDS-related databases include AIDSTRIALS, which contains information on HIV/AIDS-related clinical trials; and AIDSDRUGS, which has descriptive information about each agent that is being tested in those clinical trials. The Website also allows to search several others databases.

### **Anthropological index online**

<http://lucy.ukc.ac.uk/AIO.html>

Contains citations to the literature in the field of anthropology and archaeology. It is based on the journal holdings of the Anthropology Library at the British Museum (Museum of Mankind) that receives periodicals in all branches of anthropology, from academic institutions and publishers around the world. The library's holdings cover all areas of cultural and social anthropology, ethnography and material culture, from mainstream theoretical journals to specialist interest publications. All geographical regions are covered, and the library has particularly strong coverage of Eastern and Central Europe, with journals often not available elsewhere. The database covers articles in all languages, and provides English translations of citations from non-Roman scripts and from smaller languages. The database is regularly updated and searchable on the Web or by e-mail.

### **Astrophysics data system (ADS) abstract service**

<http://adswww.harvard.edu/>

Provides access to four datasets of abstracts: 658,866 abstracts from astronomical, planetary sciences, and solar physics articles; 598,523 abstracts from space instrumentation and engineering articles; 966,264 abstracts from physics and geophysics articles; and 3,522 abstracts from the Los Alamos preprint server. ADS is a NASA funded abstract service. The datasets include abstracts from all major journals, many minor journals, conference proceedings, NASA reports, and many PhD theses. Users can search by author, object name, keywords, words in the title, and words in the abstract text. For the instrumentation and physics journals, coverage is from 1975 to date. In addition, each dataset includes links to the full text of articles appearing in most of the major astronomical journals.

### **Bibliography of African periodical literature database**

<http://www.africabib.org/databases.html>

Indexes over 33,000 articles from English language and multi-lingual journals and periodicals that specialize in African studies or consistently cover the African continent. The materials indexed were initially chosen from the library at California State University and that number was later expanded by using materials from Northwestern University and other major university libraries as well as the Library of Congress. Each title is indexed from its first day of publication to the present or, either its date of ceasing publication or a date where the journal or periodical no longer covered Africa on a regular basis. In only a few cases were titles dropped due to the difficulty in obtaining copies or irregularities in the journal's publishing schedule. The database also tries to index materials on Africa from the mid-nineteenth century to the present time all in one index.

### **BIOETHICSLINE**

<http://igm.nlm.nih.gov/>

Is a bibliographic database of citations to the literature on ethical, legal, and related public policy issues in health care and biomedical research. The Bioethics Information Retrieval

Project at the Kennedy Institute of Ethics, Georgetown University, produces it for the National Library of Medicine (NLM). BIOETHICSLINE is updated bimonthly. It covers bioethical issues published in English from 1973 to the present.

### **Canadian patent database**

<http://Patents1.ic.gc.ca/intro-e.html>

Contains more than 1,400,000 Canadian patent documents from 1920 to the present time and is produced by the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO). The database is updated regularly with newly-granted and laid open patent documents. The available patent information consists of patent document images, bibliographic information and patent document text.

### **CANCERLIT**

<http://cnetdb.nci.nih.gov/cancerlit.shtml>

Provides coverage to cancer literature with more than 1.5 million citations and abstracts from over 4,000 different sources including biomedical journals, proceedings, books, reports, and doctoral theses. The database is produced by the National Cancer Institute's International Cancer Information Center and is updated with more than 8,000 records every month. It covers the period from 1963 to the present time.

### **CogPrints (cognitive sciences eprint) archive**

<http://cogprints.soton.ac.uk/>

CogPrints is an electronic archive of papers in the fields of psychology, linguistics and neuroscience, as well as some in the areas of computer science, biology and philosophy. It provides a way for authors to make public their pre-refereeing preprints and their refereed, published reprints. Provided by the University of Southampton, the database can be searched by subject areas, and is searchable by authors, title and keywords. Each record provides information such as an abstract, keywords, context, and full text document (in PDF, HTML, plain text or PostScript formats). The Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) as part of its Electronic Libraries Program (eLib) funds the CogPrints Project.

### **Combined health information database (CHID)**

<http://chid.nih.gov/index.html>

Provides citations (including abstracts), and availability information for health information and health education resources. It is a bibliographic database produced by health-related agencies of the US Government. It lists a wealth of health promotion and education materials and program descriptions that are not indexed elsewhere. New records are added quarterly and current listings are checked regularly to help ensure that entries are up to date and still available from their original sources. Topics covered include Alzheimer's disease, arthritis and skin diseases, cancer prevention and control, complementary and alternative medicine, deafness and communication disorders, diabetes, digestive diseases, epilepsy education and prevention, health promotion and education, kidney diseases, maternal and child health, medical genetics, oral health, prenatal smoking cessation, weight control, etc.

### **Dissertations Database**

<http://www.wvrl.uchicago.edu/dbdissertations/search.asp>

Indexes doctoral dissertations from countries other than Canada and the USA. It is produced and maintained by the Center for Research Libraries (CRL), which is an international not-for-profit consortium of colleges, universities, and libraries that makes available scholarly research resources to users everywhere. The major research libraries of North America govern the CRL, which has more than 750,000 foreign doctoral dissertations that are to be input into the database.

### **ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) database**

<http://eric.syr.edu/Eric/>

Contains over one million citations and abstracts of documents, popular magazines and professional journal articles on education research and practice, including school health issues, health promotion and education, adult education, testing and evaluation tools, early childhood education, and child/family social issues. The online version of the database,

updated monthly with the latest citations available, provides access to ERIC document and journal citations from 1966 to the present, with support from the US Department of Education, Syracuse University, and Sun Microsystems.

### **ETOH database**

[<http://etoh.niaaa.nih.gov/>](http://etoh.niaaa.nih.gov/)

Is the most comprehensive online bibliographic database covering all aspects of alcohol abuse and alcoholism. Produced by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), ETOH contains over 110,000 records and is accessed by both researchers and clinicians worldwide. Included in ETOH are abstracts and bibliographic references to journal articles, books, dissertation abstracts, conference papers and proceedings, reports and studies, and chapters in edited works. Updated monthly, ETOH contains research findings from the late 1960s to the present, as well as historical research literature. It is a multidisciplinary database on the alcohol research field.

### **Financial Times global archive**

<http://globalarchive.ft.com/globalarchive/index.html>

Enables users to search and read over 8.5 million full articles from 3,000 periodicals worldwide, most of them for free. It is a comprehensive editorial analysis of financial markets, industries, plus clear insightful content on a wide range of business topics. About 1,250 articles are added every hour. Searches may be modified in a number of ways, and users can select to search one, several, or all of the publication groups indexed.

### **FindArticles.Com**

<http://www.findarticles.com/PI/index.jhtml>

Contains full articles from more than 300 magazines and journals, from 1998 to the present. Constantly updated, it is a vast archive of articles that can be searched for free. The articles cover a wide range of topics such as business, health, society, entertainment, sports, and more. Each of the hundreds of thousands of articles in the database can be read in its entirety and printed.

### **Global ChildNet bibliographic database**

<http://edie.cprost.sfu.ca:80/gcnet/index.html>

Provides a number of screened bibliographic citations to journal articles on child-related issues, taken from various sources around the world. The records in the databases are continually updated and searchable. It is published by Global ChildNet, a division of the Global Child Health Society, which uses the Internet to offer a range of easily accessible, child health-related online services.

### **Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) bibliography**

<http://www.hcibib.org/>

Provides a bibliographic database on HCI, which "is a discipline concerned with the design, evaluation and implementation of interactive computing systems for human use and with the study of major phenomena surrounding them". The HCI bibliography is a non-profit multinational volunteer effort to provide a free comprehensive online bibliography on the field of human-computer interaction. It also gives hyperlinks to full texts, which require subscriptions. It indexes books, journal articles, conference papers, Internet resources, etc., and it is updated frequently.

### **IBIDS (International Bibliographic Information on Dietary Supplements) database**

<http://ods.od.nih.gov/databases/ibids.html>

Contains published, peer-reviewed, international, and scientific literature on dietary supplements, including vitamins, minerals, and botanicals. It is based on numerous medical and scientific databases already in existence. The database is updated quarterly with the addition of new citations and abstracts. In addition, new search terms are added to reflect emerging areas in dietary supplement research. It was developed and is still maintained through an interagency partnership with the Food and Nutrition Information Center, US Department of Agriculture. It contains over 419,000 citations and abstracts.

## **ILODOC: ILO publications and documents**

<http://ilis.ilo.org/ilis/ilodoc/ilintrad.html>

Provides citations and abstracts to post-1965 ILO publications plus a selection of several thousands earlier publications. About 40,000 documents described in the database cover a wide range of labor topics including employment, labor relations, labor law, working conditions, vocational training, social security, occupational safety and health, women workers, child labor, migrant workers, economic and social rights, and all labor-related aspects of economic and social development. It is now available in separate English, French and Spanish versions and every document in ILODOC is indexed in English, French, Spanish and German, using subject terms selected from the *ILO Thesaurus*. It is updated weekly. There are several other ILO databases on the Website as well.

## **Internet movies database**

<http://www.imdb.com/>

Provides very complete information about movies (including those made for television) from across the world, starting with the earliest cinema through the latest releases and titles still in production. The database covers more than 170,479 titles with over 2,462,516 filmography entries, including major actors, minor bit players and crewmembers. Its date of coverage is from 1890 to 2005. The database is updated weekly.

## **Internet Theatre Database**

<http://www.theatredb.com/>

Features all aspects of theatre information, indexing Broadway and off-Broadway shows, actors, actresses, theatres, and playwrights as well as plays from London's West End. All searches are case insensitive. For each play, users can retrieve information on dates of the performances, number of performances, production staff, director, cast, etc. In addition, information on a specific play includes its "investors", and a list of companies sponsoring the play.

## **Library of Congress (LC) online catalog**

<http://catalog.loc.gov/>

The database contains approximately 12 million records of books, serials, computer files,

manuscripts, cartographic materials, music, sound recordings, and visual materials representing the huge collection of materials owned by the Library of Congress. The database records reside in a single integrated database. Researchers may use the database to identify relevant literature. Besides, since each record contains full bibliographic details including LC subject headings, LC class number and DDC number, it can be a useful tool for acquisitions and cataloging departments of academic libraries for bibliographic verifications, classification and cataloging purposes, respectively.

## **Medieval Feminist Index (MFI)**

<http://www.haverford.edu/library/reference/mschaus/mfi/mfi.html>

Indexes journal articles, book reviews, and essays in books about women, sexuality, and gender during the Middle Ages. Currently there are more than 3,000 records in the database, and more than 100 records are added every month. Compiled and maintained by volunteers, the MFI was started in 1996. The indexing for most publications is still under way and not complete. The indexing for publications from 1995 to 1997 is nearing completion. The geographic areas include Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East as well as areas in which Europeans traveled. Publications in English, French, German, and Spanish are currently being indexed. And material in other languages will be added in future.

## **NGS Publications Index**

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/publications/index.html>

Contains indexes to magazine articles, books, films and videos, educational products, map products, interactive features, and newsletters produced by the National Geographic Society (NGS) on a variety of subject areas. The index allows you to search by title, keywords, contributors, or subject. Dates of coverage include 1888 to the present.

## **NLM (National Library of Medicine) gateway**

<http://gateway.nlm.nih.gov/>

It is the most comprehensive Web-based system that allows users to search simultaneously in

multiple databases of the US NLM. They include, among others:

- MEDLINE/PubMed contains over 11 million citations and abstracts to journal articles in life sciences with a concentration on biomedicine. The citations are from 4,500 international refereed medical journals from 1966 to the present. The database covers the fields of medicine, nursing, dentistry, veterinary medicine, the health care system, and the pre-clinical sciences. Its coverage is worldwide, but most records are from English-language sources or have English abstracts.
- OLDMEDLINE contains citations published in the *Cumulated Index Medicus* (1960-1965) and the *Current List of Medical Literature* (1958-1959). It covers the fields of medicine, preclinical sciences and allied health sciences.
- LOCATORplus is the NLM online catalog, and includes over 800,000 catalog records for books, audiovisuals, journals, computer files, and other materials.
- MEDLINEplus is a Website for consumer health information, and includes health topics and a guide to over 9,000 prescription and over-the-counter medications.
- DIRLINE is a database containing location and descriptive information about a wide variety of information resources including organizations, research resources, projects, and databases concerned with health and biomedicine.

**PILOTS (Published International Literature On Traumatic Stress) database**  
<<http://www.ncptsd.org/research/index.html>>

Contains citation and abstracts from journal articles, books, and other published writings on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental-health consequences of exposure to traumatic events worldwide. It is a multidisciplinary bibliographic database, developed and maintained by the National Center for PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) in Vermont. PILOTS is the largest database devoted to traumatic stress literature in the world. It includes citations to all literature on PTSD, without disciplinary,

linguistic, or geographical limitations, and offers both current and retrospective coverage. Currently there are over 18,874 references (almost all including abstracts) in the database.

**Population Index**

<<http://popindex.princeton.edu/>>

Covers all fields of interest to demographers, particularly the world's population. It presents an annotated bibliography of recently published books, journal articles, working papers, doctoral dissertations, and other materials on population topics, containing over 46,035 abstracts of demographic literature published in Population Index. It is searchable by author, title, subject, geographical region and/or year. Its coverage is from 1986 to the present and updated annually. The Office of Population Research, Princeton University, maintains the database.

**Project Cork**

<<http://dciswww.dartmouth.edu:50080/?&&36&s>>

Contains citations and abstracts to materials owned by the Project Cork Resource Center (US) on alcoholism and substance abuse. The indexed materials such as books, book-chapters, journal articles, etc., may be available in the collections of the Dartmouth College Library, which maintains the database. The Dartmouth Library Catalog can also be searched on the same Website.

**Recent Advances in Manufacturing (RAM) database**

<<http://www.eevl.ac.uk/ram/>>

Is a bibliographic database for manufacturing and related areas and contains citations and abstracts of articles from over 500 niche and mainstream journals, magazines, conference proceedings, and also details of books and videos. The database covers the main areas of manufacturing, including: manufacturing industry and management, product development, manufacturing systems and processes, manufacturing planning and control, maintenance, environmental and quality management, applied technologies, monitoring and inspection, education and training, etc. It is produced by the Library and Information

Services Department at the Nottingham Trent University and the Edinburgh Engineering Virtual Library (EEVL). Being highly reputable, it is useful for those in industry, business, academia and research institutions worldwide. Its content is from 1990 onwards and updated monthly.

### **Smoking and Health Database**

<http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/search/index.htm>

Contains details of more than 62,000 items from journal articles, books and book chapters, dissertations, reports, conference proceedings and conference papers, government documents, policy or legal documents, editorials, letters, and comments on articles. The database also contains abstracts of many hard-to-find documents including government documents and conference proceedings. Items in the database focus on the scientific, medical, technical, policy, behavioral, legal, and historical literature related to smoking and tobacco use and its effect on health. It covers information published in the past 35 years, although several records date back to the 1800s; and it is maintained by the Office on Smoking and Health (OSH), which is a division within the US National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Approximately 1,800 new items are added to the database each year.

### **Social Sciences in Forestry Bibliography**

<http://forestry.lib.umn.edu/bib/SSiF.html>

Indexes publications in subject areas relating to the social sciences to forestry worldwide. Among them are: legislation, policy and planning, management, economic development, investment and finance. The publications indexed are journal articles, books, conference proceedings, dissertations, chapters in books, etc., from 1985 to the present. It is updated weekly and published by the University of Minnesota Forestry Library.

### **TOXNET (Toxicology Data Network)**

<http://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov>

Contains a cluster of bibliographic databases produced by the National Library of Medicine, covering various aspects on toxicology, hazardous chemicals, and related areas. The databases are Hazardous Substances Data Bank

(HSDB), TOXLINE, Toxics Release Inventory (TRI), Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS), Chemical Carcinogenesis Research Information System (CCRIS), Environmental Mutagen Information Center (EMIC), and others. For instance, TOXLINE provides extensive coverage of bibliographic information on biochemical, pharmacological, physiological, and toxicological effects of drugs and other chemicals. It contains more than three million bibliographic citations, most of them with abstracts.

### **Tropical Forest Conservation and Development Bibliography**

<http://forestry.lib.umn.edu/bib/trps.html>

Subjects indexed include tropical forest resources; deforestation; conservation; indigenous peoples; management; policy; trade and industrial development; non-timber forest products; research, education, and training; and history. It provides bibliographic citations, some with abstracts, to journal articles, books, conference proceedings, and government documents. Published by the University of Minnesota Forestry Library, it covers the period from 1992 to the present and is updated weekly.

### **US Geological Survey Publications Database**

<http://usgs-georef.cos.com/>

Contains publications of the US Geological Survey, a subset of the GeoRef database established by the American Geological Institute. Provided by the Community of Science, the database provides access to the publications of the USGS and includes references to US Geological Survey reports and maps published from 1880 to date, references to non-USGS publications with USGS authors published from 1983 to date, and 225 references to reports produced by other surveys. The database contains complete bibliographic references and index terms.

### **US Government Patent Database**

<http://www.uspto.gov/patft/index.html>

Features full texts and images of more than two million US patents (including utility, design, reissue, plant and SIR patents) from 1976 to the present and more than one million

registered and pending trademarks dating back to 1870. The full text of a patent includes all bibliographic data, such as the inventor's name, the patent's title, and the assignee's name, as well as the abstract, full description of the invention, and the claims. All of the words (or text) in the patent are searchable. Patents issued between 1790 and 1976 are searchable only by patent number and current US classifications. The database is updated every week and maintained by the US Patent and Trademark

Office (USPTO). There have been about six million patents issued since 1790.

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