

REFERENCE NOTES

July 2011

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A Tour of the New ELM Portal

Jennifer Hootman and Matt Lee

We launched the redesigned ELM portal the first week of July. Now that you've had a chance to look at it and use it (<http://elm4you.org>), we'd like to call your attention to some certain aspects of the new site.

Enhanced Organization

The tabs in the main body of the home page reflect the work we've done to help direct researchers to the database most likely to answer their question.

- "Topics" are fairly akin to the way the previous iteration of the ELM portal was organized utilizing broad subjects areas to help direct users to databases most closely applicable to their topic of research.
- "Content Type" is a new addition and describes the types of content included within databases. A content type like Industry Reports (<http://www.elm4you.org/databases/content/industryreports>), for instance, can help libraries recommend sources for very specific and practical uses of ELM.
- "Grade Level" is likely self-explanatory, though please note that we've listed only the databases that have been specifically designed for students here. You can still find links to those databases with multiple interfaces along with all of the 40+ ELM databases on the "Databases A-Z" tab.
- And our final tab, "Publications A-Z," will help a researcher determine if a certain magazine, journal, or newspaper is included in any of the ELM databases, and if so, where to find it.



The enhanced organization carries over throughout the site, so that if you're on a page that lists databases, such as Literary Criticism (<http://www.elm4you.org/databases/content/litcrit>), each database on that page includes a *Tags* indicator. Clicking this will show all of the "Topics" that database covers as well as the "Content Types" included within it.

ELM for K-12 Academic Standards

Many of the ELM databases are a natural fit for K-12 student researchers. One problem in making that connection, however, can be reminding teachers of that fact at their point of need as they're crafting lesson plans. ELM for K-12 Academic Standards matches the great content from numerous ELM databases to Minnesota academic benchmarks. This displays the work our vendors have done in matching content to standards and provides a single point of entry to all of that content for Minnesota teachers.

An educator can simply browse to the standard that his or her lesson plan covers and will find relevant, interesting content to use for classroom preparation, in-class demonstration, or to recommend students use to complete homework or research assignments. A little widget of all of the content relevant to a specific benchmark can easily be embedded on a website, blog, or course management system. We hope this tool serves as a springboard to classroom use of additional locally-purchased media center content.



Check it out at elm4you.org/standards.

Databases currently included are *Encyclopedia Britannica Middle School* and *Elementary School* from Britannica and *Student Resources in Context* from Gale. We look forward to including EBSCO content when it is available.

Big thanks go to Karen Bauer, Media Director at Olson Middle School in Bloomington, for her advice, feedback, and consultation on an early version of ELM for K-12 Academic Standards. And thanks to Linda Lee, Secondary Curriculum Coordinator in the Bloomington Public Schools, for additional feedback as well.

ELM Personalized

It is our goal that MN libraries feel empowered to use the ELM databases in the ways that best suit them and their researchers. In some cases, that takes the form of libraries simply linking to the ELM website at elm4you.org. In other cases, libraries are able to direct link to several of their most relevant databases directly from their websites. ELM Personalized offers a new third option that combines the automatic authentication of the ELM portal with the choice options of direct linking.

East Central Regional Library (ECRL) system was the first to set up a personalized ELM page, so we asked Bob Gray, Reference and Interlibrary Loan Librarian at ECRL, to recount his experience doing so.

It was with some excitement and anticipation that I read "ELM Portal: Upcoming Changes" in the February 2011 issue of Minitex "Reference Notes". Great news! If all went as planned, Minnesota libraries would be able to customize an ELM page to better fit the needs of their staff and patrons. I waited, patiently, for months. And, in July, it happened --- Minitex staff rolled out "ELM Personalized".

Set-up could not have been easier. In less than 30 minutes, and in three or four simple steps, I was able to select the ELM databases I wanted on our page, write my own brief descriptions, and add our library's contact information. Simple, straightforward, and hassle-free! The page also includes links to the full line-up of ELM resources, Minnesota Reflections, Ask a Librarian, and MnLink.

I've already received positive feedback from staff here. Patrons now have quick and easy access to an online encyclopedia, newspapers, magazine and journal articles, health information, and WorldCat. And the other ELM resources are only a click away.

"Thank you" to Minitex staff for implementing "ELM Personalized" - what a great addition to reference service!

And thanks to Bob and ECRL for breaking in the new tool. Check out ECRL's personalized page at <http://www.elm4you.org/libraries/ecrl>. Visit [elm4you.org/personalized](http://www.elm4you.org/personalized) to learn more about ELM Personalized and to set up a page for your library today. ■



ELM Spotlight

ProQuest: Exciting new interface. Great new features.

Over the last year, ProQuest has been promoting its all-new platform. And you may have seen some of our announcements about their new platform and "switch over" information in our e-announcements and newsletters. Or perhaps you've received information directly from ProQuest or have been learning about the new platform on their website at <http://www.proquest.com/en-US/promos/platform/migrate.shtml>.

Some libraries have already migrated to the new platform and others are waiting for a time that better fits their local needs.

To gear up for the fall, **ProQuest plans to automatically migrate Minnesota K12 and public libraries* to the new interface on August 10th. Minitex will migrate ProQuest's Newsstand Complete and the Historic Minneapolis Tribune on the ELM Portal on the same date. This auto migration does not affect academic (higher ed) libraries in Minnesota.**

[Note: If your institution subscribes to CultureGrams, SIRS, eLibrary, Safari® Books Online, Dow Jones Factiva®, and Critical Mention - these resources will continue to be available on their current platforms and will not be migrating.]

For more information from ProQuest including FAQs, support materials, training webinars, email updates and more, visit <http://www.proquest.com/en-US/promos/platform/migrate.shtml>. Contact Paul Hoffman (paul.hoffman@proquest.com) if you have any questions regarding ProQuest.

Keep your eye out for webinars on *ProQuest Newsstand Complete* with its new interface available this fall through Minitex Reference Outreach & Instruction.

The All-New ProQuest Platform will start the school year with a fresh look! ■

What Researchers Don't Know Can Hurt Them

Jennifer Hootman



Or so suggests William Badke in his [Online](#) May/June issue article “The Treachery of Keywords.” Keyword searching, for better or for worse, has become the default mode of searching for most of our students and library consumers. The Keyword is seemingly magical – when it works – and

frustrating or worse, misleading – when it doesn’t. Really, Badke puts it best:

“... My task is most often to find a needle in a haystack or ... to find a needle in a pile of needles. You see, the goal of search is more often to find an exact size or shape of needle than it is to explore the needle pile until I see several types that interest me. I’m going to suggest that keywords, as useful as they are, seem determined to frustrate the professional researchers at every turn. The ambiguities of language, the possibility of describing the same thing in multiple ways and the fact that some concepts are almost impossible to put into words, mean that keywords are going to be treacherous friends. If our goal is to compile a set of results and sift through those results to get the best ones ... keywords may not always be the best way to accomplish the task (Badke, 2011, p. 52).”

As librarians and educators we understand this problem. But most of our students and library consumers do not, right? In fact, many seem, if not happy, satisfied with “good enough” from the results of their keyword searching in Google, the library catalog or database. Their needs are being met. What’s the big deal? Yes, you got it. The big deal is that these researchers are likely oblivious to all the information they’ve missed resting in keyword searching alone and settling for “good enough.”

As my colleague, Matt Lee, in his article “Beyond Good Enough” ([Reference Notes, April 2011](#)) noted, there is a distinct challenge laid out before us – convincing our researchers of when “good enough” might really be “good enough” and when it is not. Providing context and making the benefits of learning a new skill set explicitly known to them may be the first step in getting their attention.

I suggest that the Keyword is not the bad guy. Rather it’s “The Search” itself that is vast and likely treacherous

– our students and library consumers should be well-equipped with a skill set to problem-solve, have the capacity to adapt, and think creatively about their searching regardless of the tool or task. Yes, our instructional job focuses a great deal on sorting and evaluating results and what tool to select for the task. But Badke argues that it’s more important than ever to teach specifics of the search process, how search engines and databases behave and why, and a search skill set that empowers our researchers.

Playing out this instructional “call to duty” in practical terms may feel like a Sisyphean task or rowing against the tide but maybe a healthier way to look at it is “going the distance” for our students and patrons. Maybe it’s a matter of thinking long term – seeing this as a long distance race worth pacing ourselves for – seeing each new batch of students and each new patron as an opportunity to empower. ■

Rediscovering America in Libraries

Matt Lee

I feel at liberty to be that grandiose in titling this article because it’s about a pretty grandiose Thomas Friedman speech. Various videos of the speech are available in the “Sunday, July 17th” section on this page: <http://www.nga.org/cms/render/live/AMVideos>. The speech comes from a visit Friedman paid to a National Governors’ Association meeting where he spoke about America’s unsteady balance on the precipice of global obsolescence. Which is provocative talk suitable to a best-selling journalist drumming up sales for a new book, yes, but certainly thought-provoking.

Amid discussion of our flagging educational system, the flattening of global communications, and current public policy crippling future national efforts, one of Friedman’s points caught my attention particularly. He spent a good portion of his time with the Governors discussing a new reality in business and labor markets where productivity is the new driver of economic growth.

I had heard this notion before and had frankly been perplexed by it. Tom Stinson, Minnesota State Economist, and Tom Gillespy, the State Demographer, have given a presentation where they invoke the importance of productivity called “Minnesota and the New Normal.” The presentation projects budgetary, economic, and demographic trends into the future, and the slides for it are available at ci.minneapolis.mn.us/news/docs/statedemographicictrendssoct2010.

pdf. Perhaps the biggest takeaway of their presentation is that “future economic growth will depend increasingly on increasing productivity.” I understand the definitions of the words “increasing” and “productivity,” but haven’t ever really been able to grasp what that means in a practical Minnesota-business-and-economy sort of way.

Thomas Friedman explained it to me. And I think it presents opportunities for libraries.

As Friedman noted in his first book, the world is flat. We cannot only easily communicate across the world, but businesses can easily outsource services and production and customers across the world. This means that international businesses now compete in a very real way with local businesses. The world is “hyper-connected” to use Friedman’s term. Japanese auto-makers threatened Detroit’s business and industry. Hyper-connectivity threatens every American town and every industry. (I told you this was provocative.)

The hyper-connectedness of business processes across the world has “blown a hole” in the middle of America’s job market. Jobs one might call “routine work” are now being crushed by automation, outsourcing, and digitization. This leads to greater business productivity, but greater business productivity shrinks the workforce. Friedman notes that the idea of a business expanding to a new town and bringing 100,000 new jobs is an antiquated, now-impossible, idea. Instead, if 100,000 new jobs are to be created, they will be created by 20,000 new businesses employing 5 people each.



What does this mean in light of that Stinson/Gillespy quote of “future economic growth will depend increasingly on increasing productivity?” If greater productivity initially shrinks the workforce, that would seem to restrict economic growth. In order for growth to occur, a different kind of productivity is required: creative, entrepreneurial productivity.

Friedman believes that our educational system must undergird this new kind

of productivity by teaching Americans to think like “new immigrants, artisans, and waiters.” New immigrants, in that nothing will be given and everything gained will be earned. Artisans, in that personal pride in the creative process leads to a distinctive outcome or product. And waiters, in that the best of that breed take what little control they have over a

situation to craft something meaningful by finding a little “extra” to add.

Successful workers, using the “immigrant, artisan, waiter” mindset, will *create* good jobs rather than *take* good jobs. And they will constantly reinvent and adapt those jobs in creative ways.

Which is where libraries come in. What other institution is poised to support creative entrepreneurial thinking throughout a person’s ever-changing career path, starting with the earliest exploration of that path in school? What other institution is already embedded within communities and schools? What other institution is so aligned with lifelong learning? We can build on the job-seeking services we currently provide. We can expand creatively.

Are you familiar with CoCo? That stands for “Coworking and Collaborative Space,” and it is a local business at the leading edge of a trend to offer creative space for small businesses to work and interact alongside peers. Meg Knodl, Hennepin County Senior Librarian, is exploring this movement and is the first ever “Co-Working Librarian.” Learn more at <http://cocosp.com/2011/06/meet-meg-our-new-coworking-librarian/>.

The James J. Hill Library in St. Paul is considering a reinvention as business incubator. Read more at http://www.startribune.com/business/112353779.html?elr=KArks:DCiU10iP:DiiUiD3aPc:_Yyc:aU10iP:Dii_vPQL7PQLaU.

How else might we position ourselves to support creative entrepreneurs and in turn help Minnesota achieve prolonged economic growth?

Thomas Friedman closes his speech to the National Governors’ Association by mourning the loss of America’s historic public/private sector partnership in support of education, immigration, infrastructure, capital formation, and scientific research. He believes that these five pillars of support made America the world power it is today, and that maintaining our continued place in the world requires us to rediscover these values. He’s of course talking about funding and public policy. But I think we can help rediscover America in our libraries. Queue the fireworks. ■

Understanding User Needs Through What Is Said and What Is Not Said

Carla Pfahl

If you were to seek assistance via AskMN.org, you'd be connected with a librarian and begin a discussion of what you were looking for, what the information might be used for, and places you may have already looked for the information. The discussion is useful for the librarian to determine the type of information that best meets the user's needs and point to routes the patron has access to. Once information is shared with the patron, the librarian should ask if it is helpful, if it is what they were looking for. These are the basics of what takes place in a typical chat session. After the session is over, the user will see a survey asking them 4 brief questions to gauge how AskMN met their needs, if this was the first time they had ever used the service before, and if they would use it again in the future. There is also an open section for comments if the user would like to add anything more about their experience.

Through a review process of chat transcripts and surveys we get a good sense of user expectations met and unmet. What we see corresponds closely to what Marie Radford and Lynn Sillipigni Connaway have found through their extensive five year research project: [Seeking Synchronicity](#).

[Seeking Synchronicity: Revelations and Recommendations for Virtual Reference](#) is a new membership report from OCLC Research, in partnership with Rutgers and the State University of New Jersey. It distills more than five years of virtual reference (VR) research into a readable summary that features memorable quotes that vividly illustrate very specific and actionable suggestions. Taken from a multi-phase research project that included focus group interviews, surveys, transcript analysis, and phone interviews with VR librarians, users, and non-users, these findings are meant to help practitioners develop and sustain VR services and systems. The report asserts that the "R" in "VR" needs to emphasize virtual "Relationships" as well as "Reference."

Among the topics addressed are:

- The exaggerated death of ready reference
- The importance of query clarification in VR
- Ways to boost accuracy and build better interpersonal relationships in VR
- What can be learned from VR transcripts
- How convenience is the "hook" that draws users into VR services
- Generational differences in how people perceive reference interactions and determine success
- The need for more and better marketing

A rich resource for further exploration of this important topic, the report includes valuable statistics, lists of references, additional readings, and specific recommendations for what libraries and librarians can do to move VR forward in local environments.

Today's students, scholars and citizens are not just looking to libraries for answers to specific questions—they want partners and guides in a life-long information-seeking journey. By transforming VR services into relationship-building opportunities, libraries can leverage the positive feelings people have for libraries in a crowded online space where the biggest players often don't have the unique experience and specific strengths that librarians offer.

Download the complete report here: <http://www.oclc.org/reports/synchronicity/full.pdf>.

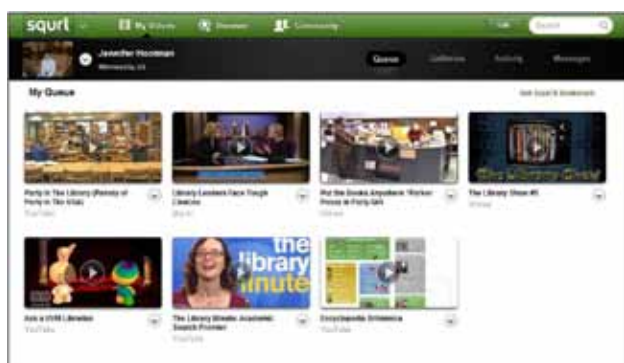
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This 'n That from the Web

Squrl It!

Jennifer Hootman

Are you ever in need of a place on the Web to gather, store, and organize videos that you find? Well, I am. Today, there are a great number of websites devoted to videos. And it can be difficult to remember where they originated – did it come from YouTube, Vimeo, TED or did I see that video on blip.tv? Sure, I could bookmark it, but that's a list that is always difficult to tame and keep organized.



I've given Squrl a twirl, and I like it. When I find a video on the Web that I want to keep, I Squrl It! I can create playlists from up to 16 different websites. I can also play and share those videos to Facebook or Twitter right from my account. Find Squrl at <http://www.squrl.com/>.

Add the Squrl It button to your browser's toolbar and create playlists from multiple sources with one click. For iPhone and iPad users, there's a Squrl app for you. If you don't like Squrl, check out other playlist organizers such as VodSpot or VidQue. ■

WebJunction MN

WJMN Update & List of Learning Opportunities

Cecelia Boone, Minitex

July was a busy month for WebJunction Minnesota and its members. Changes in course availability and other website changes came into effect, and new, interesting webinars were announced. (For more information, see the WebJunction Minnesota webpage at <http://mn.webjunction.org/1>)

Register now for two September webinars:

(For more information and registration, see: <http://mn.webjunction.org/events/webinars>)

Innovations from America's Best Small Libraries 2011

Sept. 20, 1:00 pm Central

Library Journal's annual Best Small Library in America Award (<http://www.libraryjournal.com/naturita>) was created to encourage and showcase the exemplary work of libraries serving populations under 25,000.

Putting the Public Back in Public Libraries: Community-Led Libraries

Sept. 26, noon, Central

Beginning in 2004, four large urban library systems from across Canada - Vancouver, Toronto, Regina, and Halifax Public Libraries - spent four years working in socially excluded communities, to determine how to make public library services relevant to the needs of underserved communities.

Note recent changes that came into effect for course availability for WJMN members.

1. All WJMN members may now enroll in as many courses as they like.
2. The cost of all courses has been set to \$0.
3. The public catalog has been removed. This means that WJMN members need to be signed in to see the courses.
4. The full catalog contains 354 courses that provide excellent coverage on the topics important to library staff.

Affiliation with WebJunction Minnesota is free and available to members of the Minnesota library community. Visit <http://mn.webjunction.org/1> to get started.

WebJunction Minnesota receives support from State Library services, a division of the MN Dept. of Education, which administers federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grants, and Minitex. ■

Reference Notes

Minitex

University of Minnesota, 15 Andersen Library
222 21st Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55455-0439

Reference Phone	612-624-4150, WATS 800-462-5348
Reference Fax	612-624-4508
Hootman, Jennifer	612-624-2924, hootm001@umn.edu
Lee, Matt	612-626-9843, leems001@umn.edu
Parker, Mary	612-624-1024, m-park1@umn.edu
Pfahl, Carla	612-626-6845, pfahl001@umn.edu
Staats, Beth	612-624-7873, fried004@umn.edu
Main Website	www.minitex.umn.edu
Reference Email	mtxref@umn.edu
Office Hours	Monday—Friday, 8:00 am—4:30 pm
Reference Intake Form	https://www.minitex.umn.edu/reference/request/

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