

COMMENT FROM THE CCL-EAR COMMITTEE REGARDING THEIR FURTHER REVIEW OF ETHNIC NEWSWATCH

In spite of the negative ratings and critical comments from the CCL-EAR Committee concerning The Ethnic NewsWatch search interface (average score 2.2), as well as criticisms of its user support services, the resource was originally given an overall rating of "3.1" in recognition of the community colleges' need for content of this type. A 3.1 rating means that the resource has met the Committee's overall criteria and that it supports a recommendation that the vendor's proposal be forwarded to all California Community College libraries for their review. It also specifies that the Committee would like to see further enhancements made to the product.

At its January 22, 1999 meeting, the CCL-EAR Committee reconsidered the rating and recommendation it had previously given to Ethnic NewsWatch and voted to withhold its support of this product pending the vendor's response to the concerns expressed in its review.

The Committee's concerns included the following:

- 1) The inadequate subject indexing used by the database. For example, articles on Korean businesses in the Los Angeles riots are indexed only under 'race'. Natural language and/or keyword searching are not always adequate substitutes for good subject indexing;
- 2) ENW has a cumbersome and difficult search interface compounded by little online user support to assist with using the interface;
- 3) The cost quoted by Softline for ENW seemed too high to Committee members, many of whom said that their own colleges would not be able to afford the database at that cost..

The CCL-EAR Committee would like to take another look at Ethnic NewsWatch next Fall or sometime in the future, after the database publisher has had time to respond to the Committee's concerns.

Last Updated: April 28, 1999