

**CCL-EAR Committee Review  
Of Wiley InterScience  
October, 2001**

Selected members of the California Community College Libraries, Electronic Access to Information Resources Committee (CCL-EAR) undertook a "hands-on" study of Wiley InterScience.

Wiley InterScience is the online content service from John Wiley & Sons and is publicized as "Your gateway to Wiley Publications online". It delivers the full text of over 300 leading scientific, technical, medical, and professional journals, plus major reference works and the Current Protocols laboratory manuals. Online full text is available in PDF format for most Wiley journals, with select journals offering an HTML version as well. Some important features of Wiley InterScience are the ability to search across the entire Wiley journals list or limit the search to a specific subject or discipline. A personal home page allows the user to customize its functions including; Content Alerts, Hot Journals, Hot Articles and Saved Queries. Through the **CrossRef** Initiative, Wiley is participating with dozens of publishers to provide inter-linked references across a vast body of online content. Full content access is available to licensed Institutional Customers and their authorized users. Individuals or members of professional societies or associations may also license content access for select publications.

Selected members of the CCL-EAR Committee, independently or in concert with other qualified professionals on their campus library staffs, reviewed and evaluated Wiley InterScience. Assessments were submitted on a Review Reply Form specifically designed by the Committee for this purpose. Though other staff may have helped in the review process, completion of the form was by the CCL-EAR committee member(s) only and not transferred to others. Ratings were based upon the potential value of the proposal to the California Community Colleges as a whole and not solely on the needs of any specific campus.

Attributes of the information resource were assessed on a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 representing the "least value" and 4 representing the "most value". The following attributes were examined:

**INFORMATION DATABASE**

Consider its functionality, the appropriateness of format (bibliographic/full-text), the content of the information, the adequacy of coverage (retrospective, current), and its value to the California Community Colleges as a whole.

**SEARCH INTERFACE**

Consider the functionality and ease of use of the interface. Is it intuitive or is an excessive amount of training required? Are any crucial features missing from the search interface? **USER SUPPORT SERVICES** If documentation is required for successful use of product, is it available, comprehensive, and well written? Is online help adequate and user friendly? Does vendor supply training if it is needed? Is a telephone help line available?

## **COST**

If cost is available, does it seem reasonable in terms of comparable products?

## **ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICE**

Is access/connection to product reliable and stable? Is response time adequate?

## **OVERALL ASSESSMENT**

#1 --- No Support

#2 --- No Support at this time. Future support conditional upon enhancements noted below in Comments Section.

#3 --- Support and Recommend proposal be forwarded to California Community College libraries for their acceptance or rejection. Would like to see enhancements in product noted below in Comments Section.

#4 --- Outstanding offer and opportunity. Recommend proposal be forwarded to California Community College campus libraries for their acceptance or rejection.

Following are the results of the CCL-EAR Committee's review as well as comments taken from the individual Review Reply Forms.

## **INFORMATION DATABASE ( 4, 2, 3 )**

Wiley InterScience is a well thought out and functional database. It provides an intuitive interface and access to a broad range of Wiley journal and reference publications. The Personal Home Page function is particularly useful for those who may wish to create searches, alerts and links to favorite journals and articles. The electronic journals are set up in the usual manner with links to particular issues. My random survey of the holdings indicated a 3-5 year back file for most titles. Each issue lists the included articles with links to abstracts, pdf and in some cases html versions. Only subscribers have access to the full-text articles. This appears to be the major difficulty for community college users who are unlikely to have access to most of the publications.

Wiley InterScience contains much useful information from a leading science publisher. Anyone can set up a "user account" at no cost. This gives the user access to article abstracts. However, only print subscribers can view full-text documents in .pdf files. The initial presentation is a table of contents and cover page image for each included issue. As such, the service appears to be essentially advertisements for Wiley's print products.

Broad based science access with full text from a most liberal definition of the subject of science: business, education, law, and then the more traditional fields of social science and hard science.

### **SEARCH INTERFACE ( 4, 4, 3 )**

Wiley InterScience has a well-developed and intuitive interface. Little training should be required and the context sensitive help for searching is truly helpful, as it appears in a separate window. The primary search screen allows the user to select all journals, hot journals, journals in a subject category or journals in the Wiley Bold Ideas Business Collection. It also allows a choice of display by either relevance or publication date. The advanced search is an expanded version of the basic search that allows for the Boolean operator "and" search in a variety of fields: author, title, abstract, key words, funding agencies, etc. A separate interface is used in searching the reference works. Each reference work must be viewed and searched separately using unique search interfaces, excepting the Current Protocols series, which do have a consistent interface.

The search engine is quite well developed and sophisticated, especially considering how small the database actually is (about five years' content of 300 journals, plus some reference titles). Boolean and field searching are available. Output may be switched between relevance or publication date

Very helpful with almost an overkill in search and help options.

### **USER SUPPORT SERVICES ( 2, 4, 2 )**

Context sensitive help is clear and works well for the more difficult activities such as setting up the personal home page, the alert feature, and hot journals and articles. Most of the interface is so intuitive that help should not be necessary. This product does not clearly indicate how to contact technical support. There are only general e-mail and telephone contact information provided.

When the user clicks on "help", a separate window pops up. This is very useful, as the user can easily refer to the instructions while conducting a search. As befits a "marketing department" Web site, all roads (phone, email) lead to Wiley's sales staff.

Very difficult to contact. Never received a response from the two e-mails I sent.

### **COST**

Cost unknown. My assumption is that it would be prohibitive. This is based on the cost to subscribe to the individual titles included in my random sample.

Costs are unknown. This reviewer has experience with Wiley's law-related books and subscriptions, and their costs are sky-high. I have every reason to believe that this would be true of its other offerings as well. Few if any, of Wiley's print resources would be appropriate for a community college library.

### **ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICE ( 4, 4, 4 )**

The service was always accessible with a quick response time. I was not able to actually view articles either in pdf or html formats so cannot comment on that part of the service.

Wiley's system consistently gives the user a rapid response.

No problems at all.

### **OVERALL ASSESSMENT ( 3, 1, 4 )**

This is a really great database with a number of useful features. However, the specificity and level of the included materials is substantially above that used in most community college (lower division) classes. While some faculty and disciplines might be enthusiastic about acquiring it, the amount of material included but unavailable to the majority of community college users likely would make it a frustrating experience.

As noted, Wiley InterScience is largely a marketing exercise and the Web equivalent of television news teasers: "train wreck, film at 11:00". With this database, you never get to see the film. There is also the great limitation of all sources being only from one publisher. If Wiley were to become a significant aggregator of its own and others' information, its well-designed search interface would get some real research use.

High quality content and interface. The contents, reading levels, and depth of the articles are written with the upper division and graduate student in mind. It would be most useful for four year institutions.

#### **Rating for home campus only:**

#### **Comments based on utility for home campus: (2, 1, 2)**

While this is an excellent product for the right environment, I do not see our community college as the right one. My institution currently does not subscribe to any of the included titles in paper format so I must assume that they are either not appropriate or too expensive for their potential use here.

My community college would never have a use for Wiley InterScience. Only large universities or research institutes with many Wiley periodical subscriptions would have a need for this service.

Our students would have great difficulties with the database and we would not recommend this database for a community college.

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