

## **CCL-EAR COMMITTEE REVIEW**

**H.W. Wilson**

***Science Full Text Select, Education Full Text, and Biography Reference Bank***  
**September, 2005**

In September, 2005, selected members of the Council of Chief Librarians, Electronic Access and Resources Committee (CCL-EAR) undertook a "hands-on" study of *Science Full Text Select* from H.W. Wilson. Additional information is included below on the *Education Full Text* and *Biography Reference Bank* databases, also from H.W. Wilson.

*Science Full Text* combines full-text content from Wilson's *Applied Science & Technology, Biological & Agricultural, General Science* databases, and additional relevant articles selected from other databases. Wilson is marketing this product as an "affordable choice" for community colleges, and high schools. *Education Full Text* includes indexing for over 9000 books and 700 journals, with full-text content from over 270 journals. The *Biography Reference Bank* pulls content from journals in Wilson databases, and from licensed resources from Oxford University Press, Oryx, Garland, and other third-party publishers.

Each reviewer independently, or in concert with other qualified professionals on their campus library staff, reviewed and evaluated these WilsonWeb databases. Though other faculty and/or staff may have helped in the review process, completion of the form was by the CCL-EAR committee member only and not transferred to another. Ratings were based upon the potential value of the service to the California Community Colleges as a whole and not solely on the needs of any specific campus.

### **RANKINGS**

#1 --- No Support

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

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

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

The following attributes were examined:

### **INFORMATION DATABASE**

Consider functionality, appropriateness of format, database content, adequacy of coverage (retrospective, current), and 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**

What types of customer and technical support are available for end users and library administrators?

## **COST**

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

## **AVAILABILITY/ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICE**

Is access/connection to product reliable and stable? Is response time adequate? Is product accessible to users with disabilities?

## **OVERALL ASSESSMENT**

Based on the attributes listed above, is the product suitable for community college students?

## **INFORMATION DATABASE (Sci. 3, 3, 3; Edu. 2.5, 2, 2; Biog. 3, 3, 3)**

Title lists for Wilson's journal databases can be accessed at:

<http://vnweb.hwwilsonweb.com/hww/Journals/> .

*Science Full Text Select* is a 100% full-text database which pulls full-text content from Wilson's *Applied Science & Technology Full Text*, *Biological & Agricultural Index Plus*, and *General Science Full Text*, and relevant articles taken from other Wilson databases . Coverage goes back to 1994. Of the 325 titles in the *Science Full Text* product, 20 have embargoes, 14 of which are in the "Annual Review" series (1 year embargo). About a third of the titles are peer-reviewed and 86 titles are no longer indexed or include current full-text. An overlap analysis with other products demonstrates that the database contains a great deal of unique content in full-text, not found in the consortium's other products. Only 13% of its full-text content is also available in ProQuest *Biology Journals*, 46% available in EbscoHost *Academic Search Premier*, 46% available in ProQuest *5000*, and 56% available in InfoTrac *OneFile*. Peer-reviewed content mainly comes from professional associations, university presses, Heldref publications and a couple of titles from Lippincott. *Science Full Text* does not contain content from major academic publishers such as Academic Press, Routledge, Blackwell, Kluwer, and Elsevier. Extremely current topics mentioned in recent newspapers, such as the new planet UB313-- were difficult to locate without complete information, possibly because appropriate subject headings are slower to find their way into the database.

*Education Full Text* is primarily a bibliographic database that indexes over 700 journals, some back to 1983, and over 9000 books. Some full-text is available in approximately 270 journals. Rather than depending on ERIC indexing and abstracting as some

competitors do, all indexing and abstracting is done in-house by Wilson's staff of librarians. A good number of the books indexed are textbooks which are retrievable by author or subject heading. As with *Science Full Text* a number of journal titles are unique and not available in the consortium's other subscription offers. An overlap analysis found 50% overlap of full-text titles with EbscoHost *Academic Search Premier*, 40% with Infotrac *OneFile*, and 64% with *ProQuest 5000*. Peer-reviewed content comes mainly from professional organizations and university presses, with a few titles from publishers, but once again does not include bulk content from major academic publishers as those listed above.

*Biography Reference Bank* has an impressive list of sources from which they pull content, including such Wilson classics as *Current Biography*, and several other biography reference books and series from Wilson, Garland, Greenwood, Oryx, Fitzroy-Dearborn and other prominent reference publishers, including volumes on musicians, authors, poets, artists, and political figures. *Biography Reference Bank* also includes full text articles that are biographical in nature, taken from other Wilson databases. Content also includes entries from the *Congressional Directory*, although only as recent as 2001/2002, and titles licensed from Oxford University Press including *American National Biography*, and the *Grove Dictionaries of Art and Music*. It should be noted that the Oxford and Grove databases are also available as separate subscriptions, and therefore would be areas of duplication if a library subscribes to all of them. According to the vendor, *Biography Reference Bank* is updated daily.

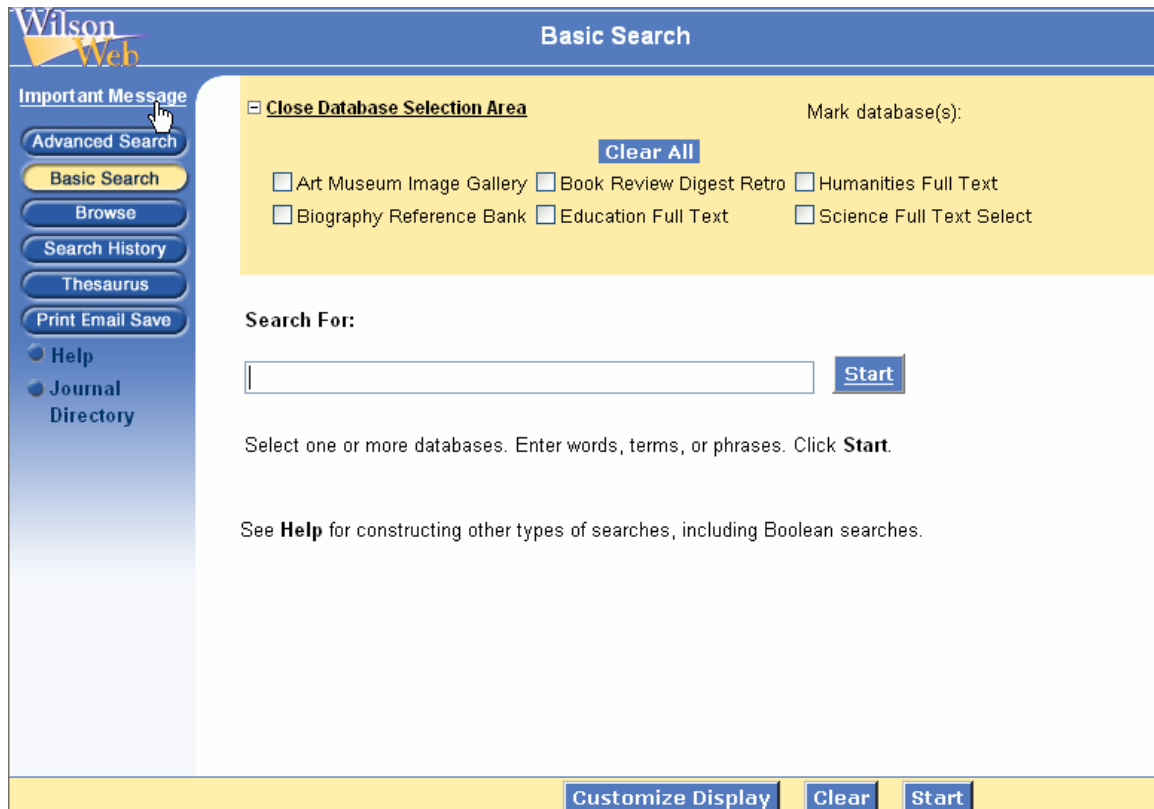
## **SEARCH INTERFACE: 2, 2, 2**

WilsonWeb's organization contains a left frame and bottom frame for navigation, and a large right frame to function as search screens or displays. The left frame contains a series of buttons to different search modes and printing, emailing and saving. Below these buttons, links are also available for Help and the Journal Directory. The main search screen is on the right. The bottom of the screen contains links to customize the display, clear the search form, or to navigate pages of search results.

Both the basic and advanced search screens include a database selection area which gives a list of available databases with check boxes. Users can select one or more databases to search at a time. If the user forgets to select a database, a pop-up window will appear asking the user to select at least one database. A toggle is included for opening and closing the databases selection area. Search options change as different databases are selected, and options may be lost when searching multiple databases. Standard Boolean operators and truncation are available in both "Advanced" and "Basic" search modes.

When performing a search, by default WilsonWeb searches select fields and not the full-text of the article, but both the basic and advanced search screens include an option to expand to searching full-text (the option will not appear until at least one database that leads to full-text content is selected).

On the basic search screen, the only option for expanding or limiting a search is a checkbox for searching the full-text of the articles. A prominent “customize display” button allows the user to control the display format, sort order, and fields to include. The list of fields to include is extensive, but some make little or no sense (e.g. “form review”, “abstract indicator”, or “text”).



The advanced search screen is the default search option unless the library sets a different default. The advanced search screen offers standard Boolean searching, date and document type limiters, as well as the format limiters. The spacing between the search term box and the field to search box should be reduced so it is clear to users that these are related. The use of the word “as” instead of “in” before the field to search box is non-standard and could cause confusion. The default field to search is labeled “All - Smart Search.” A simple search for “cloning” would look something like this:

**Open Database Selection Area** [1] Database(s) selected: Science Full Text Select

Search For:

Sort By:

as:

**Limit Dates to:**
 Any Year  
 Within last 12 months  
 From Year:   
 To Year:

**Limit to:**
 Full Text Articles  
 Page Image (PDF)  
 Peer Reviewed

**Expand:**
 Also search within the full text of the articles, for extra results

**Document Type:**

**Physical Description:**

The list of sort options is staggering. Librarians will swoon but students might be overwhelmed by, let alone not understand how to use options like “object type,” “publication Julian date,” or “LC control number.”

The search forms also understand quotations used for phrases, though quotations are not necessary. However, sometimes quotations may need to be used for one word, because by default, WilsonWeb retrieves results that include all one word’s stems and variations. For example, if a user enters “condition” without quotation marks, the results would include all search terms that include words such as “conditions” and “conditional.”

Other search forms that are available as selections from the top left include “Browse” which allows the user to browse different fields, the default selection being “Subject” with other selections such as Journal Name, Peer Reviewed Journal, and Author, Personal. It is useful only for searching for alphabetical terms and not for cross references. For example, a student could search for “death penalty” and get an alphabetical list of terms with a statement in the middle stating “Your term would have been here.” If students hope to find cross references, they need to select “Thesaurus” from the main menu of the database instead of “Browse.” Only there will the student be led to the proper subject term, “Capital Punishment.” The thesaurus in *Science Full Text Select* does not seem to work. Broader terms and relational terms are not displayed. Suggestions are sometimes offered in the thesaurus; e.g. users are directed to “Greenhouse effect” from “Global warming;” but there is no cross reference to “Climatic changes” from “Climate change,” and the thesaurus result from “Climate change” lists only 4 subject headings for international conferences. H.W. Wilson has stated that they plan to improve the thesaurus of *Science Full Text Select*.

Each article in the result list has an icon listing format availability (HTML or PDF), and a link to a library’s link resolver (e.g. Serials Solutions, SFX, etc.). Peer-reviewed articles have an identifying icon at the end of the citation. These icons (Full-text, PDF, Peer-

reviewed) are also displayed at the top of the results list as limiters. In Science Full-Text and Biography Reference Bank, the “full-text” limiter seems superfluous since all of the articles are available in either format (there is no HTML “full text” only option, available). There appears to be no way to undo a limit. For example, if a user clicks on the PDF limit and then decides to go back and view all formats, they must re-do the search. Another annoyance is that the popup text boxes that appear when the cursor is placed over an icon are set to time-out after 5 seconds. Granted, there is a clear legend where each icon is listed followed by its textual meaning in “Limit to” section on the top of each search results screen.

The sort order of the results lists can be changed by using the Customized Display button on the bottom navigation bar. However, the relevance score is lost and does not display if the results are sorted in date order.

If a student clicks on the article title as link, there may be some confusion. The link leads to the record of the article (which includes the abstract) but the full text of the article does not appear. The student HAS to click on the icon matching the full text format in order to view the article, whether it is in PDF or HTML formats. However, the tiny icons are listed on the top left and are easy to miss.

The journal title within the record is a hot link but, instead of giving information about the journal, the link opens up a list of all of the articles for that journal in the database.

A “search history” feature is available from the main menu but, instead of a list of searches in natural language, nested search strings are given such as <and> (<near> (cloning) <in> ALL, <yesno> (<and> (y <in> fti))). Students may have trouble understanding these lines and figuring out which ones to select to combine or repeat searches. Searches can be saved and reused for up to 6 months using a “sign on” feature.

The review team found several examples of awkward or non-standard terminology and phrasing. For example, instructions on using the “Customize Display” feature are as follows: “Click the “Customize Display” button on the bottom taskbar to open a specification screen, which has areas for making selections to define how you prefer records to be displayed.” Another example is the use of the term “All – Smart Search” as the default on the Advanced Search screen. The term itself is not very descriptive or intuitive, and the user must dig pretty deeply into Help in order to discover what fields this actually searches.

A subscription to Wilson databases includes free linking using SFX technology. With this linking enabled, users can find full-text articles wherever they may be in the library’s open URL compliant databases. However, this linking is not completely customizable. Rather than provide a list of the library’s subscribed databases, the library administrator must choose from three lists of databases. As a result, users will see linking references to databases to which the library does not subscribe, and may even be sent to a vendor’s search screen to search other databases provided by the same vendor.

Moving around in the *Biography Reference Bank* is a challenge. Search results are formatted as “forms” which means that using the browser’s “back” button results in an error message indicating that the page has “expired”. To avoid this problem, a user must use the “back” button at the bottom of the screen. There are also dead-end links which result in error messages such as: “The search: <yesno>(NHWW85037133) <in> AU\_TID...produced no hits.”

If the user wants to print or save one particular article, once the user opens up the HTML or PDF full text window, the user can then select print or save from the options of the browser for HTML and the PDF toolbar for PDF articles. Like its competitors, WilsonWeb leaves no instructions to the user that when the PDF window is open the user needs to select print or save from the PDF toolbar, not the browser.

If the user wants to email any article, or print, save or email a marked set of articles, the student must select the Print/Email/Save button from the main menu. With the full text of the article opening up in a separate window the student needs to make sure that the database window is not minimized to select the “Print Email Save” button to email an article. Once the student clicks on the button, four selections appear: to either Print, E-Mail, Save or Export to bibliographic software. The student chooses one of these options, then chooses whether to have citations, full text, or other formats, delivered and then the student finally can click on the single Email, Save, Print, or Export button. In other words, there is a three step process in order to email one article, or any form of delivery for more than one citation at one time.

### **USER SUPPORT SERVICES 3, 3, 3**

To access WilsonWeb, computers must be set to accept cookies and pop-up blockers must be disabled. WilsonWeb does not support AOL.

Help is available from a menu frame on the left side of each search and result screen but not from within an article. A context-sensitive help screen appears along with a “Help Contents” list. The help screens open in a new window that is half screen size with no option to maximize, print, or go back to the previous screen. A tab within the help documentation leads to an online tutorial that includes labeled screen shots. There is also a search box to allow searching within the help file.

The help menu does include a link to technical support but only opens an email form. For live help information, you must click on “Wilson Documentation”, which opens a web page listing guides, manuals, and contact information.

<http://www.hwwilson.com/tecfaq5.html>

Phone support is listed as available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. This page also includes links to the administrative module and a list of customization options including changing search and sort defaults, co-branding, and button text.

WilsonWeb provides extensive help to the user in formatting citations. There are instructions in the Help file, and it is possible to format citations automatically in MPA and APA styles within the print function. However it must be done as a separate step during printing. The user cannot format the citation style and print full-text at the same time.

### **COST (Sci. 3.5, 3.5, 3; Edu. 2, 2, 2; Biog. 3.5, 3.5, 3)**

*Science Full Text* is very reasonably priced and is indeed an “affordable choice” for community colleges. *Biography Reference Bank* appears to be affordably priced as well and considerably less than Gale’s *Biography Resource Center*. *Education Full Text* seems overpriced for the actual amount of full-text content.

### **AVAILABILITY/ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICE 4, 4, 4**

These reviewers had no problems with access or response time. Wilson is very good about notifying subscribers of any problems, updates, new products/features, etc. via listserv. According to the vendor, WilsonWeb is ADA compliant.

Remote access is available using IP authentication, referring URL, and username and password.

### **OVERALL ASSESSMENT 2.5, 2.5, 3**

For a community college library in the market for a reasonably-priced science, education, or biography database, these are adequate. A comparison of content of the science and education databases with the content of the Ebsco and Proquest database packages offered to the consortium last year reveals a surprising amount of unique content in the Wilson products.

The interface, however, is not as intuitive as its competitors. At times, it can be cumbersome or confusing to our community college students with its unclear language or labels, its recorded “Dialog”-like search history, its overabundance of choices, and the convoluted process to E-Mail articles.

### **Reference List**

#### ***Biography Reference Bank***

Doherty, J. J. “Biography Reference Bank.” Choice Feb. 2005: 989.

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Scarth, Linda Loos. "Science Full Text Select (Book)." Booklist 1 Feb. 2005: 996.

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