

**CCL-EAR Committee Preview**  
**World eBook Library**  
**<http://worldebooklibrary.com/>**  
December 1, 2011

**Database Overview:**

*World eBook Library* originated in 1995 and claims to be “Where the world goes to read.” In April of 2011, W.T. Cox, a journal subscription service in North Carolina, acquired the database. The collection currently comprises 2,100,000 books in PDF, 10,000 audiobook MP3 files, and is adding over 55,000 resources each month. In 2012, the collection will also include two million journal articles. Over 200,000 publishers contribute content. While this content is generally freely available on the Internet, *World Public Library* digitally remasters each document, cleaning up the text, deleting blank pages, and reformatting the document as a PDF file. The PDFs are fully downloadable without restriction and may be used with most mobile devices. The subscription permits access to unlimited users simultaneously. W.T. Cox describes *World eBook Library’s* intended audience as “researchers and college students interested in primary sources of information, timeless classics, rare, special and official eBook titles.”

**Search Interface:**

The initial search screen is action packed, with book jackets across disciplines displayed in rotating sequence. Selecting the **Search** tab in the toolbar brings the patron to the search page with its two options: *eBook Finder*, a quick search and the *Advanced Search* menu. The *Advanced Search* menu allows for Boolean searching and limiting by item type (PDF, audio, or video file), language (the collection includes 230 languages), academic discipline (there are over 160), and specific ebook subject libraries (there are nearly 90). Faceted searching allows for multiple item types, languages, academic disciplines, and ebook libraries to be searched simultaneously. It’s this reviewer’s guess that the default searches all of these. It is also possible to search each individual item, once open, by text.

An *eBook Finder* search on “spotted owl\*” retrieves one book: *The Timber Stability Act (1990)*. The record includes hyperlinked subject terms. Selecting *northern spotted owl* retrieves no additional titles. Repeating the search in the *Advanced Search* menu retrieves the same results. Repeating the search in *Free Google eBooks* on the books.google.com page retrieves over 20,000 titles, many of them primary sources. An *eBook Finder* search on “endangered species act” was more productive and returned 140 titles. The first ten are U.S. Government documents. The results are difficult to sort, but they may be filtered by author, subject, and collection. Curiously, limiting by publication date is not an option.

The search interface includes translation technology. MARC records are available for all *World eBook Library* titles. Usage statistics are Counter Compliant.

**Content:**

It seems as though the bulk of this enormous collection is freely available, and more readily found and read, on the Internet. *World eBook Library's* MARC records does permits a library to integrate individual ebooks, or the entire *World eBook Library*, into its catalog.

This reviewer had difficulty opening some of the PDFs. Also, some records are intentionally incomplete. For example, *The Great Gatsby* is one of 200 resources offered on the *Give Aways* page. Only the first 149 pages may be read. At page 150, the reader is directed to <http://collegebookshelf.net/> to purchase the entire book. Reviewer's note: a free download of the entire *Gatsby*, as well as most of Fitzgerald's other published work, at the University of Adelaide:  
[http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/f/fitzgerald/f\\_scott/](http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/f/fitzgerald/f_scott/)

**Recommendation:**

The cost of a one year subscription to *World eBook Library* is comparable to a one year subscription to much smaller, but more user friendly and subject selective ebook collections. Annual Individual subscriptions are available for \$8.95/ year. *World eBook Library* waives subscription fees for "physically disabled users, special needs users, or disaster relief services emergency services."

**Other Reviews:** None as yet.