Enthusiastic Response to Library Classes

This Spring the response to and attendance at Library classes has been outstanding. Over 500 people attended the EXTEL Financial Databases classes.

For both Lexis/Nexis and EXTEL, classes have been oversubscribed, with registrants asked to attend the next session. In several instances, the classes were so large that they had to be split into two simultaneous sessions.

Classes offered this year have included a wide range, from Basic Research Skills to Chemistry for 3rd Year Students and Job Hunting seminars. Several database classes have also been held – both general in nature and specific (such as covering Lexis/Nexis).

Library Instruction -continued on page 3

COLLECTION SPOTLIGHT:
Journal Collection and Selection

Whether you call them serials, periodicals, magazines, or journals, the Library subscribes to about 3,300 print titles; another 1,500 plus titles are available electronically in full-text or full-image. Since most of the Library’s print journals date from 1990, there are microform backfiles for several decades of many titles. The decision to add these is based on need and use. The Library continues to add subscriptions but requires a justification for adding new titles because of the need to keep the serials budget in proportion (approximately 31% is currently used for serial subscriptions).

No library can have all the journals needed by its users, so the most used titles are held locally, and access to many other titles is maximized. At HKUST tens of thousands of journals are accessible with abstracts or at the table of contents level through Inside Information and Faxon Finder. Journal articles not available in the HKUST Library in full-text format may be acquired via Interlibrary Loan. For infrequently used items this is the most economical method of acquisition.

A study of journal use in the HKUST Library is currently underway. That is why we ask you not to reshelve any journals that you use, so that library staff may count them. In August we will analyse the findings of this year-long study, as part of our ongoing efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of the collection.

Online Subscriptions
http://library.ust.hk/res/resource.html

On-campus users of the Library’s World-Wide Web Server (http://library.ust.hk/) have access to many online resources not available to other users. A growing number of database vendors are making their products available through the Web, and the Library has subscribed to several of these for your use. These include:

Britannica Online has an excellent interface to the database used for the Encyclopedia Britannica - the most extensive encyclopedia in the world.

FirstSearch is a collection of research databases covering many academic disciplines. It includes WorldCat, with over 30
million records with the holdings of thousands of libraries in the U.S. and the world.

The 25 Dynasties History Database featured in our last issue records the history from ancient China to the Ching dynasty. It contains about 40 million characters and allows browsing and searching.

The most recent addition is access to a searchable archive of 17 journals published by the Institute of Physics to which the Library subscribes. The online service includes full-image access to these articles.

These and other sites can be found on the Library Resources page of our Web server, at http://library.ust.hk/res/resource.html

**INTERNET: Web Search Engines**

As the sheer volume of information available on the World-Wide Web continues its exponential expansion, it is increasingly difficult to locate anything useful. Web directories such as Yahoo (http://www.yahoo.com/) remain helpful, and are having their features constantly expanded. But their very focus has several disadvantages.

Directories often have links to only a few selected sites under subject categories, and if you don’t understand their method of organisation, you will not find what you want. A major improvement was the inclusion of search options into these directories, which greatly increase the likelihood of locating what you want.

Several sites have gone in a different direction, developing massive search engines to provide broader and more flexible access to resources. These are designed to locate Internet resources, create a database of resource information, and provide searching of that database in a number of different ways. While these servers have many similarities, it is important to be aware of the differences.

Some search engines index selected Web resources based on subject, geographic region or other characteristics. Alta Vista (http://altavista.digital.com/) will not include Web pages that require forms to be filled in, registration, or passwords. For a Hong Kong focus, try the HKUST Computer Science Department's WWW Index Server (http://dbc113.cs.ust.hk:8001/IndexServer/). It covers over 240 local sites and 24 HK-related sites.

Once a site is included, there are differences in what is actually added to the index. Open Text (http://www.opentext.com:8080/) indexes all words while others will ignore words like 'the'. Some may only include the title and the first 10-50 words.

Search engines may provide complex search commands or natural language searching and each has its own manner of ranking the results of a search inquiry. Some search engines try to 'weight' the index, so words that appear more frequently on a page will be weighted higher.

Because of these differences in searching techniques, indexing, and Web page selection, each engine may come up with different results for the same search query. Thus, it is a good idea to search more than one search engine.

A few recent sites, such as All-in-One Search Page (http://www.albany.net/allinone/) and search.com (http://www.search.com), have directories of search engines. They provide a way for the user to query different engines from a single location. But the searches are performed one at a time.

The meta-search engine provides a front-end which will interrogate several search engines simultaneously. Metacrawler (http://metacrawler.cs.washington:8080/) accesses up to 8 different search engines at one time and allows the user to set a variety of parameters including a time limit on the search. Meta-search engines save time and reduce the number of different search commands that may be used. However, they are not able to use all of the special search features that individual search engines offer.
MEDIA: Prime Time Literary Classics

Currently the most popular title at Media Resources is the TV drama series 三國演義; Romance of the Three Kingdoms (PL2690. S3199d) — we rarely find the complete set sitting on the shelf.

Indeed, compared with the western classics, the “popular” Chinese classics are always appreciated by patrons of all ages, be it in book form or in video. Yet, this and other recent series produced by the China TV Production Centre are in high demand not only because of their production quality, authenticity, etc., but also the fact that they can be enjoyed in their original language of Putonghua. Some patrons have commented on how promptly new releases are added to the collection.


Latest series on order include Kung-Tzu 孔子; Confucius; and T’ang Ming-Huang 唐明皇.

BE CONSIDERATE:
Reserving Seats & Library Access

Library users sometimes complain about the ‘reservation’ of study spaces by personal possessions, and about the presence of non-UST people in the Library. It has been our observation that most of these seats are being ‘reserved’ by UST students. There will never be enough seats in the Library for every student in the University to have their own.

However, there are plenty of seats in the Library right now, as long as students do not try to reserve them by placing their belongings on them and walking away. Such action is inconsiderate, and should be discouraged. Unattended belongings may be removed by anyone, so that the seat can be used by people who are actually in the Library.

It is common sense not to leave your valuable belongings unattended. And there is no reason to assume that only those who are not members of the UST community would steal. Unfortunately, in every population there are those who are dishonest.

While maintaining the University’s “open” policy, we are also concerned that our own students have priority in the usage of library space and facilities, as stated in the notices posted at the library entrance. This means that the library reserves the right to check IDs and ask non-UST cardholders to leave, and exercises this right whenever the physical crowding requires it.

Some students request that the library should not be open to outsiders, some complain that others are using bags and books to reserve seats. Still others protest when their unoccupied seats had to be given up for other users. And if you are one of those whose belongings have been removed, please be cooperative, and think about how your behaviour affects other Library users. While we do our best to serve you, you can help us by being responsible users, and by being considerate to your fellow students.
Suggestions and Answers

Warm Bodies / Seat ‘Reservations’: People (including UST students) trying to reserve study spaces by leaving their belongings unattended remains a problem. The Library has repeatedly informed UST students that they themselves can remove articles from seats/rooms that have been unoccupied for a long time. Seats can only be occupied by warm bodies.

ERL: Macintosh users now have access to a growing number of the CD-NET databases through the ERL server. A web interface is under development. If you have questions, send e-mail to library@usthk.ust.hk

OS Support: Be assured that the Library will make every effort to support both the present DOS/Windows and the new Windows95 PC environments during the campus' upcoming transition period.

Using the Suggestion Box: Several users have had difficulty using the Suggestions feature in the Library Catalog. Please keep three things in mind: 1. Leave your email address if you want a reply. 2. Pressing <RETURN> on a blank line means that you are done and the message will be sent. 3. Suggestions may be up to 6 lines long. You should send longer messages by e-mail to library@usthk.ust.hk

Library Staff Development Program

During the first week of March Dr. Candy Schwartz, a library science professor at Simmons College, Boston, presented three days of workshops on cataloging, records management, indexing, associative retrieval, and WWW search engines. This staff development program provided updates for librarians on several significant topics.

Patents For All Users!

The HKUST Library has one of the most complete sets of patent databases in Asia, and perhaps the only one so readily available to academic staff. These are in the Database Search Room for use by HKUST faculty, staff, and students. Non-UST patrons may arrange for fee-based assistance. For details contact a librarian at the Reference Counter, or send e-mail to lbref@usthk.ust.hk

Individual full-image databases are available for patents filed in the U.S., the U.K., Europe, and with the World Intellectual Property Organization. A table of patent holdings is at http://library.ust.hk/info/db/patents.html. For more information about patents, see http://library.ust.hk/res/guides/pf/patent/patweb.htm

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