

Overall Assessment

This is a remarkably useful tool. Facts on File has hit the mark with its target audience, and for a very reasonable price. Any high school or public library, as well as any academic library needing to provide introductory materials on women's history, should consider subscribing to this online database.

Contract Provisions

Site licenses allow for access by library patrons both in the library and remotely.

Authentication

Authentication can occur in four different ways: username/password; IP filtering; proxy server; or card holder bar code number.

Advisor Additional References

Andrews, Amy. "American Women's History: A Research Guide." *School Library Journal* 47, no.1 (Jan 2001): 59.

"Facts on file releases new database documenting American women's history." *Computers in Libraries* 20, no. 10 (Nov/Dec 2000): 14.

Oka, Christine K. "American Women's History: An On-Line Encyclopedia." *Library Journal* 125, no. 16 (Oct 1, 2000): 154.

Quinn, Mary Ellen. "American Indian History and Culture: An Online Encyclopedia / American Women's History: An Online Encyclopedia." *The Booklist* 97, no. 5 (Nov 1, 2000): 562.

Contact Information

Facts on File, Inc.

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URL: <http://www.factsonfile.com>

Notes

1. Telephone conversation with Ben Jacobs, Facts on File, February 14, 2001.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid. References: McKinney, R. D. "American Women's History." *Choice* (January 2001) [online] <http://www.choicereviews.org/>. Accessed 2/12/01. *The Booklist* (January 2001) [editor's choice 2000 article]

Biography

Christine Hamilton-Pennell is an independent information consultant specializing in literature reviews, needs assessments and feasibility studies, Web-based subject research guides, online course design, and Web site development. She is also an adjunct professor for the Library and Information Services master's program at the University of Denver. Previously, she served as director the Colorado Department of Education's Resource Center for 11 years, and has worked in academic, school, and medical libraries as well. ■



▼ ADVISOR REVIEWS—STANDARD REVIEW

e-global library

February 21, 2001

Composite Score:

★★★★ 1/4

Reviewed by: Larry Sheret

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Product Description

Pricing is based upon whichever of the two contracts provide subscribers with the best deal. The Annual Enterprise contract pricing is listed below. Target prices for three FTE's have been listed. The actual prices for both the "Base Library," as well as for each of the options, is based upon the actual FTE and is determined on a sliding scale that may be interpolated or extrapolated from the numbers below. An FTE of 500 is the minimum enrollment that is eligible for Annual Enterprise pricing. Volume users receive a per capita discount.

Base Library:	500 FTE	\$ 9,375
	1,000 FTE	\$ 15,000
	2,500 FTE	\$ 24,000

Optional modules include the following:

OCLC Databases:	500 FTE	\$ 6,000
	1,000 FTE	\$15,000
	2,500 FTE	\$24,000
Document Delivery:	500 FTE	\$ 4,000
	1,000 FTE	\$ 9,300
	2,500 FTE	\$17,250
On-Call Reference:	500 FTE	\$ 4,000
	1,000 FTE	\$15,000
	2,500 FTE	\$28,000

Subscribers may prefer the flexibility of contracting on a per semester (or term) basis by paying a sign-up fee of \$1,000 plus the following amount for each student signed up:

Base Library per student:	\$ 10
OCLC Databases:	\$ 6
Document Delivery:	\$ 10
On-Call Reference:	\$ 8

e-global library has its corporate roots in Jones Intercable, one of the nation's top ten cable providers which was founded in 1967. With a sharply developed vision for using technology to make educational opportunities ubiquitous via the internet, JonesKnowledge.com, Inc. was created to oversee the development of a number of educational enterprises. One of these is Jones International University, which was founded in 1993 and began offering classes in 1995. In 1999, Jones International University became the first fully online university to receive NCA accreditation.

The virtual library at Jones International University was originally created to support the university's program in business administration. Expanding upon this model, the online library increased its holdings to include a comprehensive range of multidisciplinary information resources to support the online course needs of high schools (advanced placement level), universities, corporations and nonprofit organizations.

The library's contracts with online vendors have been negotiated so that the information resources of Jones International University may be licensed on the open market. The result is *e*-global library, the first comprehensive online library designed for online students available by subscription.

Educational institutions searching for a way to supplement the library and information services they already provide to their students, or which need a comprehensive package to provide all of the information needs of their students, may find *e*-global library to be a quality, cost-effective and expedient solution. Very large institutions will probably find less value in this product since they already provide these products and services to their students, and because they possess economies of scale to secure reduced rates from vendors.

The homepage is formatted with a menu bar running along the left third of the screen and a text window filling the rest of the screen. Whatever item is selected from the menu bar is explained in the text window.

The menu bar lists 11 possible selections: Online Tutorials, Research Guides, Research Databases, Internet Resources, Government Resources, Financial Aid, Career Development, Reference Desk, Document Requests, Course Resources, and What's New at the Library.

Online Tutorials are broken down into sections: *e*-global library 101, Business 101, Internet 101 (unfortunately, the discussion on search engines does not mention Google.com), Libraries 101, and Research Papers 101. These tutorials are concise works packed with useful information.

Research Guides show students how information is arranged and how it can be accessed by subject in a variety of formats and from a variety of sources.

Research Databases available through *e*-global library are divided into five categories: general resources, business, humanities, social sciences, and science and technology.

- General Resources provides access to databases from OCLC. These include ABI INFORM, ArticleFirst, ASTA, ContentsFirst, CWI (Contemporary Women's Issues), ECO, ERIC, FactsOn-File, GenSciAbs, GPO: US Government Printing Office, Hu-

manitiesAbs, MEDLINE, netFirst, PapersFirst, PerAbs, ProceedingsFirst, ReadersGuideAbs, SocAbs, Union Lists, Wilson-Business, WilsonSelect, WorldAlmanac and WorldCat. Of these 23 databases, 14 provide full-text information.

- Business databases are ABI Inform, Econlit and Wilson Business Abstracts.
- The Humanities database is Humanities Abstracts.
- Social Sciences is comprised of Contemporary Women's Issues, Education Abstracts, ERIC, and PAIS International.
- Science and Technology has Applied Science and Technology Abstracts, CINAHL, general Science Abstracts, and MEDLINE.

Many databases that have the term "abstracts" in the title, such as Humanities Abstracts, actually include numerous full-text articles, along with articles that are simply abstracted or indexed. Conversely, some of the full-text databases are not entirely full-text, but include a mix of full-text articles and abstracted information.

Internet Resources are carefully selected according to ACRL guidelines by subject specialists and professional librarians based upon each site's ability to support curricula with content rich material. All of the Web sites have been indexed and annotated.

Government Resources is a select subject index to 325 government Web sites that provide access to 150,000 documents.

Financial Aid is divided into various sections that cover the financial aid process, meta-sites of links to financial aid resources, scholarship listings and specialized resources. The specialized resources section has sites for minorities, women, re-entry students, MBA majors, and graduate students.

Career Development Resource Center gives guidance through its sections on recommended reading, getting started, finding out about an industry or company, internet job databases and resume postings, and career skills.

Many subjects covered in the above listings are broken down into sub-categories. For example, the Career Skills Option from the Career Development Resource Center just mentioned contains 11 topics, including Changing Careers; Dressing for Success; Excelling in an Interview; Negotiating the Best Job Offer; Networking; Personality Tests and Self Assessment; Relocation Resources; Salary Surveys; and Writing Cover Letters, Resumes, and More.

Reference Desk gives personalized reference services to faculty and students by providing online forms for submitting reference questions. Response times are usually under an hour, with a guarantee to respond within no more than 24 hours. This is also the place to go for technical computer support. Institutions that wish to opt out of the reference desk service may have links set up to direct students to their own libraries. This allows subscribers to avoid duplication of services and to save money without students noticing that they have been shifted from one service provider to another.

Document Requests provides instruction and online forms for students to obtain articles, books, and dissertations.

Course Resources is the digital reserve-shelf where professors may post their own course materials.

What's New at the Library is the online equivalent of a "New Books and Magazines" rack.

Link checks are automatically run on the entire site every 24 hours to verify that every link is current.



***e*-global library Review Scores Composite: ★★★★★ 1/4**

The maximum number of stars in each category is 5.

Content: ★★★★★ 1/2

e-global library is designed to support the library needs of AP high school through university students who are taking online courses. Although it has competitors in some of the various components of its product, *e*-global library offers the most comprehensive online library service currently available that most closely mirrors the workings of a traditional library. It is also the only online library of its kind to have obtained agreements from vendors to license its products and services to third parties.

Searchability: ★★★★★ 1/2

The site uses a well thought out, annotated menu system to quickly direct students to the information resources that suit their course requirements. Keyword searching is not needed or available until a database is chosen from the menu. From that point, searchability varies from database to database. Only quality databases are included in the menus, some of which are public domain, and others of which are licensed. Most of these databases have excellent search tools. The principal point of access for general information is OCLC's FirstSearch, which offers everything from simple key word to advanced precision searching of multiple databases simultaneously.

Pricing: ★★★★★

Two pricing options are available. One is a sliding scale that is linked to total FTE (including online and onsite students) which gives cost reductions to higher volume subscribers, and the other is based upon an individual online class head-count of the number of students enrolled (as opposed to FTE) and a \$1,000 per semester (or term) institutional signup fee. Due to some of the complexities of the pricing structure, it will be necessary for pricing to be determined on a contract-by-contract basis.

Contract Options: ★★★★★

Two contract options are available. The Annual Enterprise contract is based upon FTE, and it includes both the online and onsite student population. The Per Student/Per Term contract is available on a semester (or duration of class) basis. All contracts include the Base Library offering, which includes everything but On-Call Reference services, ILL/Document Delivery and OCLC access. These features may be added at an additional cost. Simultaneous user and consortium contracts are available, but must be negotiated separately.

Contracts may be tailored so that academic libraries may integrate their own resources with those of *e*-global library in a seamless way. A library that already has remote access to particular databases may request that these be linked to the *e*-global library Web site, thus allowing students to be "passed through" to online content from their own home library. "Pass through" agreements may also connect students to their own school's Reference and ILL departments if so desired.

Technical Requirements

For text-based information, a 486 PC, or an earlier model Mac should be adequate to navigate the site and the databases it provides. For graphics, use no less than a 75 MHz computer with at least 12M memory and a 14.4 modem. Users with fast computers and internet connections will love the quick download times made possible by *e*-global's three T-1 lines

Usage statistics are available to subscribers.

Critical Evaluation

e-global library is an information broker that has pulled together excellent information resources, and packaged them in a way that makes them more affordable and readily available through a user-friendly delivery system that is fully tailorable to the needs of individual institutions and libraries.

Just as a Wall Street mutual fund is able to give professionally managed stock market access to smaller investors at an affordable price, *e*-global library is an information broker that gives access to several quality online library services for a price which most educational facilities would be unable to match if they were to implement these services on their own. Of course, most schools already have libraries, so the question is, will they receive enough value from *e*-global library to justify the added expense?

I suffered sticker shock when I first saw the cost of a licensing agreement. But after thinking about the amount and quality of the resources available to students, and especially through OCLC, I believe the product is reasonably priced for many institutions. Short of designing their own online libraries, businesses and academic facilities that need online library services seem to have few viable options to *e*-global library. Colleges that are "transitioning" into providing services to online students for the first time may find *e*-global to be a great stop-gap measure, if not a permanent one.

Since the creator of *e-global library*, Jones International University, has received NCA accreditation, it seems reasonable to assume that academic facilities subscribing to this product could rest assured that they are providing a quality offering to their students.

Small volume users would never be able to assemble this kind of service and access to information for anywhere near these prices. Large users may find it cost effective to subscribe to *e-global library* by canceling some of their existing online subscriptions, and by taking advantage of the lower group rates that this service offers.

e-global library is user-friendly, but some students may encounter some frustration as they develop their information literacy skills. I'm not sure what can be done about this. Part of the problem comes from the fact that some of the most robust resources offered are ones that have been constructed for use by professional librarians. This has both an upside and a downside. The upside is that students will have access to material usually verboten to them. The downside is that these products may seem a bit unwieldy and frustrating to students who are not familiar with the strengths and limitations of these sites.

To their great credit, *e-global library* has selected only authoritative resources of particular benefit to learners. The trade-off is that often, desired information is readily available only in abstracted form, and that the extra step of ordering a document for a fee from an online vendor, or obtaining a document or book through ILL, is required... just as in a traditional library.

In an age when so much information is available at the stroke of a key, some students will simply not choose to take advantage of the abstracted indexes mixed in along with the full-text offerings. Even though it is very user friendly, some of its offerings cater to students who have a higher degree of information literacy. Using this site is like the online equivalent of going into a major academic library for the first time. It will take time for most students to get comfortable locating information from the online library, just as it would be for them to locate the resources in a large, conventional academic library.

The site might be enhanced by adding an "additional information" section that would include those sites deemed authoritative and valuable, but which do not fit in to the "academically useful" filter that *e-global library* uses in its selection process, such as high quality subscription sites that students may wish to purchase on their own.

Searchability. Although indexed and abstracted online information from reputable suppliers is usually the best way to find scholarly material, as most of us have experienced, a simple internet keyword search is the best solution in some situations. I asked the science tutor here at the Aravaipa Campus to run a search using *e-global library*. I told him that I wanted to observe him in order to get an idea as to how intuitive the site was for a novice user.

He wanted to find information on Nitinol. His first choice was to go to the Research database and to scroll down to Science & Technology. His keyword search only yielded abstracts. There was relevant information, but he said he didn't want abstracts. He wanted full-text information.

Trying again, he chose General Search. This took him directly into OCLC. He clicked on ArticleFirst and entered his search term, Nitinol. There were 140 hits, but only one was full text.

In contrast, a search for Nitinol on Google yielded 6,210 hits, and the first several screens were loaded with an abundance of relevant information, including scientific tables regarding the molecular properties of Nitinol, its uses, manufacturers, and suppliers.

Although *e-global library* is intuitive enough for a first-time user to navigate easily, some information, as demonstrated in the search for Nitinol, is available only through document delivery or ILL... just as in a traditional library. Or, as in this case, a simple Google search more than did the trick.

Institutions that subscribe to this product should understand that some of the tools that *e-global library* provides are usually available only to librarians, and that to use these tools effectively takes skill and practice. Along with the enormous amount of information that is instantaneously available from this site, sometimes there is no choice but to wait for a book ordered through ILL, or an article by document delivery. And sometimes, the best option is to contact the reference librarian for help.

Competitors

Although *e-global library* is currently the only comprehensive provider of academically structured digital online library services that mirror traditional library services, several of its features are also provided by competitors.

For example, netLibrary offers e-books of current publications. *e-global*'s solution is to provide links to Amazon.com, which provides hard-copy texts for roughly the same price as an e-book. And OCLC's FirstSearch informs students where to find the nearest libraries that have copies of any desired text for them to check out or obtain through ILL.

Internet Public Library <www.ipl.org> is a free site supported by corporate donations and volunteers. IPL is a truly phenomenal resource. It is easy to use and does not disappoint. It provides an enormous amount of online information, for example: Ready Reference, 4,110 items; Associations, 2,068 items; Native Authors, 1,414 items; Literary Criticism, 3,810 items; Texts, 13,142 items; Newspapers, 2,827 items; Serials, 3,238 items; plus sections on Librarians' Resources, Great Libraries, and Young People. Altogether, IPL contains 33,905 content rich items. I have not stumbled across a single dead link.

In addition to IPL, one may access Librarians' Index to the Internet <www.lii.org> or Virtual Library <www.vlib.org>, a site originated by Tim Berners-Lee (the inventor of HTML) and maintained by volunteers. VL is an impressive high-quality site that is expanding.. although it is not as extensive as IPL or lii.

These free sites do not provide remote access to databases of full-text journals such as are offered by Elsevier, KR Dialog, Gale (InfoTrac), et.al., but these products might prove to be more expensive than a subscription to *e-global library*. Nor do the free sites offer several of *e-global library*'s features: active reference services by on-duty librarians, for example, research guides, access to subscription sites such as WilsonSelect and FirstSearch, or easy-to-fill-out forms to request books through ILL or articles by document delivery. Nevertheless, IPL, lii and VL are near the top of *e-global library*'s internet links, showing that it has truly pulled together the best sites and has bundled them into a single product.

There are, of course, an enormous number of online services that provide information in various subject areas: companies such as Questia, Wilson and Gale. *e-global library* is not in competition with these companies. In fact, it derives much of its content from its "competitors." *e-global library* is unique with respect to the licensing agreements it has worked out with some of them to make their products available by subscription to users in a package deal that provides access to a greater breadth of information at a more affordable price.

When I asked a representative of *e-global* library who their main competitor was, I received the following response. "We really have no competitors. Groups that provide access to digital content provide only a piece of what a library offers while we provide the entire internet-based library model. By mirroring a brick-and-mortar library, we can effectively extend the reach of academic libraries. We are not a substitute for libraries. Our goal is to support and promote the concept of libraries as resource centers rather than as a narrow compendium of articles."

Authentication

Authentication and access to the site is by username and password only, which I believe to be the simplest and most hassle-free approach.

Selected Users

Florida Online High School
Jones International University

Author Selected References

McGhee, Tom. Cyber-library dedicated to researchers. *Denver Post* Dec.4,2000. <www.denverpost.com/business/biz1204d.htm>

Jones, Glen. Lifelong Learning 2025: Farewell to the last analog professor. *Communications Engineering and Design* <www.ced-magazine.com/25thsupp/supp4.htm>

Contact Information

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Advisor Additional References

Rogers, Michael. "Jones offers digital library service." *Library Journal* 126, no. 2 (Feb 1, 2001): 15.

Biography

Larry Sheret is the Program Coordinator of the Learning Resource Center at Central Arizona College, Aravaipa Campus. He serves on Central Arizona College's Learning Outcomes and Web Development committees. Mr. Sheret earned his MA from the University of Arizona School of Information Resources and Library Science in 1996. ■



▼ ADVISOR REVIEWS—STANDARD REVIEW

e-global library: Another Perspective

Composite Score:

★★★

Reviewed by: **Chuck Hamaker**

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The full-text components offered in *e-global* seem to me overpriced and underdeveloped. In the information rich environment that many university and college libraries now support, suggesting this package is "distance education support" would not meet the ACRL guidelines for many institutions. The guidelines state:

Members of the distance learning community are entitled to library services and resources equivalent to those provided for students and faculty in traditional campus settings. (ACRL Guidelines for Distance Learning Library Services, Fall 2000. <<http://www.ala.org/acrl/guides/distlrng.html>>)

e-global itself explains that its services should be seen as a supplement to a local library's efforts.

Full-text, Web-based databases are much less expensive than the prices involved in *e-global*'s products might suggest. EBSCO's Ultra Online package, including Masterfile Ultra (which provides 550 full-text journal titles, Health Source Plus, ERIC, and a professional development package with 358 full-text education serials) sells to high schools for

around \$3,000. EBSCO has even developed a junior high and a separate community college netLibrary package for full-text e-books. A free journals full-text database on the Web right now also has some very high quality journals (including 300 magazines and journals <<http://findarticles.com>>), with full text ranging from the *Annual Review of Psychology* and *Harvard Health Letter*, to *Harper's*.

The Contemporary Women's Issues package from Gale is advertised on Gale's Web site with a base price of \$900. OCLC's Article First competes with free table of contents databases like ingenta's UnCover. And even the free Web full-text database PubMed provides free MEDLINE. ERIC is widely available free on the Web. Business databases such as EconLit and ABI Inform are normally only available to educational institutions. I will note, however, that *e-global* is a very good way to get ABI Inform, as the "stand alone" price for this file to institutions is relatively expensive, compared to EBSCOhost products.

If a college or university has a business school they should be considering those resources themselves, rather than going to a re-seller like