In keeping with international trends in technology and information resources, a palatable feast awaits the information appetite in terms of online databases in 2005. The merging of the campus libraries into a single entity has resulted in every effort being made to provide university-wide access to as many databases as possible. This smorgasbord of information sources is a blend of staples such as the uniquely local Sabinet Online, the South African collection of online indexes, to what some consider to be the caviar of sources, ScienceDirect, with its full text facility and links to citations, websites and personalized alerting service. The bread-and-butter dishes such as EBSCOHost, with its multidisciplinary flavour, and Web of Knowledge (ISI citation indexes) - a delicious mix of science, social science, arts and humanities and education – are ever sustaining, and together with specialist treats such as Wilson Education Full Text, ABI Inform (business), EconLit, Art Abstracts, SciFi (includes Chemical Abstracts), BIOSIS and International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (to name but a few), there should be something to satisfy every taste.

The new e-cuisine does not automatically provide a fast food replacement for the traditional approach to information searching. New tools and ingredients require new ways of thinking and working but for some processes there are no cheaper substitutes. Just as food selection and preparation is vital to the creation of delicious and digestible meals, ever more necessary in the e-environment are topic analysis, identification of key words and synonyms for searching, correct usage of features such as Boolean operators and wildcards, and above all, the evaluation of information found to establish its suitability for the purpose.

In its new packaging what you see is not necessarily what you get, neither is it the full extent of what is available. Even sugar coated offerings have their limitations. The ‘ready steady cook’ ten minute meal approach is likely to leave one malnourished in this complex information world particularly in the light of the range of brands where no two products are the same, continuity is not guaranteed, something new is on special every week and there is always the latest flavour of the month. Like the warning in small print on the average container of ‘lite’ food, databases ‘need to be used in conjunction with’… a number of other information sources to provide results that are nutritionally balanced.

Some training in database searching is necessary to enable users to keep up-to-date with what is available, and to evaluate the content of the products on offer without being dazzled by the packaging. Only those with discriminating palates appreciate that the proof of the pudding is in the eating not the packaging. Does the 2005 menu mean the demise of the printed traditional fare? Indeed not. This year on two campuses already library issue statistics total 355 388; over 11 000 books are on order with more orders still waiting to be placed, and library photocopiers produced in excess of 3 million pages (which is several hundred thousand prints more than those e-merging from printers in student LANSI).

Librarians have risked indigestion from e-consumption by spending many hours attending promotions and training courses. They have sampled an array of tempting products and are committed to training users in trying new recipes to achieve deliciously exciting and digestible results. Are you ready to savour 2005’s new menu that retains the best of the old but includes appetizing new food for thought?

Rose Kuhn and Jenny Aitchison
Book Fair at Westville Library

The 6th Annual Book Fair was held in the Westville campus library from 21 to 23 September. Fourteen South African publishers from as far afield as Cape Town and including one audio visual materials supplier, displayed local and foreign publications, most published post 2000. The book fair was officially opened by Prof. Makgoba. The Westville campus purchased some 3240 books from the fair.

Ashika Ramlakhan

Conferences

Norma Russell and Rani Moodley from Medical School library, along with Richard Beharilal from Westville campus recently attended the 2nd Annual Conference of the Health Information Community of South Africa held in Bloemfontein from 8 – 9 November. They were part of a group of some fifty delegates. The theme was: “Caring and sharing: information support for a healthy nation”. Ten papers were presented on a range of topics focusing on specific health resources facilities and aspects of technology and knowledge management in libraries. Rani presented a paper titled “The changing role of the health science librarians with the introduction of problem-based learning at the Nelson R Mandela School of Health Sciences” and also chaired a session. Various service providers gave presentations on their products and the delegates were given a tour of the SASOL library. It is possible that next year’s conference will be held in Durban.

Rani Moodley and Richard Beharilal

Databases

- **ScienceDirect**
  UKZN now has online access to ScienceDirect. This database, launched commercially in 1999, contains full text access to some 1800 scientific, medical, technological and some non science periodicals published by Elsevier. A few journals from other publishers are also included. Available are some sixty million abstracts, two million full-text articles with another one million accessible via CrossRef to other publisher’s platforms. Full-text access is from 1995. Some of Elsevier’s reference works will also accessible in full text.

  Richard Beharilal

- **Web of Knowledge**
  This popular online index has been available since January 2004 with a ten year back file. From 2005 UKZN has purchased the complete back file going back to 1945 for all three citation indexes.

E G Malherbe Library Stocktake

Stocktaking will commence on Monday 29th November, partly to prepare for future transfers of library stock and partly to consolidate the collection for the new library system planned for 2006. A large number of library staff will be involved in the exercise so the library will operate on a skeleton staff. All queries should be directed through Mr Sibiya (X2044) or Mr Sikhakhane (X2322/3). The stocktake will commence on the first floor. Whilst the stocktake is underway on any particular floor, there will be no access to that floor. The library apologizes in advance for any inconvenience caused to users.

Catherine Dubbeld
**e-Research Workshop**

On 3 November, the UKZN research office hosted a workshop whose purpose was to discuss the development of an enhanced e-research infrastructure at UKZN to manage the institution’s intellectual capital and digital content and to devise initiatives for developing an information infrastructure that could enhance research and support researchers. Catherine Dubbeld from E G Malherbe library, one of several speakers, provided input on the problems of sustaining access to expensive electronic journals. An interest group was formed and the formation of an institutional repository suggested to encourage deposition of pre-prints and to disseminate information.

Catherine Dubbeld

**Gateway Information Service to become infofind@ukzn**

The Gateway Information Service, housed in the E G Malherbe library is to change its name as of January 2005. It is still being run as a fee-based business information service open to firms and individuals. Contact Julia Vorster for more information: 031 260 3030; or infofind@ukzn.ac.za; or vorster@ukzn.ac.za

Catherine Dubbeld

**Heritage Day celebrations**

“Our women, our heritage: celebrating 10 years of democracy” was the title of the Alan Paton Centre’s Heritage Day seminar which featured a slide show from the collections of the APC followed by five women speakers who shared their experiences on a range of women’s issues covering education, the work of Black Sash and women in government. Thina Siwendu, KZN Business Woman of the Year, was the final speaker. Texts of the speeches are available from the APC.

Jewel Koopman

**ISBN – 13 in South Africa**

International Standard Book Numbers (ISBNs) are to change from the current ten to thirteen digits with effect from January 2007. “The main reason for changing the ISBN is to increase the numbering capacity of the ISBN system. As a result of electronic publishing and other changes in the publishing industry, the numbering capacity of the ISBN system is being consumed at a much faster rate than was originally anticipated in the 1960’s when the ISBN system was designed for printed books” (ISBN website). Existing ISBNs will be prefixed by 978. Publisher identifiers will therefore change. For further information: [http://www.isbn-international.org](http://www.isbn-international.org).

Catherine Dubbeld

**Library Staff Indaba**

- On Monday 6 December the first meeting of all library staff from all campuses will take place on the Pietermaritzburg campus for the morning. All libraries will remain open on this day. The meeting has been organized by Prof Abdool Karim, DVC Research.
- Professors Abdool Karim and Walker have held meetings at all the campus libraries in recent weeks to bring staff up to date with merger developments.

**Perseus Survey Solutions**

Several library staff recently attended training in an online survey package, Perseus Survey Solutions, which is designed to accommodate the creation, distribution, collation and analysis of survey instruments and data. The training was initiated by esATI and all library participants are committed to producing a library-based questionnaire. The focus of the questionnaires will be user
expectations of OPAC, in the light of the impending replacement of URICA with a new library system, Unicorn. Perseus is useful for a wide range of non-library applications. Richard Beharilal

Pietermaritzburg Campus

- Over the vacation period, the Main Library will be adding more shelving units on the top floor and replacing the current study desks with more compact units.
- The current OPACs, workstations and subject librarian PCs are in the process of being replaced.
- The Life Sciences Library offered e-resources training in one of the Agricultural Faculty LANS from 22 – 24 November. Databases covered included Sabinet Online, EBSCOhost, CAB, ScienceDirect and Web of Knowledge. Rose Kuhn

Retirements

- Frances Roberts, head librarian of Edgewood library and Norma Russell, head librarian of Medical School Library, are due to retire at the end of this year. Frances has been chief librarian at Edgewood since 1997. She has numerous library and teaching qualifications including a Masters in Information Studies. She is a prolific publisher and has numerous publications to her credit including short stories and a monthly column in the British Writers’ News. She has held various library and teaching posts during her working career and has taught French and Creative Writing.
- Norma joined the University in 1987 as assistant librarian at Killie Campbell, moving to the Medical School Library in 1990. When the Medical School considered introducing problem based learning, Norma applied for a bursary and traveled to Australia in 1998, visiting various sites to ascertain the role of libraries in supporting such learning. She has numerous qualifications and publications to her name. She was active in the planning of the new Inkosi Albert Luthuli Hospital Library.

Both Norma and Frances have been asked to stay on temporarily next year for six months until senior posts are filled. Catherine Dubbeld and Nora Buchanan

User Education

- With a new academic year just round the corner, academic staff are requested to consult with subject librarians concerning training in the use information resources for students in the new year.
- Library orientation will once again be offered during Orientation Week 2005 in all libraries.

Year End Library Parties

The respective campus libraries will be holding their annual get-togethers on the days listed below. No library staff will be available during these times but all libraries will remain open, staffed by student assistants.

- Howard College, Medical School and Edgewood: 15 December; 1.30 – 4pm
- Pietermaritzburg: 2 December; 2 – 4.30pm
- Westville: 8 December; 12 – 2.30pm

The library staff of UKZN library wish all our users a Happy Christmas and New Year and a restful break over the annual shutdown period.
SELECTED ONLINE DATABASES AVAILABLE TO **ALL CAMPUSES IN 2005**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Database</th>
<th>Access Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABI Inform</td>
<td>Index and abstracts; unlimited access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Abstracts</td>
<td>Full text; unlimited access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Healthline</td>
<td>Index; 6 – 10 users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Studies (Nipad)</td>
<td>Index; unlimited access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biosis</td>
<td>Index; 10 concurrent users; 10 years backfile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSA Biological Abstracts</td>
<td>Index; unlimited access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Dissertations</td>
<td>Index plus abstracts from 1980; 24 page thesis overviews for theses from 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecology Abstracts</td>
<td>Index; unlimited access back to 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EconLit</td>
<td>Some full text; unlimited access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Bibliography of the Social Sciences</td>
<td>Index; unlimited access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOP: Institute of Physics Archive</td>
<td>Index; 1874 – 1992; unlimited access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLA (Modern Language Association) Bibliography</td>
<td>6 concurrent users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ScienceDirect (Elsevier journals)</td>
<td>Full text; unlimited access; 10 years back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SciFi (includes Chemical Abstracts)</td>
<td>Some full text links; 3 concurrent users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociological Abstracts</td>
<td>Index; unlimited access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web of Knowledge (ISI citation indexes and Journal Citation Reports)</td>
<td>Index; 5 concurrent users; 1945 onwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westlaw</td>
<td>Full text; unlimited access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson Education</td>
<td>Full text; unlimited access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson Humanities Abstracts</td>
<td>Unlimited access</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Newsletter committee:** Catherine Dubbeld (dubbeld@ukzn.ac.za, extn 2318); Pretty Nkosi (nkosip2@ukzn.ac.za, extn 2299) Howard College campus; Rani Moodley (moodleyk@ukzn.ac.za, extn 4372) and Nonhlanhla Ngcobo (ngcobon15@ukzn.ac.za, extn 4260) Medical School campus; Richard Beharilal (beharilalr@ukzn.ac.za, extn 7450) Westville campus and Rose Kuhn (kuhn@ukzn.ac.za, extn 5904) Pmb campus.

Please contact Gita Ramdass (ramdass@ukzn.ac.za, ext. 5896 (mornings only) Pmb campus if you would prefer a print copy of the newsletter.
Book review

Hass, Amira. Reporting from Ramallah: an Israeli journalist in an occupied land
Los Angeles: Semiotext(e) 2003.
(Pietermaritzburg Campus: Main Library) 956.953044092 HAS

As the world awaits the impact of Yassar Arafat’s death, this book serves as another stark reminder of how the lives of ordinary innocent and powerless people are distorted and degraded at the hands of those with power and resources. Amira Hass is the first and only Jewish Israeli correspondent for a major Hebrew news provider to have lived amongst the Palestinians she writes about, in Ramallah and Gaza. She describes herself as ‘a correspondent on Palestinian affairs’ and ‘an expert in Israeli occupation’ (p7). The book is a chronological collection of accounts of her encounters with the everyday lives of Palestinians under Israeli occupation between 1997 and 2002. Although the thirty seven accounts are discrete and unrelated, they serve to expose both the shameful scenario of increasing brutality and dehumanization of Palestinians by both Israeli and Palestinian administrations, as well as the growing, seemingly irreconcilable hostilities between two nations in one land.

As far as Hass is concerned, the rising rate of suicides amongst Palestinians, which she sees as an ‘extreme expression of the despair, frustration, purposelessness, and overwhelming anger plaguing …neighbourhoods’ (p16) is the result of several factors. The most noticeable is the violence of plenty; for those who do not have and have been dispossessed, plenty represents the worst in violations of human rights and dignity. For example, the April 30, 2000 article discusses Israeli plans for ‘bypass roads’, which she considers to be unnecessary considering the existing road structure. These ‘bypass’ roads will cut through the cultivated lands of four Palestinian villages and run through a refugee camp necessitating the demolition of several houses. As laws forbid a host of activities either side of a road, access to their fields and thus their livelihoods will be denied Palestinian landowners. In addition, many people, already refugees, will be forced to move yet again to make way for the roads. Twenty four hour curfews in Israeli-controlled areas are turned on and off at whim, interrupting schooling and basic everyday activities for weeks or months on end whilst neighbouring areas under Palestinian control are unaffected.

In the occupied territories Palestinians are not treated as equals, and there is no social conscience in those who seek total subjugation. Other articles describe arbitrary arrests, demolition of homes, overcrowding and poverty, deliberate disregard for laws, and a myriad of bureaucratic and military structures that ensure that ‘hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are criminals or potential criminals’ because they have no other options. Shooting of children from twelve years occurs because the military considers any child over twelve an adult, in direct violation of international law.

Perhaps the greatest impact of this book is in the matter-of-fact manner in which Hass so graphically describes the various scenarios, simply, and with great attention to detail. Her almost dispassionate manner in terms of the presentation of stories of everyday hardships reinforces the futility of one of the greatest humanitarian disasters on earth.

Rose Kuhn

Other related books