

Library Update Online

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1. Electronic Resources

The Library has subscribed to the web version of General Periodicals Ondisc (GPO). The web version of GPO is known as Periodicals Abstract Research II and it is accessible via Proquest (<http://www.umi.com/proquest/>)

Sport Discus is now available via OVID Gateway (<http://gateway.ovid.com/autologin.html>) instead of NIENet, bringing the existing number of databases available via OVID Gateway from four to five. Electronic version of The Economist is now accessible from any PCs on the campus. You need to obtain the password from the Library's Reference staff or get it from the NIE Staff Intranet. These databases are accessible only from PCs on the campus or through remote dial-up.

To date, the Library has

Type of Database	As at 31 Dec 1998
CD-ROM Database	22
Online Database	13
Regional Database	2
Electronic Journal	65

2. Booking System for use of Facilities in Library

With an increase in number of student recruitment, the Library has implemented a booking system for use of AV equipment, microform reader-printers, multimedia computers, study rooms and discussion rooms. The booking system which allows for 1-day advance reservations, facilities tracking of abuse and illegal use of facilities.

3. Viewing of NIE Theses/Dissertations Abstracts via WebOPAC

Users of WebOPAC (our Library's catalogue on the Library's Web page) will be able to view abstracts and summaries of theses and dissertations. A hyperlink is available at each thesis/dissertation's library record in the Library bibliographic database and by clicking this link, users will be connected to the abstract. This provides the convenience of searching records and viewing the abstracts from the same access point.

4. Searching of Chinese Titles

Three PCs installed with the WinMASS freeware are now available at the Library's lobby to facilitate searching of Chinese titles. Users can now view Chinese characters in the OPAC by activating the WinMASS software before searching the library catalogue. A search guide, Access to Chinese Catalogue via the Information Gateway, is also available next to the PCs for quick reference purpose.

5. Loan Policy for Malaysian Magazines (without distribution rights)

Recently, the Ministry of Information and the Arts has notified the Library that permits are required for sale and distribution, in Singapore, of newspapers (including magazines) printed or published in Malaysia. Serials Unit is in the process of seeking the Ministry's approval to import those magazines which do not yet have such distribution rights.

Two important conditions for the importation are:

1. "the magazines are used for reference purposes only".
2. "the magazines shall not be circulated beyond the premises of your library".

Thus, CURRENT and BOUND Malaysian magazines without distribution rights are for reading in library only. Loan policy for all other non-restricted magazines remains unchanged.

6. Tea-time Reading with Yvonne Yin: British Newspapers Online

Why a write-up on British newspapers? Why not American newspapers? Well, as the ed says, if you wanna Yankee papers, it should be quite easy to look them up yourself. It's the Brits whose marketing ain't so hot (in fact, even their newspapers are practically all foreign-owned nowadays).

As for the NIE Library and Information Services Centre, it mainly subscribes to the local newspapers. This is of course not enough for the average info junkie, but happily gone are the days when one had to make trips to the British Council for the British newspapers and the National University of Singapore Library for the American ones (for the Aussie papers, one wrote to relatives).

A brief description of the major British dailies is given, followed by details of coverage and access. Naturally, the newspapers may make changes at any time, especially where registration and archives are concerned.

Description

All five of Britain's national broadsheet dailies are online. The *Daily Telegraph* (online version, *Electronic Telegraph*, or *ET* for short) is the top-selling British broadsheet, with a circulation of over a million. Running close behind is *The Times*, Britain's oldest and most famous newspaper. The *Daily Telegraph* and *The Times* are bitter rivals, and make absolutely no secret about it. Bankers swear by the *Financial Times* ("there's only one newspaper in the world and that's the *Financial Times*", I've heard one English banker say). *The Guardian* is a left-of-centre newspaper with a circulation of about 400,000. *The Independent*, the new kid on the block (founded in the eighties) is another left-of-centre paper, but with a circulation about half that of *The Guardian*'s.

The combined circulation of all five is slightly over 2.5 million, far less than that of the tabloids (which are not covered here for obvious academic reasons).

Newspapers

Electronic Telegraph

The Times

Financial Times

The Guardian

The Independent

URLs

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk>

<http://www.the-times.co.uk>

<http://www.ft.com>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk>

<http://www.independent.co.uk>

Registration

I did my registration some years back, and some things may have changed, but a quick check showed that the *Electronic Telegraph* (ET), *The Times* and the *Financial Times* (FT) still require registration. *The Guardian*, which previously did not require registration, now does, leaving *The Independent* to be true to its name and the only one where you don't have to register first before reading the articles. The forms for *The Times*, ET and *The Guardian* are quite short and easy to fill up, and the ET will also kindly email you back after you have successfully registered. (The *Financial Times* is very snoopy and asks you for your salary range as well). You register first, then bookmark the homepage and whatever sites you're interested in. After bookmarking, you will not have to log in or register again.

Archives

This is the Achilles heel of most of the online British broadsheets. The ET, which was the first online, is searchable all the way back to its launch date in November 1994, but certain regular features in the print version were not included until recently, while *The Times* has for over a year put up a notice saying that it has retired its search engine, and you can search only by date. The FT even charges for articles: as it has recently overhauled its archives, it is best to check again for the latest details. *The Guardian* has done some updating, but if *The Independent* has an archive, it's a well-kept secret. Fortunately, the NIE Library and Information Services Centre now subscribes to the networked version of *Dow Jones Interactive*, which includes all the five papers. However, *Dow Jones* is not that comprehensive either. Coverage of the *Daily Telegraph* goes back the furthest, to 1991, followed by *The Times* and *The Guardian* (1992). *The Independent* and FT go back to 1997. All are full-text except for the FT (abstracts only).

If you're interested in searching *Dow Jones* (which of course has thousands of other publications), please enquire at the Reference Counter.

Conclusion

With the advent of faster PCs and improvements in browsing software, online newspapers no doubt enjoy healthy online readership figures. Online newspapers are a real boon especially to overseas readers who may not have access to the print version, or who find that a subscription is too costly (one alternative initiated by some newspapers including the *Daily Telegraph* and the local *Straits Times* is to publish a weekly version). The online newspapers are at the moment freely accessible, at least for current issues. Whether they can sustain this free newspaper service indefinitely is another matter. Naturally one hopes they can, and that the advertisers who prop up the service will continue to remain exceedingly optimistic about their returns.