

Library Resources

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HOW CAN I USE ELECTRONIC RESOURCES FROM HOME?

By far the most frequent question we receive related to the electronic resources to which the Library subscribes is: **Can I use these resources from home?**

Answer: Any currently enrolled student and any MSU faculty and staff member can have remote access to electronic databases. Our subscription cost usually is based on the number of potential users. However, connecting to the resources is not automatic. First, you need to have a current MavCARD with a library barcode. That account must be activated. If you haven't used the card recently (or ever), check with the Library's Circulation staff (389-5064) to make sure the status is active.

There are several ways of connecting to the Library system. The explanations are provided through links from the Library's home page at www.lib.mnsu.edu. From "online resources" or "about the library" go to Remote Access. The instruction page includes directions about how to dial directly to the campus network and how to connect through an Internet Service Provider. Please note that students in the Residence Halls must follow these directions. Even though they are physically "on campus," they do not have a direct connection to the system.

The directions spell out how to configure various versions of Web browsers (Internet Explorer or Netscape) to be able to use the MSU proxy server. Once the instructions have been completed successfully, you will be required to log in with a User Name and password. The User Name is the 14-digit barcode on the back of the MavCard (begins with 201010. . .); the password is your last name. From that point you will not need additional passwords for individual databases.

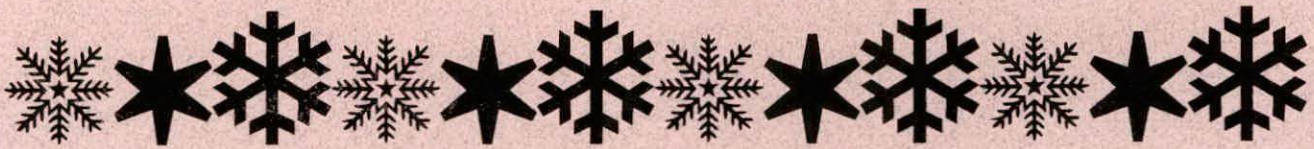
Why do I have to go through the hassle of dealing with a proxy server?

Answer: Because database vendors sell subscriptions to their products, they want to make sure that only people affiliated with institutions that have paid for the service have access to the information. Every computer connected to the Internet has a unique IP (Internet Protocol) number, and institutions usually have a sequence of IP numbers. When we subscribe, we provide particular IP numbers or ranges so that those machines will have access to the information from the vendor. If a person uses a machine that is part of this sequence, there is a direct connection and there is no need to supply a user name and password. However, the computer someone is using off campus or in dorm rooms will not fall into that IP range.

That's where the proxy server becomes important. A proxy server is an on-campus computer to which users can connect over the Internet. The computer is a kind of intermediary between the computer of the remote user and the database servers that supply information to which the Library has subscriptions. When you log in to the proxy server, you are identified as a legitimate user for whom MSU has paid access rights. Online agreements with vendors allow us to provide this remote access to users affiliated with our institution.

MSU's proxy server is maintained by Information and Technology Services. Questions about configuring the browser can be directed to the Help Desk at 389-6654 or HelpDesk@mnsu.edu. Questions about searching databases can be answered by reference librarians at 389-5958 or askref@mnsu.edu.

Additional information about proxy servers and libraries can be found in Peter Webster's article, "Remote patron validation: posting a proxy server at the digital doorway," in Computers in Libraries, September 2002.



FUNDING FOR ELECTRONIC RESOURCES IS AT A CRITICAL POINT

The huge deficit in the state budget is well known, but it is hard to anticipate what specific cuts will be enacted in the coming legislative session, especially those relating to higher education. If the budget for MnHESO (Minnesota Higher Education Services Office) is reduced any further, it will affect much more than the financial aid for students that most people associate with MnHESO. MINITEX is also a MnHESO program and could be targeted for cuts that would affect both public and private academic libraries around the state. More than 1,500 libraries in Minnesota benefit from MINITEX services, whether it is to borrow and lend using the MINITEX-funded delivery systems, request electronic delivery of articles to the end user's desktop, or take advantage of the discounts and contracts that MINITEX negotiates at the consortium level.

The many databases that MINITEX makes available are perhaps the most important consideration for MSU, Mankato students and faculty. Almost two thirds of the electronic resources currently offered through the MSU Library's web site are funded or subsidized by MINITEX. If MINITEX is funded below the current level, the MSU Library alone would need more than \$160,000 in additional funds to provide these resources that have become essential tools for faculty and students. Thanks to MINITEX, we can provide free and speedy delivery of books and articles via inter library loan and electronic delivery.

Everyone (students, faculty, the general public, the media, legislators) has been telling us that libraries need to move into the electronic era. MINITEX has been instrumental in helping Minnesota libraries move forward. At our library alone, over the past five years we have taken giant leaps in that direction. We now spend 31% of our subscription budget for journals and magazines in electronic format (compared to 7% five years ago). Thanks to MINITEX, we are able to negotiate excellent licenses that save us and many other Minnesota libraries thousands of dollars. Since many MSU faculty will continue to create online modules, our students will depend more and more on the availability of electronic resources and our university will continue to depend heavily on the resources that MINITEX provides or subsidizes.

As the legislative session unfolds, we will keep you posted on any developments that relate to MINITEX and MnHESO funding and will ask for your support throughout the process. We continue to count on MINITEX to provide online access to full text magazines and reference resources for post-secondary and K-12 students, faculty, teachers, and staff as well as the general public. We will also continue to count on your support during the tough months ahead.

Currently, MINITEX **subsidizes** the following resources:

- ACS Web Editions
(chemistry journals online)
- ArticleFirst
- Business & Company Resource Center
- CINAHL and CINAHL Journals
- Contemporary Authors
- Expanded Academic
- General Business File
- General Reference Center
- Health Reference Center
- Health and Wellness Resource Center
- PapersFirst
- ScienceDirect
- WorldCat

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This document is available in alternative format to individuals with disabilities by calling Library Services at (507) 389-5952 (V) or (800) 627-3529 (MRS/TTY).