Questions to Ponder…

- Do you think your reference collection is optimally used?
- What are some of the “unsung heroes” and “trusty work horses” of your reference collection?
What is REFERENCE UNIVERSE?

- Indexing to your reference collection, positioning those with most indexing at top of listing.
- Links through to your online catalog, for the call numbers
- Limiters can be used to make your search more precise
- Cost: MSU--$1895/yr
Why Explore Ref Universe?

- Reference Universe can be a way to know the contents of reference books.
- Reference Universe can be a way to find gaps in your collection.
- Reference books are good starting points for college students: contain expert opinion, concise context, and a "place to go next".
- Average allocation of $50,000 for reference collection, want to get use out of it.
- Good excuse to dig around in the reference collection!
Library catalogs have limited information about the content of a reference work

Reference Universe serves as a cumulative index to content in over 10,000 specialized encyclopedias and handbooks (print and electronic)

Covers all disciplines, over 10,000 works published from 1985-present

RU indexes both back-of-the-book indexes and article titles

Relevance ranking algorithm may be more effective than a standard keyword search in OPAC

(This information taken from Reference Universe web site)
Some libraries that subscribe

Albion College
Arizona State University
Arkansas State Library
Art Institute of Chicago
Auraria Library
Baylor University
Berry College
Bloomfield Township Public Library
Boise State University
Boston College
Boston University
Brandeis University
Brigham Young University
British Library
Broward Community College
Brown University
Bryn Mawr College
California Digital Library
California State University-Fullerton
California State University-Long Beach
California State University-Pomona
Cardozo Law Library
Carnegie Mellon University
Case Western Reserve University
Catholic University of America
Central Connecticut State University
Central Missouri State University
Century College
Century College
The Citadel
Clemson University
Cleveland State University
Colby College
Colgate University
College of Charleston
College of New Jersey
College of St. Scholastica
College of William and Mary
College of Wooster
Colorado College
Columbia University
Community College of Philadelphia
Cornell University
Dallas County Community College District
Dartmouth College
Davidson College
Denison University
Drew University
Duke University
Earlham College
Eastern Connecticut State University
Eastern Michigan University
Emory University
Florida Atlantic University
Florida International University
Florida International University
Franklin & Marshall College
Garland Independent School
George Mason University
Georgetown University
Georgia State University
Goucher College
Hamilton College
Hanover College
Harvard University
Haverford College
Hillsdale College
Hiram College
Hofstra University
Indiana University at Bloomington
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
James Madison University
Johns Hopkins University
Lane County Community College
Largo Library
Lewis & Clark College
Library of Congress
Marquette University
McGill University
McNeese State University
Memorial U University of Newfoundland
Messiah College
Miami University
Middlebury College
Middle Tennessee State University
Minneapolis Public Library
Minnesota State University, Mankato
Mississippi Library Commission
Morehead State University
Montana State University
Mount Holyoke College
Mount Union College
Muhlenberg College
Publishers

- ABC-CLIO
- Academic Press
- American Chemical Society
- AMS
- Backbeat
- Billboard
- Berkley
- Charles Scribner’s
- Corwin
- CQ
- Facts on File
- Gale

- Garland
- Greenwood
- Houghton-Mifflin
- Information Science Publishing
- Lucent Books
- MacMillan
- McFarland
- Nolo
- M E Sharpe
- Oryx
- Osprey
- Oxford

- Praeger
- Routledge
- Sage
- Scarecrow
- Smithsonian
- St. Martin’s
- United Nations
Study description

- 100 freshman Composition topics; chose 50 for the study, trying for disciplinary balance
- Eliminated electronic reference books but included all works (not just those at MSU) to gauge what we didn’t see
- Simple terms—search like an uninitiated user
- Looked to see how helpful Reference Universe would be to a novice library user.
- Wanted to explore Ref Universe as collection development tool as well
- Excuse to get to know the reference collection better
Limitations of our study

- We used a convenience sampling: we only used resources available at Minnesota State University, Mankato (Summer ’08, RU updated every two weeks)
- Academic collections; search through public library might get very different results
- We used BRIEF phrases to search
- We were modeling how an uninitiated student might search, not how an expert would search (e.g., didn’t limit by date)
- Dependent on 1) quality of indexing & 2) sources that have bought into Reference Universe
Some of the topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hazing</td>
<td>Alchemy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birth control Pill</td>
<td>Chinese Culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>HPV Vaccine</td>
<td>Professional Gaming</td>
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<td>Autism</td>
<td>Glass Blowing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evolution</td>
<td>Deep Sea Diving</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medicare</td>
<td>Boston Red Sox</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global Warming</td>
<td>Raising Puppies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stem Cell Research</td>
<td>Tsunamis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steroid Use in Sports</td>
<td>Five Points of New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binge Drinking</td>
<td>Spring break</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hemp based paper</td>
<td>Fashion</td>
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<td>Organic food</td>
<td>Surfing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water sanitation</td>
<td>Hybrid Cars</td>
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<tr>
<td>Genetic discrimination</td>
<td>Snowboarding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recess</td>
<td>Child Abuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADHD</td>
<td>Stem Cell Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steroids</td>
<td>Open adoption</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charter schools</td>
<td>Water quality in Minnesota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School shootings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 Useless = less than a page, a mention but not very helpful information.
2 Okay = okay, less than 3 pages, no bibliography, an okay starter point
3 Good = helpful, around 3 + pages, bibliography
4 Also noted “Don’t own”
Inter-rater reliability

- We did five independently to see if we thought we ranked them the same, which we did.
- Doing them meant going to the reference book, looking at the actual entry, not relying just on indexes or chapter headings.
Reference Universe

Reference Universe

Search Term(s): [Input Field] Search

Search As: [Keyword (all fields)]
- singular and plural forms
- exact phrase
- exact words

Search Citations Containing:
- all of the words (and)
- any of the words (or)

Display all Reference Universe Works

Begin Search | Use Browse Mode

The Cumulative Index to Reference Works
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Select Record</th>
<th>Reference Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Guide to real estate &amp; mortgage banking software&lt;br&gt;1988 Real Estate Solutions [HD1380.G85 1988]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>The Encyclopedia of Housing</strong>&lt;br&gt;1998 Sage Publications [HD7287.E53 1998]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Housing Statistics of the United States, Fourth Edition&lt;br&gt;2001 Bernan [HD7293.A1H654]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>West's Encyclopedia of American Law, edition 2</strong>&lt;br&gt;2004 Gale [KF154.W47 2004]</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><strong>Gale Encyclopedia of Everyday Law</strong>&lt;br&gt;2002 Gale [KF387.G27 2003]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples: Notable Sports Figures

Ty Cobb

Title with a .326 batting average; he was the first in the league ever to get 100 hits in a season; and his 40 stolen bases was third in the league. He joined the Tigers in the second month of the season. During the next five years Cobb would single-handedly make Detroit over from the weakest market for baseball to the most lucrative. Cobb's play with the Tigers that year alternated between brilliance, foolishness and embarrassment. He landed hits, ran into foolish outs and interfered with his own fielders. But he brought an element of excitement that few fans had ever experienced in baseball.

Despite being called up to the big leagues, 1905 and 1906 would be among the most difficult years of Cobb's life. In August, when he was preparing to join the Tigers, personal tragedy struck. His father was shot to death, and the killer was Cobb's own mother. Amelia Cobb thought her husband, who was climbing in his bedroom window at night, was a prowler, and in March 1906 she was found not guilty. W.H. Cobb's unexpected death robbed Cobb of the family member he was closest to, and possibly the only one capable of exerting a steadying influence on the headstrong youth. It also meant Cobb the chance to prove to his father that he had made good in baseball.

Cobb's difficulties did not end with his return to the Tigers in spring 1906. At a time when rookie ballplayers were routinely hazed by veteran players, the Tigers'
Men and Masculinities

Civil War period when it emerged as a descriptor of initiation jokes played on newcomers to the ranks of the military. After the Civil War, the term hazing was used to describe practices of initiating new students to the university and maintaining order within the established hierarchy between classes of students (i.e., upperclassmen vs. freshmen). Such activities typically included expectations of personal servitude and other displays of subordination to students in the upper ranks. Occasionally however, hazing involved what was termed “disorderly conduct” and sometimes escalated into physical brawls causing serious injuries and even fatalities (Nuwer 1999).

Hazing practices in the early 2000s continue to reflect the masculine historical roots of military units and universities. However, documentation of hazing in high schools, organized athletics, as well as professional groups like police academies and firefighting units has grown considerably. Over the last century, and especially the last three decades of the twentieth century, awareness and concern about the dangers of hazing has increased, marked for example by its inclusion in many school and university codes of student conduct. Since the 1970s there has been at least one student fatality each year involving hazing (Nuwer 1999, 237). Such tragedies often led to increased public scrutiny and sometimes resulted in the passage of statutory legislation rendering hazing a criminal act. In the United States in 2003, forty-four states have enacted anti-hazing laws that vary widely in scope and consequence but are typically restricted to behavior occurring in educational arenas.

Hazing activities are generally considered to be physically abusive, hazardous, and/or sexually violating. The specific behaviors or activities within these categories vary widely among participants, groups, and settings. Alcohol use is common in nearly all types of hazing. Other examples of typical hazing practices include: personal servitude; sleep
The quality that differentiates hazing from other superficially similar behaviors is the specific co-occurrence of structured ritual, collectively perceived purpose, and a unidirectional form of abuse. Not all social rituals are abusive and some that are abusive are not purposeful. Similarly, some social practices may be reciprocative, rather than unidirectional, or relatively unstructured. Hazing, by contrast, is characterized by all three qualities.

The body of literature on human ritual is enormous, but hazing rituals belong in the subcategory of rituals of initiation. Like all such rituals, hazing typically requires a distinct and dichotomous set of individuals: those who have power, authority, experience, and group-identity and those who are attempting to earn these attributes. Like all true rituals (and unlike most customs or folkways), hazing rituals are limited by time and place, have a definite beginning and end, and usually include a well-rehearsed or at least well-planned script. The overall hazing “process” may include a series of rituals each of which contributes to the perceived organizational project of turning initiates into members, recruits into soldiers, and pledges into “brothers” and “sisters.”

Many behaviors commonly identified as hazing lack the essential element of consciously and collectively perceived purpose. Hazing distinguishes itself from other activities in that those participating in the process, both as perpetrator and as recipient, consciously perceive a reason—however expedient or rational—for the practice. This reason is sometimes as simple as the mechanical and highly effective transposition of meaning and experience: anything suffered for must be worth suffering for; greater suffering equates to greater worth; the more we have suffered together, the more we must value each other.
Results 1-5

- One good, three don’t own (Conflict Diamonds)
- One good, three useless, one don’t own (Hazing)
- Four good, one don’t own
- Three good, two don’t own (Evolution)
- One good, one useless, three don’t own (Music Downloading)
Results 6-10

- Two *useless*, less than a page (Funding Art Education)
- Two *good*, one *okay*, two *don’t own* (Methamphetamines)
- Two *good*, three *don’t own* (Wiretapping)
- Three *good*, two *okay*, one *useless* (Minimum Wage)
- One *okay*, two *useless*, two *don’t have* (Gender/Professions)
Results 11-15

- Three *good*, one *okay*, one *don’t own* (Homeschooling)
- Three *goods*, two *okay* (Medical Malpractice)
- One *good*, one *don’t own*, one mystery--not in OPAC (Salary Cap/Sports)
- Five *good* (Media Violence)
- Three *good*, two *don’t own* (Global Warming)
Results 16-20

- Two good, one okay, two don’t own (Stem Cell Research)
- One good, one okay, three don’t own (Binge Drinking)
- Three good, one useless, one don’t own (Organic Food)
- Three good, two don’t own (Genetic Discrimination)
- Three good, two okay (Logging)
Results 21-25

- Two useless (Recess/School)
- Four good, one don’t own (ADHD)
- One good, one useless, two don’t own (Hockey/Safety)
- No hits (Rehab/Ex-cons; Rehabilitation/Prisoners worked better)
- Three good, one okay, one don’t own (Renewable Energy)
Results 26-30

- Three good, One good unexpected (Affirmative Action)
- One good, four don’t own (Social Security)
- Three good, two don’t own, no surprises (Gambling)
- Three we don’t own (Puppy Mills)
- Three good, two don’t own (Natural Disasters)
Results 31-35

- Four *don’t own*, one *good* unexpected (Hybrid Cars)
- Two *okay*, three *don’t own* (Snowboarding)
- Four *don’t own*, one *okay* (Presidential Race)
- Three *goods*, two *don’t own* (Smoking Bans)
- One *don’t own* (Stadium Financing)
Results 36-40

- Four *good*, one *don’t own* (Refugees)
- Four *good*, one *don’t own* (Immigration)
- One *good*, one missing from the shelf, three *don’t own* (Obesity Epidemic)
- Three *good*, two *don’t own* (Eating Disorders in College)
- Three *good*, two *don’t own* (Capital Punishment)
Three good, two don’t own (Japanese-American Internment)

Three good, two don’t own (Child Abuse)

Four good, one okay (Open Adoption)

Two good, three don’t own (Water Quality)

Three good, two don’t own (School Shootings)
Results 46-50

- Five *good* (Charter Schools)
- Three *good*, one *okay*, one *don’t own* (Spanking)
- Four *don’t own*, one *useless* (Identity Theft)
- Three *good*, two *useless* (Racism)
- Five *good* (Eugenics)
Total ratings across all topics showed about half were “good”, useful sources with bibliographies.
OPAC Keyword searches (w/Reference limit) vs. Ref Universe:

- 23% of the “good” hits in RU were also found in OPAC search
- OPAC search found fewer “good” hits overall; but, also found different relevant resources
- OPAC searches may get to the newer additions to your reference collection more efficiently

Different search algorithms = Different results
Unexpected Gems from RU

- West’s Encyclopedia of American Law for Affirmative Action; Wiretapping
- Encyclopedia of School Psychology for Spanking; Autism
- Conflicts Over Natural Resources for Conflict Diamonds
- Men and Masculinities for Hazing
- Encyclopedia of Protestantism for Homeschooling
- West’s Encyclopedia of Everyday Law for Medical Malpractice
- Encyclopedia of Bioethics for Stem Cell Research
- Total Hockey Encyclopedia for Hockey Safety
- Work in America for Minimum Wage
- Encyclopedia of Interest Groups and Lobbyists for Minimum Wage
- Encyclopedia of Major Marketing Campaigns for Hybrid Cars
- Encyclopedia of Recreation and Leisure in America for Snowboarding
- Encyclopedia of Childbearing for Open Adoption
- New Dictionary of the History of Ideas for Eugenics
Most of the books we didn’t own are public library kinds of reference books?

Examples: *Consumer’s Guide to Social Security, Gambling, What’s at Stake, Teen Guide to Environmental Science*
Many of the things I found through RU I would have found through keywords I found in the titles of the works, but I am not sure if more complex searches would have found more utility in RU.
Conclusions Drawn

- Pete’s perspective: Reference, some Instruction and “techie” experience; newbie to MSU and its collections
- Relevance ranking of BOTB indexes vs. keyword searching of catalog records
- OPAC performs better for new additions
- RU could help the novice searcher
We welcome your Questions and Comments!

Tell us some of your favorite reference sources, and we will send the list out to everyone.