Providence College

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January, 2018

Twentieth-Century Global Perspectives

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/janice_schuster/18/

ADVISOR REVIEWS—STANDARD REVIEW

Twentieth-Century Global Perspectives

doi:10.5260/chara.19.3.51

Date of Review: October 19, 2017

Composite Score: ★★ 1/2

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Abstract

The collections that comprise Twentieth-Century Global Perspectives, covering 1941-1996, include primary sources from the Central Intelligence Agency's Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) Daily Reports, 1941-1996 and its Joint Publications Research Service (JPRS) Reports, 1957-1995. The online versions of these sources are not consolidated anywhere else, making these collections invaluable for researchers in the various disciplines covered. Weaknesses of the database include the inability to search across all collections simultaneously, the absence of help screens, and the inability to export to bibliographic management tools such as RefWorks or Zotero.

Pricing Options

This is a very expensive product. I was not able to obtain general pricing information. For my institution (liberal arts college granting undergraduate and graduate degrees with approx. 4,500 FTE students), the cost to purchase all the collections is approximately \$50,000. The individual collections range in price from \$6,500 to \$14,000 to purchase. There is an annual access fee of approximately 3%.

Product Overview/Description

This new family of digital resources for twentieth-century international studies provides global perspectives on many of today's most relevant research areas. Each of the unique collections offers new insight and unprecedented opportunities for teaching and scholarship in some of the most-searched topics in libraries today. Researchers are increasingly looking to twentieth-century geopolitics to complement and inform a variety of disciplines, and these five collections from the Archives of the Central Intelligence Agency give libraries the opportunity to meet these current needs of their institutions.

Each collection includes primary source documents from around the world, including government publications, magazines, newspapers, and transcribed television and radio broadcasts, all collected and translated by the Central Intelligence Agency between 1941 and 1996. All the collections are available individually, giving libraries the opportunity to tailor their research collections to the current needs of their students, faculty, and other researchers. In addition, the interface enables researchers to easily search the collections by a broad range of topics, each providing highly relevant results for users at all levels.

American Race Relations: Global Perspectives, 1941-1996
<<http://www.readex.com/content/american-race-relations-global-perspectives-1941-1996>>

Apartheid: Global Perspectives, 1946-1996 <<http://www.readex.com/content/apartheid-global-perspectives-1946-1996>>

The Cold War: Global Perspectives on East-West Tensions, 1945-1991 <<http://www.readex.com/content/cold-war-global-perspectives-east-west-tensions-1945-1991>>

Immigrations, Migrations and Refugees: Global Perspectives, 1941-1996 <<http://www.readex.com/content/immigrations-migrations-and-refugees-global-perspectives-1941-1996>>

Middle East and North Africa: Global Perspectives, 1958-1994
<<http://www.readex.com/content/middle-east-and-north-africa-global-perspectives-1958-1994>>

User Interface/Navigation/Searching

SEARCH INTERFACE

The Readex landing page gives prominent links to all of the available collections and a brief description of each, as well as a link to Readex AllSearch to "search across all of your available Readex collections..." Unfortunately, Readex AllSearch must refer to the ability to search other Readex resources and collections that one's library subscribes to, not to the ability to search all of the Twentieth-Century Global Perspectives collections at the same time. *Choice* reported in 2016 that "...each (collection) (can) be searched only independently of the others" (Cleland-Sipfle p. 354), so this was a known flaw. It is misleading for the Readex AllSearch link to be included when there is actually no ability to search all of the collections simultaneously.

The search screen defaults to a single-box search and gives a link to suggested searches, which are hyperlinked. In the Apartheid collection, I chose the suggested search for "Issues and Legislation, Immorality Act," which resulted in 47 resources. The Advanced Search link displays prominently on the search screen.

The landing page includes links on the left to Current Events and Special Reports. I found those links to be a bit confusing, since they are not directly related to the Twentieth-Century Global Perspectives (TCGP) collections.

SEARCHING

In the Apartheid collection, I searched for "South Africa" in the basic search box which, not surprisingly, resulted in over 59,000 resources. The interface suggests date limits on the left of the screen, by decades and by years, and indicates how many resources are included under each date limiter. I chose 1959, which resulted in 44 resources.

The Advanced Search screen provides many options. Fields available for searching include full text, title, article date, report date, original

Twentieth-Century Global Perspectives

Review Scores Composite: ★★★★★ 1/2

The maximum number of stars in each category is 5.

Content: ★★★★★

Unique primary source content not consolidated anywhere else.

User Interface/Searchability: ★★★

No help screens. No ability to search all collections simultaneously. Citation link provides only sample citations and does not provide the specific citation in MLA or APA format. No ability to export to a bibliographic management tool such as RefWorks or Zotero.

Pricing: ★★

This is a very expensive product. Readex could not provide me with a price range, but for my institution, all of the collections would cost approx. \$50,000 to purchase. Individual collections cost between \$6,500 and \$14,000. An annual access fee applies after the initial purchase.

Purchase/Contract Options: ★★★★★

The licensing agreement includes both governing law and indemnification clauses, both of which would have to be changed or removed if my library were to subscribe. Interlibrary loan use is prohibited.

language, source, citation text, and FBIS ID. Boolean operators AND, OR, and NOT are available. I used the Boolean AND to add “Mandela” to my “South Africa” search. The results decreased from over 45,000 resources to approx. 7,500. I changed the search option from full text to title, which resulted in 223 resources.

It is easy to switch among the different collections by clicking on the Other Products link on the results screen. I switched to the Cold War collection, opened the advanced search box and entered “Reagan” AND “Gorb*”. The asterisk is the wildcard, and the search resulted in over 2,500 resources. I added the term “Moscow” in the source field to my search, which narrowed the results down to approx. 1,000 resources.

HELP SCREENS

I do not see any help screens. On the basic and advanced search and on the results screens, there are links to Other Products, Terms of Use, and Privacy, but no link for Help. Readex should add context-specific Help buttons to the search and results screens.

Contact Information

Readex

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Naples, FL 34108-2734

Phone: (800) 762-8182

E-mail: <readexmarketing@readex.com>

Producer URL: <http://www.readex.com>

Product URL: <http://www.readex.com/content/twentieth-century-global-perspectives>

RESULTS DISPLAY

The results display is clean and easy to navigate. Clicking on the title link takes the user to a thumbnail image of the document, with the search term(s) highlighted in yellow. It is easy to zoom in to make the image larger, to see a smaller portion of the document, and zoom out to make the image smaller, to see a larger portion of the document. On the right of the screen is a smaller image with a red outline that allows the user to visualize where the text appears in the original document. This should be very useful to serious researchers. Clicking on Download results in a PDF of the document, including the citation prominently displayed at the top. The e-mail function works as expected. However, the citation function does not work as expected and is confusing to users. Instead of retrieving the citation of the desired resource in MLA or APA format, the Citation link simply gives examples of MLA and APA style. This is not at all helpful and should be removed. It does not appear to be possible to export citations to reference management tools such as RefWorks or Zotero.

HISTORIC CONTENT

The primary source documents covering 1941-1996 included in Twentieth-Century Global Perspectives are invaluable. At my library, we are constantly trying to improve access to primary source documents for our students and faculty in a variety of disciplines. With improvements to the search interface, these collections would be a valuable addition to the resources we provide for our users.

ACCESSIBILITY

Web-based Readex collections, including the image-based Twentieth-Century Global Perspectives, are developed with the goal of providing access to all users. Every effort is made to make content understandable and navigable through multiple mechanisms. Readex aims

for full compliance with ADA/Section 508 and Level A of the Web Content Accessibility guidelines. In addition, Readex considers the higher levels of WCAG and other accessibility recommendations and implements them whenever possible.

Critical Evaluation

The greatest strength of the collections in Twentieth-Century Global Perspectives is their unique content: primary source materials from the Central Intelligence Agency's Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) Daily Reports, 1941-1996 and its Joint Publications Research Service (JPRS) Reports, 1957-1995. The online versions of these sources are not consolidated anywhere else, making these collections invaluable for researchers in the various disciplines covered. The PDFs of the documents display clearly and are easy to navigate.

The collections have several weaknesses, the foremost of which is the inability to search all of the collections simultaneously. The Readex AllSearch link on the landing page implies that it is possible to search all collections at once, when this is not the case. There should be more limiters on the left of the results screen, in addition to the date limiters. Names, geographical places, political entities, etc. would be useful additions.

The lack of an export function to reference management tools such as RefWorks or Zotero is a drawback for serious researchers.

It is odd that there are no help screens. Readex should add context-specific help to both the search and the results screens.

Competitive Products

ProQuest's Digital National Security Archive <<http://www.proquest.com/products-services/databases/dnsa.html>> covers some of the same topics as Twentieth-Century Global Perspectives, but ProQuest's product contains declassified documents that do not overlap the content in TCGP.

There are no competitive products that cover the same content as TCGP.

Purchase & Contract Provisions

The licensing agreement seems reasonably standard. Interlibrary Loan use is prohibited. The agreement is governed by the laws of the State of Georgia. There is also an indemnification clause. The general counsel at my college would require that the governing law state be changed to Rhode Island or be removed. She would also require that the indemnification clause be changed to the one her office drafted or be removed.

Authentication

Academic institutions may authenticate users by IP address range or by other secure method.

Free Text Keywords: 20th century | global perspectives | world history | international events | apartheid | race relations | cold war | immigration | migration | refugees | Middle East | North Africa | geopolitics | Central Intelligence Agency | primary sources | government publications | newspapers | radio and television broadcasts | English-language translations

Primary Category: History & Area Studies

Secondary Categories: Ethnic, Gender, and LGBTQ Studies; General Reference; Government Information; Humanities; Multidisciplinary (or interdisciplinary); Political Science & Law; Science, Technology, Computers, Engineering (including Environment); Sociology, Education, Anthropology, Psychology

Type of product being reviewed: Image database; Newspaper or news source; Primary source digital content; Reports

Target Audience: Undergraduate (including community colleges); Graduate/Faculty/Researcher

Access: One-time purchase; Subscription

Author's References

Cleland-Sipfle, K. 2016. "Twentieth-Century Global Perspectives." *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries* 54 (3): 354-356. <<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lx-h&AN=119218160&site=ehost-live>>

Lyons, L. E. 2013. "Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS): Daily Reports, 1941-1974." <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/A343155571/BIC1?u=providence_main&xid=73997da0>

About the Author

Janice G. Schuster is commons librarian, research, education and collections, tenured associate professor at the Phillips Memorial Library at Providence College in Providence, Rhode Island. She is responsible for the library's electronic resources and serials, co-chairs the library's knowledge collections group and serves on the library's assessment group. She serves the college in many ways including currently: Faculty Senate: elected at-large senator; elected member of the Provost's Advisory Committee; appointed secretary for Senate website and listserv; appointed member of the Faculty Status committee. Common Reading Program: member of the steering committee; chair of the library resources subcommittee; member of the essay contest subcommittee. She serves the profession as the co-chair or chair for many years of the Electronic Resources Affinity Group of the Higher Education Library and Information Network (HELIN) consortium. She has published on electronic resources, serials, adoption and livable communities. She holds B.A. and M.L.S. degrees from Indiana University (Bloomington) <http://works.bepress.com/janice_schuster>. ■