

Database opens doors to biological fields at the University of Idaho

Biosis Previews[®] is now delivering in-depth information on biological research to the University of Idaho, USA. This article, entitled "Database opens doors to biological fields", was written by Kate Baldwin and originally published in the *Moscow Pullman Daily News (USA)* in April 2006.

Celeste Brown is adding a new Internet database to her list of favorites — *BIOSIS Previews*.

"Now that I know about it, I'll bookmark it," the bioinformatics coordinator at the University of Idaho said.

The library at the university launched *BIOSIS Previews* last week after a month of testing. The database provides references for areas of traditional biology such as botany, ecology and zoology and interdisciplinary fields like biomedicine, biotechnology and biochemistry.

"Its biggest appeal is — it's comprehensive," said Ron Force, director of the UI library. "It covers more of the biological fields than any other indexing service available."

The database holds more than 15.6 million records that date to 1969. It contains abstracts of journal articles, meeting and conference reports, books and patents. "We decided with the increased emphasis with biological research on campus we really needed to have it," Force said. He expects users to run about a thousand searches a month on the new database. "It's mostly for the advanced person — the graduate students and the post docs, the research associates and the professors," Force said.

UI lecturer Matthew Parks plans to start using the database to prepare for the courses he teaches in the Department of Biological Sciences. He already uses the library to track down articles that are pertinent to his lectures. He shares articles that cover current research in his field to supplement what his students learn through textbooks. "I use it to help connect students to what (scientists) are actually doing now," Parks said. "So they can realize this is a very active topic."

Brown said she uses databases like this every day in her work. Brown explored the new program by trying different searches. She pulled up a plant systematics journal and surprised herself. "This wouldn't have come up in PubMed", she said. PubMed is another database available at the library that she normally uses to find articles on biomedical topics.

Force said the library has more than 120 different databases, covering just about every major subject area.

Brown also discovered the database has a link to the library's interloan system. "If I need an article in a journal we don't get — and a lot of journals we don't get — you can link out straight into the interlibrary request form," she said. "If this allows people to access articles in their field without actually having to go to the library, people will use it a lot," she said. "I could see where this could be really useful."

Additional information

Biosis Previews: www.scientific.thomson.com/products/bp

Moscow Pullman Daily News: www.dnews.com

University of Idaho library: www.lib.uidaho.edu