

Report of the 2021-2022 Electronic Resources Task Force

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Executive Summary

The evaluation process grouped the databases by usage. Recommendations will be made in terms of priorities and funding available. We recommend the following:

- 1) Eliminate less-used e-resources to reallocate funds to existing and new e-resources.
 - a) Do not renew the contracts with several vendors as discussed below. See page 11.
 - b) Spend the money on other databases.
- 2) These resources are outside of ERTF's scope of review, but their existence was kept in mind when evaluating and making recommendations:
 - a) EBSCO 38 databases (35 through BOR contract)
 - b) OCLC (FirstSearch)
 - c) Swank K-12 Video Streaming
 - (1) This serves an existing market
 - (2) The DOE and state library saw a need for this item.
- 3) Very high usage and well known in the state. The top recommendations:
 - a) Scholastic's BookFlix
 - b) ProQuest's SIRS Issues Researcher and SIRS Discoverer
 - i) Issues Researcher has a very good cost/use.
 - ii) Discoverer has decent cost/use.
 - c) ProQuest Research Library
 - d) World Book Suite
 - e) ProQuest's U.S. Newsstream
- 4) ERTF determined there is a great need for each of these types of e-resources, so continue to purchase the following:
 - a) Test Prep/Careers: EBSCO Learning Express
 - b) ProQuest's CultureGrams Online
 - c) ProQuest's AncestryLibrary
 - d) Fold3 by Ancestry
 - e) HeritageQuest Online by Ancestry
 - f) Gale's Miss Humblebee's Academy
 - g) Gale's Books and Authors
- 5) New items to add or purchase
 - a) Utilize freely available e-resources: Duolingo, Legal Templates
 - i) These serve an existing market.
 - ii) ERTF saw a need for these items.
- 6) After the decisions were made concerning items 1-5, and prices tentatively known for these resources, there were several remaining considerations that the ERTF discussed. These are:

- i) More diversity in database offerings - the number 1 most requested item via the surveys, several research guides have been created to point users to existing e-resources
 - ii) Language learning - the number 2 most requested item via the surveys, SDSL has tried subscription resources in the past which were expensive and rarely used, a freely available option will be added to the SDSL web site.
 - iii) Pursuing a discounted multi-year contract for the genealogy resources: Ancestry Library/Fold3/HeritageQuest
 - iv) Consider replacing Books & Authors with Novelist
 - v) Consider alternatives to SIRS Issues Researcher and SIRS Discoverer
- There was generally solid consensus about these items.
- 7) Nonfiction E-books and Gale Virtual Reference Library
- a) Do not regularly allocate funds to buy additional nonfiction e-books.
 - b) If it is very late in the grant year and the SDSL has remaining grant funds to spend, then update some e-books.
- 8) Recommendations to not Renew
- a) Gale Legal Forms
 - b) TrueFlix
 - c) Consumer Reports
 - d) Chilton
- 9) Extra funds remaining

Acknowledgements

Electronic resources were reviewed and evaluated through the efforts of the following people. Many hours were devoted to thoughtful consideration of both current and prospective resources. The South Dakota State Library and SD Department of Education would like to express appreciation to the following individuals and the organizations they represent, who contributed expertise and time.

<u>Member</u>	<u>Represents</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Institution</u>
Kim Bonen	Co-Chairman	Digital Resources Coordinator	SD State Library
Nina Mentzel	Co-Chairman	Metadata Librarian	SD State Library
John Anderson	State Government	Labor Program Specialist	SD Department of Labor
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Sarah Jones-Lutter	Small Public	Director	Redfield Carnegie Library
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0. Notes, Methodology, and Table

General Notes for this Report

The mission of the 2021-2 Electronic Resource Task Force (ERTF) was to review, evaluate, and formulate recommendations for which electronic resources should be provided by the South Dakota State Library (SDSL). By thoroughly analyzing current resources, exploring new resources, and evaluating their value

to SD citizens, lead to recommending new resources and cancellations. The goal was to provide the best, most cost-effective resources that will be utilized by SD citizens.

The terms databases, electronic resources, e-resources, and resources will be used interchangeably in this report. Any database costs are given as either current costs or stand-alone prices. No package discounts were factored in, as these may depend upon the selected package and contract negotiations.

Comparison of usage statistics: Every vendor collects usage stats slightly differently, and not all vendors collect the same data. It is difficult to compare across vendors. The most useful data for comparison are: 1) sessions (how often did someone access the resource), and 2) views (how many items of potential use did the user find). In general, views will be 2-4 times greater than sessions.

Methodology/Process

January 10th, 2022, the Electronic Resource Task Force (ERTF) was assembled. A large part of the task force's evaluation was determining which e-resources were the best choices based on finite funding; it can be challenging making "either-or" choices.

In November 2021, South Dakota libraries and patrons were sent a survey to get feedback of the SDSL's current offering of e-resources. Survey results were presented to the Task Force at the January 10th meeting.

Current vendors and potential new vendors were contacted about their products beginning in late January 2022. Links to trials of potential e-resources were sent to the ERTF beginning in February 2022. A conference call was held on February 24. After this step, the ERTF had a "short list" of items to consider for recommendation.

1. Goal: Eliminate less-used e-resources to reallocate funds to existing and new e-resources.

A number of currently purchased e-resources are not being used or are not being used enough to justify cost. Freely available e-resources will be added to the database list and some subscriptions will not be renewed. Funds saved may be used to pay for other e-resources.

2. EBSCO/ OCLC / Swank

EBSCO's, OCLC's and Swank, are all current e-resources that were outside of the ERTF's scope of review. However, their existence was kept in mind as a factor when making recommendations.

- **EBSCO** - Contract through June 2022 with the SD Board of Regents Schools/ Minitex. SDSL gets thirty-five e-resources from EBSCO. Most are aimed at late high school and adult-level research.
- **OCLC** - FirstSearch provides resources primarily for collegiate research. WorldCat is necessary for ILL; these two are sold as one package. If in the future it is possible to purchase FirstSearch separately from WorldCat, the SDSL should investigate whether to continue purchasing FirstSearch.
- **Swank** - Swank K12 Streaming serves an existing market and the DOE and ERTF saw a need for this resource. South Dakota educators now have access to a curated collection of top educational films which are click-and play ready in their streaming library. They are also able to

search the entire library of films and request new films be added with an approved lesson plan. The Swank K-12 streaming library provides access to over 30,000 movies, documentaries, and foreign language films for instructional support.

3. Very high usage and well known in the state

All of these databases have good name recognition, and generally require low promotion and maintenance. Usage is high for all of them.

- **Scholastic's BookFlix**
The top performing database with a low cost per view.
- **ProQuest's SIRS Issues Researcher**
Provides information to research and create argumentative essays for grades 6-12; it has background information and analysis of over 300 current and leading issues. It gets very heavy use and is a good cost per view. The ERTF also rated it highly. A compare and contrast/argumentative research resource is important to provide.

Comparison to similar products

- The SDSL also has EBSCO's Points of View Reference Center, however this is intended for high school and university level. SIRS Issues researcher is intended for middle school and high school.
- A product trial for Gale In Context - Middle School was set up in February as a potential alternative to SIRS Issues Researcher. The ERTF unanimously preferred SIRS Issues Researcher over Gale In Context - Middle School because it provides better information for argumentative research and critical thinking skills development.
- **ProQuest's SIRS Discoverer**
This multidisciplinary database is aimed at students through 8th grade; it covers current events, history, health, language arts, math, science, social studies, and more. It's cost per session is less than other K-8 resources, such as World Book. SIRS Discoverer is one of the most cost-effective resources, and there is enough history, interest, and usage to keep it around in the immediate future. It's also relatively inexpensive for FY23.

Comparison to similar products

- A product trial for Gale In Context - Elementary School was set up in February as a potential alternative to SIRS Discoverer. The ERTF unanimously preferred SIRS Discoverer over Gale In Context - Middle School because it provides better information for argumentative research and critical thinking skills development.
- **PQ Research Library (PQRL)**
PQRL is "a truly multidisciplinary resource featuring a diversified mix of scholarly journals, trade publications, magazines, and other sources across the top 150 subject areas." The ERTF considered PQRL one of the most important resources. It's been at the SDSL since 2005 but cost per view is worse than other research resources.
- **WorldBook Suite**

The recommendation is to keep the World Book Suite while maintaining the total contract near the same level and price. The World Book Suite includes World Book Early Learning, World Book Discover, World Book Kids, World Book Students, World Book Advanced, and World Book Dramatic Learning.

- **ProQuest’s U.S. Newsstream**

Full-text articles from over 1000 newspapers, newswires, news journals, television and radio transcripts, blogs, podcasts, and digital-only websites. The ERTF said that a newspaper-type resource was very important to have.

4. Resources of greatest need

The ERTF determined there is a great need for a product in these areas. In the future, it is recommended to continue purchasing these types of e-resources, even if it is from another vendor. All of these databases also serve different market segments than the OCLC and EBSCO resources and do not overlap each other.

- **Test Prep/ GED/ Careers: Learning Express**

Learning Express (LEX), provided by EBSCO, has been at the SDSL since November 2006. It contains “Practice tests and self-paced courses for all learners. ASVAB, GED, GRE, SAT, resume/cover letter writing courses and more.”

- **ProQuest’s CultureGrams Online**

Statistical and cultural information about the United States and global countries for grades k-12.

- **ProQuest’s AncestryLibrary**

Ancestry search and genealogical information from census records, historical maps, and more. Aimed at public libraries. This is an in library use only license which affects usage. We saw a decline in usage during the coronavirus pandemic when libraries closed to the public. Usage is rising once again. The ERTF agreed that this is a unique and valuable resource that should continue to be provided.

- **Fold3 by Ancestry**

Genealogy search and military records. This is a newer database that is growing in popularity.

- **HeritageQuest Online by Ancestry**

Genealogy search and historical records. This collection is available to users from home.

- **Gale’s Miss Humblebee’s Academy**

Interactive learning program for ages 2-6. Perfect for homeschooled students and preschool prep.

- **Gale’s Books and Authors**

Reader’s advisory database.

5. New items to add or purchase

Utilize freely available e-resources: Duolingo, Legal Templates

- i) These serve an existing market.
- ii) ERTF saw a need for these items.

6. Remaining E-resources for Consideration to Purchase

After the decisions were made concerning items 1-5, and prices tentatively known for these resources, there were several remaining considerations that the ERTF discussed. These are:

- i) More diversity in database offerings - the number 1 most requested item via the surveys. Several research guides have been created to point users to existing e-resources
- ii) Language learning - the number 2 most requested item via the surveys. SDSL has tried subscription resources in the past which were expensive and rarely used. A freely available option (Duolingo) will be added to the SDSL website.
- iii) We recommend pursuing a discounted multi-year contract for the genealogy resources: Ancestry Library/Fold3/HeritageQuest
- iv) We considered replacing Books & Authors with Novelist but found Novelist not feasible at twice the price of Gale's Books & Authors.

There was generally solid consensus about these items.

7. Extra funds remaining

It is recommended to not regularly allocate funds to buy additional nonfiction eBooks. However, continue paying the inexpensive annual maintenance fee for Gale Virtual Reference Library (GVRL).

If it is very late in the grant year and the SDSL has additional grant money left to spend, then update some GVRL eBooks. SDSL could also consider purchasing titles for the South Dakota Titles To Go Consortium.

8. Recommendations to not Renew

- **GALE Legal Forms -**

This resource has not performed as expected. Patrons and library staff report that the interface is not user-friendly and therefore usage has steadily fallen. The ERTF has recommended we do not continue this contract.

- Poor and falling usage, and ERTF has low opinion of GALE Legal forms
- Total sessions in FY21 were 410; FY20 987. Cost per use is very high.
- In the February ERTF current resource evaluation, none of the task force members considered it helpful. Much of the content can be easily found online for free.

- **TrueFlix**

TrueFlix usage is steadily falling. The other Scholastic resource, BookFlix, gets much more usage and similar content may be found in other resources, including WorldBook. Recommendation is to discontinue this resource.

- **Consumer Reports**

This resource gets very little usage. The information available in this resource is available via EBSCO's journal databases. Cost per session is very high. The ERTF is concerned that users will

not find the information via the journal databases, however, with additional training and promotion, it will be much more cost effective to utilize other resources and cancel this.

- **Chilton Library**

This resource has had low, but steady usage over time. Unfortunately, it is not cost-effective. ERTF polled the technical schools with automotive programs and found that none of them are using it. It is therefore recommended to discontinue this resource.

Appendix

Other resources reviewed and rejected

- Novelist
- EBSCO Auto Source Repair
- Gale In Context Elementary
- Gale In Context Middle School