

# Technology

## Better Than Google

### *Libraries Offer Online Databases With Quality Information — For Free*

By DAN GIANCATERINO

Have you used that really cool Web site lately? You know, the one that helps you find incredibly useful information with just a few keystrokes. The one that's available 24/7/365.

No, it's not Google. They say their mission is to "organize the world's information and make it universally accessible," but they don't even come close.

Your local library's Web site does a better job of it. It offers you many quality information sources from reputable publishers that are not available for free anywhere else on the Web. You can access these resources from your desktop at home or at work, using your Web browser. All you need is a library card.

Last summer, *BusinessWeek* ran an article titled "The Library: Next Best Thing to an MBA." The author understood that a library isn't simply a bunch of books on shelves: "The sheer volume of library resources available is staggering. It wouldn't be a stretch to say that many could rival an MBA program in terms of the tools they offer for instruction and information — available for little or no cost."

That's not just true for business research. Public and school libraries in Pennsylvania offer remote access to full text articles from magazines and newspapers, peer-reviewed health and

medical information, an archive of current and historical images, reference materials such as biographies, maps and encyclopedias, and much more. The service is called the POWER (Pennsylvania Online World of Electronic Resources) Library. It's your tax dollars at work.

#### SEARCH FASTER

One evening, my daughter's boyfriend parked himself in front of my computer for a couple of hours, furiously typing away. Finally I asked him what he was doing. (Actually, I wanted him to go home.) "I'm trying to find a schematic for my car's electrical system on Google," he said. "I need to know where the heater blower resistor is located because I have to replace it. But all I'm getting is junk." I told him to take a

break and kicked him off the PC. He went to raid the fridge and I went to work. I accessed the Delaware County Library System, [www.delcolibraries.org](http://www.delcolibraries.org), clicked on the Auto Repair Reference Center, and typed in my card number. Once I was logged into the database, I clicked on the appropriate year, make and model of car. Then I selected the electrical system and printed out the schematic. Total elapsed time: around five minutes. The boyfriend was amazed: "Dude, how did you do that so fast?" Did I tell him? Nope ... knowledge is power.

#### GET MORE ACCESS

I frequently use other online resources that the Delaware County Library System licenses. For example, the New York Times Historical file lets me search the full text of articles from 1851-2003. Each article displays in Adobe Acrobat PDF format.


"So what," you say. "Google's news archive search ([news.google.com/archivesearch](http://news.google.com/archivesearch)) goes back about 200 years and includes more sources than just the Times." True, except Google only gives you an abstract in most cases. You will have to pay at least \$4.95 to view the full text.

If I need to find information about a privately held firm or a small business, I choose

ReferenceUSA. This database of 14 million companies, similar to D&B, provides (among other things) sales data, number of employees, management, corporate family tree, and in some cases a street-level picture of the business location. Try doing that with Google!

Do you live or work in Philadelphia? If so, you're eligible for a Free Library of Philadelphia card. You can even apply for one online at [www.library.phila.gov](http://www.library.phila.gov). The card will

The screenshot shows the 'Account' page of the Free Library of Philadelphia. At the top, there are navigation links: 'Text Size [+]', '[-]', 'Events', 'Blog', 'Site Guide', and 'Contact'. Below these are links for 'Access your account online', 'Don't have a library card? Sign up now', and 'Support the Library'. The main content area is titled 'Account' and includes a 'Home > Get a Library Card' breadcrumb. There are links for 'Get a Card', 'Benefits', 'About Your Card', 'Request PIN', and 'Login to "My Account"'. A notice states: 'You must be 18 or older to apply online. A Free Library card is available at no cost to anyone who lives, works, pays taxes, or goes to school in the City of Philadelphia. In addition, anyone who is 65 or older or who has a valid card with an Access PA sticker from another Pennsylvania library can obtain a Free Library card without charge. Out-of-state residents can obtain a card by paying an annual fee of \$15.00. Printable Registration Form'. Below this is a section for 'Please select your type of registration, then click on the NEXT button.' and a warning: 'We cannot issue a library card if the required fields are not filled out. Cards should arrive in the mail in 5-10 business days. You will be asked for identification the first time you borrow materials with your new card.' The 'Reason for Registration:' section has radio buttons for 'New', 'Renew Card', 'Lost/Stolen Card', and 'Change of Name/Address'. A 'Next' button is at the bottom. The footer contains: '©2007 Free Library of Philadelphia | Employee Intranet | Terms of Use | Your Privacy | RSS'.



**Welcome to the POWER Library**  
 Pennsylvania Online World of Electronic Resources:

Please enter your library card number. **DO NOT** enter any spaces or punctuation, just numbers!

Allegheny County (via eiNetwork) barcode number:

Submit

If you continually experience problems with any of the POWER Library databases, please view the

be mailed to you, normally within a week. I've got one.

The Free Library features the databases from the POWER Library, plus quite a few additional resources. I especially like the Business and Company Resource Center from Thomson Gale, which provides in-depth company profiles — history and operations, products, financials, investment reports, industry rankings, and more — from Thomson Financial. The database is also an excellent source for industry information, including news articles and Datamonitor Industry Market Research reports.

Finally, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention some of the online resources Jenkins Law Library makes available to its members:

- Do you need to find some relevant cases and Shepardize them? Or search the Pennsylvania statutes, which aren't available anywhere on the Web for free? Or print forms from Dunlap-Hanna and other Pennsylvania secondary sources? Lexis Thru Jenkins provides remote access to Lexis for 20 minutes every twenty-four hours to Jenkins members with 10 attorneys or less in their firm. Jenkins is currently the only law library in the U.S. providing this service.

By the way, the Pennsylvania Bar Association, [www.pabar.org](http://www.pabar.org), also provides desktop Lexis access to its members at no additional charge. (Yes, I know they're not a library!) The service is called InCite, and it lets you search for cases and use the Unannotated Pennsylvania statutes, among other things. You can also Shepardize cases for an additional fee. Pennsylvania secondary sources, however, are not included in InCite.

- If you have to print an article from, say, the *Wake Forest Law Review*, Jenkins offers you three resources: Law Journal Library from HeinOnline, LegalTrac by Thomson Gale, and H.W. Wilson's WilsonWeb. Each of these databases lets you search and display the full text of articles from U.S. accredited law school journals and law reviews. Full text availability and years of coverage vary according to the database.

- For full-text articles from newspapers

across the U.S., America's Newspapers from NewsBank is the place to go. This is an archive of more than 500 papers, updated daily. Searching is quick and easy. Years of coverage vary by title, but many date back about twenty years.

For more information, including a complete list of Jenkins online databases, visit [www.jenkinslaw.org/collection/lpi.php](http://www.jenkinslaw.org/collection/lpi.php).

Google has a catchy name, an easy-to-use Web site, and a relentless marketing machine. But for quality information at little or no cost to you, you can't beat the library. Take advantage of its online services today. ■

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## LOCAL LIBRARY WEB SITES

### Berks County Public Libraries

[www.berks.lib.pa.us](http://www.berks.lib.pa.us)

### Bucks County Public Libraries

[www.buckslib.org](http://www.buckslib.org)

### Chester County Library System

[www.ccls.org](http://www.ccls.org)

### Delaware County Library System

[www.delcolibraries.org](http://www.delcolibraries.org)

### Free Library of Philadelphia

[www.library.phila.gov](http://www.library.phila.gov)

### Jenkins Law Library

[www.jenkinslaw.org](http://www.jenkinslaw.org)

### Montgomery County Public Libraries

[www.montcopa.org/commerce/library.htm](http://www.montcopa.org/commerce/library.htm)

# Tech BRIEFS

## Law Practice Management

Technology is well-represented in programming for the Association's newest



division. The LPM Division's Practice Technology Committee has scheduled a full year of programming for its monthly meetings.

The committee plans to cover

such topics as "Setting Up a Law Office — Determining Your Technology Needs," "E-Filing in the Court of Common Pleas," and "Reducing Your Use of Paper."

## YLD EZine

A new one-stop resource for young lawyers on the move, the YLD EZine is the fastest way to stay current on all of the Young Lawyers Division's events and activities. Plus, columnists offer information and tips on a host of issues of concern to young Philadelphia lawyers, including the city housing market, rainmaking, arts and sports.

YLD members receive the weekly EZine featuring eleven departments in a convenient, condensed HTML e-mail. Find a calendar of YLD events,



the latest Division news, a photo gallery, podcasts, blogs and more, right in your inbox.

## Chancellor's Video Greeting

When you visit the Chancellor's page on the Philadelphia Bar Association's Web site, [philadelphiabar.org](http://philadelphiabar.org), you will now enjoy a personal greeting from Chancellor Jane Dalton. The video greeting is the first use of video on the Association Web site and can be



viewed with Windows Media Player.

Filmed at Duane Morris's Center City offices, the three-minute video features the Chancellor outlining her priorities for the coming year: judicial independence, the Bar's role in the city's economy, public service and assisting members with law practice management.