

CCL-EAR COMMITTEE REVIEW
Books in Print 2.5 (BIP)
November 2012

For generations of librarians, *Books In Print* was a quintessential collection development tool, serving as the universal list of information on published books. As a comprehensive, third-party catalog of the world's book market, it made the transition from print to digital media years ago. The current iteration from the publisher R.R. Bowker, called *BooksInPrint 2.5 (BIP 2.5)* provides users with an efficient way to cross-search and retrieve bibliographic, publisher, and market information about books published in the United States in a variety of formats. (A similar product not addressed by this review, *Global Books in Print*, includes both U.S. and non-U.S. imprints.)

OVERALL RECOMMENDATION for COMMUNITY COLLEGES: 2, 1.5

- #1 --- Not recommended
- #2 --- Recommended with reservations as noted
- #3 --- Recommended
- #4 --- Outstanding offer

RATINGS for SPECIFIC ASPECTS of the DATABASE:

The following features were examined and rated on a four point scale (1=Poor; 2= Needs Improvement; 3=Good; 4=Excellent):

DATABASE CONTENT/FORMAT: 2.5, 2

Consider functionality, appropriateness of format, database content, adequacy of coverage (retrospective, current), and value to the California Community Colleges as a whole.

As with previous versions of the online program, BIP 2.5 offers subscribers comprehensive bibliographic information on currently published, out-of-print, and forthcoming books, e-book, audio, and video titles covering all levels, varieties, and interests (including scholarly, adult, juvenile, popular, reprint and out of print titles). It includes full-text book reviews (over 1 million according to the latest CCL offer), from over 40 well-known and reliable sources, including Booklist, CHOICE, Publisher's Weekly, Library Journal and School Library Journal. In *BIP 2.5*, a complete list of review sources can only be found by scrolling through the "Reviewed By" options box on the Advanced Search screen. The program also contains complete information from Bowker's publisher authority database, though the reviewers were unable to determine the number of publishers included. A separate readers' advisory program that helps users identify similar fiction and non-fiction titles, *Complete Connection*, is accessible from a quick link at the top of each screen.

Library staff and patrons can create custom book lists using the *Staff Lists* or *My BIP* features. *Staff Lists*, which is intended for collection development purposes, is easy to navigate and lets users capture and download detailed bibliographic and purchase information (i.e., retail price, binding information, etc.). *My BIP*, however, is a rudimentary program that allows users to

save only book titles and a custom note, one title at a time after registering for a separate account. Patrons accustomed to “My Account” or “My Folder” features in other programs and databases will be frustrated by the limits of this one.

Finally, BIP 2.5 includes a feature called “Tag Cloud” (previously named “Word Cloud”), a list of linked, uncontrolled terms harvested from the title records (including *Annotations* and *Professional Reviews* fields). These terms supposedly appear in a results screen pull-down box labeled “Related Keywords,” but as of the time this review was written, no terms appeared in this box on any results screen. “Tag Cloud” will be further addressed in the following section.

SEARCH INTERFACE: 3, 3

Consider the functionality and ease of use of the interface. Is it intuitive or is an excessive amount of training required? Are any crucial features missing from the search interface?

The search interface for BIP 2.5 utilizes a single-search box that is intuitive for users and will not require an excessive amount of training. The default keyword search is “All” and other field specific search parameters include: subject, title, author, publisher, and series title. The search field supports Boolean operators and ISBN.

Basic book information is provided in the search results display including title, author, ISBN, format, publisher, publication date, price, and call number (see screenshot below). Search results can be sorted by relevance, title, author, year, and price. According to Bowker,

Relevancy is determined by how often, how exactly, and where your search terms were found in a record. Quick search searches titles and variants, contributors, subjects, series, publisher/imprint, TOC, agent, chapter excerpts, awards, and numerical identifiers: ISBN (10 and 13, with and without dashes), EAN, and Bowker's item and title IDs.

Searches can also be expanded or narrowed (see screenshot below). When searching for the title, “*Checklist Manifesto*” by Atul Gawande, in basic search, there are 5 results. After expanding the keyword search, there are 5,787 total results. Expanding keyword searches can be helpful with the options to refine searches on the right side by format, author, status (in-print, out of print, forthcoming), availability, price, publication year, reviews, and by subject.

The screenshot displays the Bowker Books In Print search interface. At the top, the search bar contains the text "checklist manifesto". A red arrow points to the search button. Below the search bar, the results are displayed as "Results 1- 25 of 5,787, sorted by: Relevance". The first result is "1. The Checklist Manifesto: How to Get Things Right" by Atul Gawande. The interface includes navigation links like "Home", "Administrator", "Staff Lists", "Complete Connection", "Publisher", and "Help". On the right side, there is a "Refine Options" sidebar with categories like "Format" and "Author".

An advanced search option is available from the home page as well as within the results list, as indicated on the upper right in the screenshot below.

Bowker | Books In Print

Home | Administrator | Staff Lists | Complete Connection | Publisher | Help

All **Advanced Search** My BIP

Results 1- 5 of 5, sorted by: Relevance

You have 0 item(s) selected

[Check All](#) | [Uncheck](#)

1. The Checklist Manifesto
How to Get Things Right

Author: by Gawande, Atul
1-4299-5338-1
978-1-4299-5338-2

ISBN-10: 1-4299-5338-1
ISBN-13: 978-1-4299-5338-2

Format: Electronic book text

Publisher: Henry Holt & Company

Publication Date: Apr 2010

Price: Write for Information contact Macmillan

Dewey: 610.28/9

Related Keywords

Refine Options

Format

- Paperback (2)
- Cd-Audio (1)
- Electronic Book Text (1)
- Hardback (1)

Author

- Gawande, Atul (4)
- Mayo, Julia (1)

Status

- In Print (5)

Advanced search offers many more limiters that can be helpful to collection development selectors including: type of book (fiction or non-fiction), format, audience, awards, books reviews, media mention, etc. Additional search parameters are also available including: keyword in title, keyword in subject, ISBN, publisher name, etc. See the following screenshot of the advanced search for further detail.

Advanced Search

Type

Select All

Fiction

Non Fiction

Status

Select All

In Print

Out Of Print

Forthcoming

Audience

Select All

Trade

Young Adult Audience

Elementary/High School

Juvenile Audience

Format

Hardcover Book

Illustrated Book

Large print

Leather / fine binding

Softcover

Country of Publication

United States

United Kingdom

Canada

Australia

New Zealand

Language

English

Spanish

German

Italian

French

Award

Award-All

Select Any

ABC Children's Bookselle...

ACT Book of the Year Awa...

Reviewed By

Reviewed By-All

Select Any

API Reviews

BIOSIS

Booklist

Media Mention

Media Mention-All

Select Any

BBC Open Book

BBC Radio 4 Book Club

Business Week

Price Range

To

Date Range

JAN -- To JAN --

Lexile™ Measures

To

Age Range

To

LC Class

To

Dewey Range

To

Search All

Keyword in Title

Keyword in Subject

Search All

Author/Contributor

ISBN

BIC Subject

BISAC Subject

Keyword in Subject

Keyword in Title

Keyword in TOC

Publisher Name

Sears Subject

Series Title

Subject - (All)

Title - (Exact)

USER SUPPORT SERVICES: 1, 1

What types of customer and technical support are available for end users and library administrators?

User support is sparse and confusing. Neither detailed technical information nor clear explanations of features and content is available through in-database documentation or from the publisher. A link to “Help” at the top of each screen takes users to what amounts to little more than obvious descriptions and screen shots of what users can figure out or see for themselves in the actual database:

The screenshot shows the 'Use and Features Outline' page for Bowker Books In Print. The page has a blue header with the Bowker logo and 'Books In Print'. Below the header is a navigation menu with 'Search', 'Discover', and 'Connect'. The main content area is titled 'Books In Print Use and Features' and includes a 'Search' section with the text: 'Searching for titles is easier than ever with new title level functionality. The vast Books In Print Global database, now at your fingertips.' It also has a 'Discover' section: 'Discover more of what you like with all-new visual display and social media features built into the Books In Print platform.' and a 'Connect' section: 'Your library, with the variety of new features, discoverability, and refine facets for facilitating research.' Below these is a section titled 'Books In Print and Global Books In Print Access' which states: 'Books In Print combines the valuable content and search tools you've always known, with new discovery features, more complete bookseller information and a visually appealing interface that allows both professionals and end users to easily find what they need. No matter if you have Books In Print or Global Books In Print, all subscribers will enter through the same URL.' It includes the URL www.BooksInPrint.com and explains that the display is based on the subscription (global edition vs. U.S. and International titles). It concludes with: 'Books In Print is the over-arching name of the product. It can be displayed in a variety of ways.'

The screenshot shows the 'Advanced Search' page for Bowker Books In Print. The page has a blue header with the Bowker logo and 'Books In Print'. Below the header is a navigation menu with 'Search', 'Discover', and 'Connect'. The main content area is titled 'Search: Advanced Search' and includes the text: 'Advanced Search allows you to enter a variety of criteria to help limit your search results.' Below this is a search form with the following fields: 'Search All' (dropdown), 'Keyword in Title' (text), 'Keyword in Subject' (text), 'AND' (checkbox), 'OR' (checkbox), and 'Add/Remove / Reset All' (button). The search form is divided into several sections: 'Type' (with options: Fiction, Non-Fiction), 'Status' (with options: In Print, Out of Print, Forthcoming), 'Audience' (with options: Trade, Young Adult Audience, Elementary/High School, Juvenile Audience), 'Formal' (with options: Audio-AB, Book-AB, Video-AB, Audio Formats, Audio tape), 'Country of Publication' (with options: United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand), 'Language' (with options: English, Spanish, German, Italian, French), 'Award' (with options: Award-AB, Select Any), 'Reviewed By' (with options: Reviewed By-AB, Select Any), and 'Media Mention' (with options: Media Mention-AB, Select Any). The search form has 'Search' and 'Clear' buttons.

More information about some features can be found in the database FAQ, but this isn't easy to find – users must first click the small “Product Information” link at the bottom of each screen. On the FAQ, users can find more information about certain features, but, as with the Help

screens, sometimes it provides no more clarity. For example, nowhere in the FAQ about “Tag Cloud,” does the user learn it refers to a section labeled “Related Keywords” on results screens:

Bowker | Books In Print Home | Administrator | Staff

All ▾ Enter your query here ▶ Search

Tag Cloud

Q: What is the tag cloud and how does it help me?

A: The tag cloud is located in the upper right hand corner of the search results screen. It displays words sourced from the actual record of the title that you the Record's Annotations, Reviews, Profiles, Series, etc.

One key concern during the development of Books In Print was the desire to eliminate the most common problem in performing a search: reaching a dead end - to give the user choices that they did not initially consider or associate with the original topic of their search. Books In Print offers the kind of assistance to your answers.

Finally, the tag cloud brings serendipity -- finding something of great value that you weren't explicitly searching for -- into the experience. It'll increase the richness of your book search on the market.

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Q: Can I hide the word cloud?

A: Yes - simply click on the arrow located to the left of the search box. Click on the arrow again to unhide the word cloud.

[Back to Top](#)

Furthermore, users wondering about the “Related Keywords” link on results screen will have to guess, since the only “explanation” that the two are connected appears in images used in the “Help” entry for “Tag Cloud:”

Bowker | Books In Print

Use and Features

Search

Discover

- **Tag Cloud**
- My BIP
- Lists

Connect

Discover: Tag Cloud

Discover more of what you like with all-new visual display features built into Books In Print, such as the next generation tag cloud. Tag Cloud uses tagged words from the actual record, making the Cloud more relevant. Tags are taken from the title's Annotations, Reviews, Profile, etc.

The tag cloud, on the right of the results screen, offers suggested terms related to your search. You can select from the cloud similar topics or discover something new all together. The tag cloud enables you to do a brand new search based on terms relevant to your initial search.

For example, when searching for William Shakespeare, the tag cloud might suggest searching plays, literature, and even criticism. By clicking on 'criticism,' you will discover titles on that term, and generate a new tag cloud based on 'criticism.' (b) Don't want the tag cloud? No problem! You can hide the tag cloud at any time.

Advanced Search My Discoveries

Related Keywords

year shakespeare writers lives histories johnson samuel steevens george parker philip reed isaac

Advanced Search My Discoveries

Related Keywords

Refine Options:

Format

- Paperback (22,037)
- Hardback (9,493)

(To further add to reviewers' confusion, the “Related Keywords (aka Tag Cloud)” field in all results screens that were viewed for this review were empty, leaving no clue as to whether the field was intentionally blank or there was a technical problem.

Technical support is offered from Bowker via phone and email during the standard work week. However, getting answers from the vendor directly about both content and configuration was equally elusive. Request for clarification about features, content scope, design, and usability either went unanswered or yielded responses that didn't directly answer the questions (requiring

follow up). Although many, if not most, librarians understand **what** *Books in Print* is and can likely figure out how to use it at the most basic level, it is frustrating to use or just understand the purpose of all the “bells and whistles” that supposedly make this new search and retrieval interface superior to any previous online version or, indeed, the print publications. The inability to easily pull comprehensive information about types of content (e.g., statistics on actual content, such as books included for each category, number of reviews included, comprehensive lists of review sources, publishers, etc.) makes it difficult for potential subscribers to realize how the content might be different/better than less expensive competing products on the market.

COST: 1, 1

If cost is available, does it seem reasonable in terms of comparable products?

BIP appears to cost more than other similar products on the market (other online commercial book jobbers that include published reviews, publisher information, and bibliographic/purchase data required for collection development). It is difficult to verify the added value that the vendor claims to have, which presumably justifies the higher price, because they didn’t respond to requests for information about the scope of content.

Long-time subscriber renewal prices have remained constant for CCL members over the last two years. However, new subscribers may pay dramatically higher prices.

AVAILABILITY/ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICE: 2, 1.5

Is access/connection to product reliable and stable? Is response time adequate? Is product accessible to users with disabilities?

According to their website, BIP is fully accessible, stating that “it supports browser scaling of text, and there is a dedicated version that works on very specific high accessibility systems and devices, like Braille readers.” As previously mentioned, the vendor did not provide detailed information on accessibility for reviewers. Reviewers contacted technical support via telephone to inquire about ADA/Section 508 compliancy and were directed to the statement listed on the website and told that no further information was available.

The BIP 2.5 interface includes Web 2.0 tools, including rating, tagging, and social network features. The vendor claims that a redesign of the search and retrieval algorithms, in which a title-linked search results screen and edition-grouped results slowed user navigation of the site, has improved retrieval relevancy ranking and facet accuracy, and that the site works faster due to “target page load enhancements.” BIP access and connection appears to be reliable and stable with adequate response time. However, the vendor did not provide information on counter compliance, remote access, authentication, authorized users, usage statistics, course management system integration, or mobile access

OTHER REVIEWS OF THIS PRODUCT

NONE FOUND