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.

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.

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.

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:

Bowker. | Books In Print

Use and Features Outline

Search

Discover

Connect

Books In Print Use and Features

Search

Seaching for titles is easier than ever with new title level functionality. The vast Books In Print Global database, now at your fingertips.

Discover

Discover more of what you like with all-new visual display and social media features built into the Books In Print platform.

Connect

Your library, with the variety of new features, discoverability, and refine facets for facilitating research.

Books In Print and Global Books In Print Access

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 though the same URL.

www.BooksInPrint.com

The Books In Print display is based on your subscription. For example – if you have the global edition (formerly known as Global Books In Print), then you will see the full array of U.S. and International titles.

Books In Print is the over-arching name of the product. It can be displayed in a variety of ways.

Bowker. | Books In Print

Use and Features Outline

Search
- Quick Search
- Refine Search
- Advanced Search
- Readers Advisory
- RSS Feeds
- Market Default

Discover

Connect

Search: Advanced Search

Advanced Search allows you to enter a variety of criteria to help limit your search results.

       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:

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:"

(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