Accessing Literature on the Bahá'í Faith: Emerging Search Technologies

GRAHAM HASSALL

Abstract

This article surveys some current search technologies that can be used to find documentation on the Bahá'í religion. The capacity to search and retrieve documents has increased at a phenomenal pace in the past three decades. Search technologies have multiplied and become more both effective and more accessible. Emphasis has shifted from seeking information toward making the best use of the information found. Deeper access to information has expanded the range of research questions that we may dare to ask.

Résumé

Cet article aborde des technologies de recherche courantes pouvant servir à trouver de l'information sur la religion bahá'íe. Depuis trente ans, la capacité de chercher et d'extraire des documents a connu une croissance phénoménale. Les technologies de recherche se sont multipliées et sont maintenant plus efficaces et plus accessibles. L'accent est aujourd'hui mis sur l'exploitation efficiente de l'information recueillie plutôt que sur la recherche de l'information comme telle. Un accès plus exhaustif à l'information a aussi permis d'élargir la gamme des questions de recherche qu'il est possible de poser.

Resumen

Este artículo estudia algunas tecnologías actuales de búsqueda que pueden ser utilizadas para encontrar documentación acerca de la religión Bahá'í. La capacidad de buscar y recuperar documentos ha incrementado a un paso fenomenal en las últimas tres décadas. Tecnologías de búsqueda han multiplicado y han llegado

a ser más efectivas y accesibles. El énfasis se ha desplazado de buscar información a darle el mejor uso a la información encontrada. Un acceso más profundo a información ha expandido el alcance de preguntas de investigación que nos atrevemos a hacer.

Access to literature relating to the Bahá'í religion and its emerging global community has expanded phenomenally with the advent of new communications technologies. Scholarly literature is appearing in academic presses, in Bahá'í-sponsored or affiliated presses, in the media, and on the Internet.[1] Significant references to the Faith appear in the literature of religious studies and the social sciences generally, as well as in current affairs literature. However, there is also is an increasing volume of scholarship published on the World Wide Web (WWW) only,[2] and systematic posting of essays on the Web is now widely regarded as "publication." Consider, for instance, Moojan Momen's commentary "A Change of Culture," published on H-Bahai on 15 February 2003.[3] Although merely posted to a scholarly discussion group, such articles are a contribution to knowledge and are more than passing discussion.

There are also innovative uses of technology by which collaborative or collective authorship takes precedence over individual authorship. These sites are known as "wikis," which have come to be called "crowd-sourced" sites because they use the efforts, and aggregate the intelligence, of large groups of people. The Wikipedia (the "free encyclopedia") at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page has an expanding number of Bahá'í articles, and the Bahaikipedia, which commenced in March 2007 (http://bahaikipedia.org/Main_Page), is similarly expanding in content and number of participants. Collins suggests the terms "fluid," "collaborative," or "social-networked" to distinguish this type of knowledge from the more traditional and carefully crafted "expert" knowledge.

The rapid emergence of electronic information services is revolutionizing access to information on the Bahá'í Faith. Electronic sources range from websites that are freely accessible, to journal databases and full-text books available only by subscription, to discussion groups that allow

researchers to communicate back and forth. By combining these sources the researcher may learn not only of such traditional sources of scholarly information as books and academic papers, but also of such other sources as news services and newspaper articles. Judicial and other official records such as those of the United Nations Organization are also becoming available, as are booklists supplied by booksellers. Search at the online bookstore Amazon.com, for example, yielded 264 "Bahá'í" hits in March 1999, 304 the following October, 1,681 in April 2007, and 3,528 in January 2012. The REDEX CD-ROM from Newsbank titled *Index to UN Documents* searched in March 1999 yielded 209 references to "Bahá'í," while more recently, in July 2010, the United Nations Bibliographic Information System (unbisnet.org) contained 253 titles matching "Bahá'í." A search in the EBSCO database, in the World Magazine Bank file, yielded 107 references. It is clear from these sample searches that Bahá'í content available online is multiplying at an exponential rate.

Computer technology makes it possible to search a database such as FirstSearch and learn that author D. C. Lewis referred to the Bahá'ís of Tartarstan in an article that appeared in the journal *Central Asian Survey* in 1997,[4] or to find in *America: History and Life* a reference to an article in the *Armenian Review* quoting "newly discovered English-Language materials" of Dr. Reuben Darbinian of Boston, which "[p]resents the concluding extract from the daily journals of Dr. Reuben Darbinian, the editor-in-chief of the Harenik publications of Boston; the entries from November 1931 through April 1932 cover daily life and thoughts on Bahá'í and foreign relations."[5]

This search capacity is quite extraordinary, even if already taken for granted by a younger generation of scholars. In an earlier period, "publication" referred to the physical printing of "hard-copy" books, newspapers, pamphlets, magazines, theses, official reports, and academic journals. This printed literature was accessed by browsing through collections in libraries and bookstores, card catalogs, printed indexes, and archives. Information deemed useful by a researcher was then either copied out by hand or photocopied page by page. In some cases, access to such institutions was limited by membership, such as being a student or

faculty member of a university, or by being recognized as a legitimate researcher by an institutional archive. The most open form of search and retrieval in this phase was through purchase of materials for one's personal collection, or through visiting a public library.[6] Of course, in the context of such limited access, researchers had minimal access to official records of governments or other agencies. Search projects from this period include E. G. Browne's *Materials for the Study of the Bábí Religion* and Momen's survey of contemporary Western accounts of the Bábí and Bahá'í religions. The premier bibliography of the period is Collins's *Bibliography of English-Language Works on the Bábí and Bahá'í Faiths.*

In a second phase of access, catalogs were computerized and made available at site-specific locations, particularly institutional and academic libraries. Access to full-text documents shifted from such technologies as microfiche to digitized images. The rapid emergence of general access to the Internet then made possible not only the online interrogation of computerized catalogs, but also the retrieval of full-text articles whether in "read-only" or Optical Character Recognition (OCR) format. The significance of OCR technology is that a researcher can now bypass manually constructed catalogs and indexes, and seek any string (that is, sequence of letters and symbols) imaginable, across a range of platforms (that is, software programs that provide an interface between digital text and the reader—such as HTML, Adobe's PDF, or Microsoft Word).

The practical effect of this technological advance is that the researcher may now find obscure (or not so obscure) references of interest that have evaded previous detection (at this stage we are setting aside the issue of "quality" in search results; a discussion of quality versus quantity of search results will follow). A large number of "Bahá'í" references are in one sense small and inconsequential.[7] Yet even the smallest inclusion of a reference can represent a significant shift on the part of an author. A second issue concerns the "boundaries" of Bahá'í literature, which potentially includes literature by Bahá'ís, or concerning Bahá'í themes, which does not make explicit Bahá'í references. The work of scientists, engineers, and lawyers, as well as those in social sciences and humanities, may be inspired by Bahá'í values and concepts implicitly rather than explicitly. Such material

will not be identified by search engines. Note, for instance, Frank Lewis's study of Rumi, Andy Knight's studies on the United Nations system and international order, Danesh Sarooshi's works on international law, Bill Huitt's encyclopedia entry on "moral education," and so on.[8]

Search

It is now possible to keep track of references in print media through e-Tracker, Lexis-Nexis, Westlaw, and so on, and in discussion groups (for example, through Dejanews). Full-text retrieval of articles is available through such subscription services as Expanded Academic and such electronic libraries as Questia. It is possible to monitor closely the activities of the Bahá'í International Community in the various agencies of the United Nations Organization, and it is possible to track the work of Bahá'í institutions, whether schools and institutes, individual scholars, scholarship portals (for example, Bahá'í Faith Index, Bahá'í Library), or Associations for Bahá'í Studies. In sum, the search capacities currently unfolding present exciting opportunities for bringing together extremely diverse and seemingly esoteric but potentially crucial and invaluable information in the service of scholarship.

Electronic sources are being expanded and supplemented both forwards and backwards in time (see, for instance, the JSTOR [Journal Storage] project. This means that older publications are gradually becoming indexed. Commonly used web browsers remain Internet Explorer and Firefox; however, regardless of choice of browser, the researcher should customize with add-ons, commencing with the Google toolbar, and if using Firefox, selected journal search add-ons available at http://mycroft.mozdev.org/download.html.

Library Catalogs

Traditionally, library catalogs comprised cards that could be searched by author, title, and subject. Some large libraries printed their catalogs in book form so as to enable searches from beyond their physical location,

wherever such printed catalogs were placed. I first encountered the fac-simile of the British Museum's card catalog in the Michael Somare Library of the University of Papua New Guinea. The catalogs of most libraries are now searchable online and while the most common way to do this is to first visit the library's website, bibliographic software such as Endnote facilitates this without the need to visit the website directly. Libraries that deploy what is known as the "Z39" protocol have opened up their catalogs to such searching. The Zetoc database, for instance, pro-vides Z39.50-compliant access to the British Library's Electronic Table of Contents (ETOC), allowing search through the contents of approximate-ly 20,000 current journals and 16,000 conference proceedings published per year:

> With around 20 million journal and conference records, the database covers every imaginable subject in science, technology, medicine, engineering, business, law, finance and the humanities. Around 100,000 of the journals included are available for electronic data delivery (EDD) download. The database covers the years from 1993 to date and is updated daily. A list of journal titles covered by the database is available. Copies of all the articles and conference papers listed on the database can be ordered online from the British Library's Document Supply Centre in Yorkshire.

While online, I have connected to the library catalog at Temple University and conducted a search for materials cataloged with the term "Baha'i" in any field. (Note that some sites differentiate between "Bahai" and "Bahá'í," and searches for historical material may even require a search for "Behai.") This search yielded 95 entries for materials dating between 1911 and 2006.

INDEXES

Serial indexes may index an individual serial or multiple serials. *America: History and Life*, *African Studies*, and *Canadian Periodical Index* typify titles

devoted to the indexing of serials from geographic regions, while *Arts and Humanities Citation Index*; *Combined Retrospective Index to Journals in Sociology 1895–1974, Vol. 3: Subjects; and Religious and Theological Abstracts* exemplify serial indexes devoted to specific fields and disciplines. I have inspected at least 136 such serial indexes, which, over a period of time, have become subsumed in the larger electronic libraries and for the most part discontinued as distinct hard-copy publications.

The advent of digital libraries, which enable full-text searching within serials, has rendered serial and subject indexes obsolete—apart, of course, from indexes to materials not yet online. Services of interest include in ATLA Religion Database + ATLAS, which holds records from 1949 to the present.[9] A search in this database on 18 February 2002 for the term "Bahá'í" yielded 439 records; a search through Hein Online on 4 August 2003 found Bahá'í references in 27 volumes, while a search in the Periodicals Contents Index Web[10] on 15 February 2002 yielded 25 references in English, German, and Italian.

Various degree qualifications at tertiary institutions require their students to submit a dissertation or thesis. Dissertation indexes seek to compile lists of completed theses. Within academic environments, there are also departmental publications which have a low volume of circulation and minimal accessibility. Whereas theses are becoming more accessible through indexes, it is still possible to find unique citations in specific university catalogs. In March 2003, for instance, I discovered in the library catalog at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, the hard-copy master's thesis, "Bahá'í: A Study in Planned Syncretism" by Benson.

While dissertation indexes were formerly in hard copy only, a number of online dissertation indexing projects now exist. Hard-copy dissertation indexes include the *Comprehensive Dissertation Index*; *Dissertation Abstracts International: A, The Humanities and Social Sciences*; *Doctoral Dissertations*; *American Doctoral Dissertations*; *Index to Theses Accepted for Higher Degrees by the Universities of Great Britain and Ireland* (http://www.theses.com/); and *Union List of Higher Degree Theses in Australian Libraries*. One innovative project to expand digital access to theses is the Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (http://www.ndltd.org/). A search at

this site in April 2007 yielded 45 theses having a Bahá'í reference. UMI Dissertation Publishing, which is part of ProQuest, makes more than two million theses searchable at http://disexpress.umi.com/dxweb.

BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Typically, Bábí and Bahá'í references are found in bibliographies of religion and of countries. To date, the writer has inspected 92 in addition to the bibliographies devoted to Bahá'í literature, the main ones being those by Bjorling, Collins, and Stockman and Winters, with an earlier contribution by Braun. *The Resource Guide for the Scholarly Study of the Bahá'í Faith* is online at http://www.bahai-library.com/books/rg/, while additional bibliographies of Bahá'í materials have been gathered by Jonah Winters at http://bahai-library.com/resources/. Finally, recent products such as Mendeley (http://www.mendeley.com) are introducing the potential for both single and multi-author digital bibliographies.

ARCHIVES

Archives collect documents and other artefacts that may not exist in published form. Traditionally, the contents of such collections were accessible only those able to visit the archive's physical location. The advent of online catalogs allows for off-site searching of contents, if not citing of the documents and artefacts themselves. Material of relevance to Bahá'í studies may be found in archives of Bahá'í institutions as well as in a great many other locations.

In preparation for a conference of Bahá'í librarians and archivists convened at Landegg Academy, Switzerland, in January 2003, I surveyed Bahá'í institutions on the topic of institutional development. Data from the twenty responses received[11] indicated that a mere handful had by that date established formal archives or libraries. Few archives had measured their shelf size (Japan, 70 meters; France, 130 meters; Australia, 205 meters). Library holdings varied in size from exceptionally small: Slovenia and Croatia, 100 volumes; Western Caroline Islands, 400; Vanuatu, 600;

Thailand, 1000; South Africa, 1500 to 2000) to considerably larger: France, 3000; India, 4000; Australia, 5000; Bahá'í Academy, 8000; US National Bahá'í Library, 83,000 volumes. Three countries had Mission Statements for their archives (Australia, USA, and Venezuela) and three had Development Plans (Australia, France, and Japan). Very few countries had a separate budget for archives (Australia and USA) whereas most relied on periodic allocations from their National Spiritual Assemblies. In Senegal's report, funding included an allocation from the Literature Subvention Fund of the Continental Board of Counsellors. Four institutions had at least part-time paid staff (France, India, USA, and Australia). Although some libraries and archives kept by Bahá'í institutions are small, their collections are rare and valuable. The report for Sweden, for example, explained:

Archive facilities are underdeveloped to the point of non-existence in the Bahá'í community of Sweden. We have a new Bahá'í Centre which presently is in a process of being rebuilt, while our national archive is stored rather unsystematically in boxes and generally not accessible. We also have been honoured with taking custody of the late Hand of the Cause Dr Ugo Giachery's personal Bahá'í library, comprising two bookcases. Books from this library may be viewed by Bahá'ís when they visit the Centre. (Respondent: Örjan Widegren)

The library and archive collections of established national communities, such as USA, UK, Australia, Switzerland, Germany, and Japan, include larger, and sorted, collections. The report for Japan explained:

The materials in this Archive were accumulated over some forty years through the efforts of Mrs. Barbara Sims, long-time secretary and member of the National Spiritual Assembly, and author of *Japan Will Turn Ablaze* and *Traces That Remain*. Special Collections include the private papers, photographs, possessions and books of Hand of the Cause, Agnes Alexander, Mr. Saiichiro Fujita, and Mr. Tokujiro Torii. The Archives currently holds a collection of books which properly belong in a Bahá'í Library and will be transferred there when one is

established. The records of the National Spiritual Assembly of North East Asia, elected in 1957, include the earliest histories of the Faith in Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan. The collection is the largest Bahá'í Archives in North or Southeast Asia and includes copies of letters from 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi, all the records of the National Spiritual Assembly of North East Asia, the National Spiritual Assembly of Japan, the Archives of the Local Spiritual Assemblies of Kyoto and Tokyo, and Collections of individual prominent Bahá'ís, including the Hand of the Cause Agnes Alexander.

The Bahá'í Archives in Bern, Switzerland, holds records of the International Bahá'í Bureau and the National Spiritual Assembly of Italy and Switzerland (one of the twelve "World Crusade" Assemblies). The report for Vanuatu indicated that all materials are "kept wrapped in plastic bags, as a protection against humidity, cockroaches and occasional cyclones. . . ."

The most professionally managed Bahá'í archive outside the Bahá'í World Centre is that in Wilmette, Illinois, which in 2003 had two professional archivists and occupied seven rooms in the lower level of the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, in addition to off-site commercial storage space. It is open to the public and used by appointment during weekdays. The Report from Archivist Roger Dahl explained:

In 2001–2002 the Archives received 172 accessions, totaling 336 linear feet. This included 252 boxes of National Center records, 5 new collections of personal papers and 9 additions to existing collections of personal papers. The Archives also received five original Guardian letters. Currently the Archives has something over 7,000 linear feet of holdings.

Audiovisual holdings include over 19,000 photographs; several thousands reels of films and video tapes; something over 5,000 reels of audiotape; approx. 200 reels of motion picture film and some filmstrips.

Documents (manuscripts, letters): As of May 2002 the Archives had processed 254 record series of National Center records, totaling

1,180 boxes, 32 rolls of microfilm and 11 boxes of microfiche. The Archives has 552 collections of personal papers, of which 325 (in 1,236 boxes) have been processed and open for research.

While the major portion of archival materials of significant interest to Bahá'í scholars is stored in the archives of National Assemblies and at the Bahá'í World Centre, other archives do hold materials of interest. A search by Web at the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (NUCMC), for example, points to archival materials having Bahá'í content in fourteen repositories.[12]

SEARCH ENGINES

Simple searching is achieved through "open source" searching of the World Wide Web. Most Internet users are familiar with Google, Yahoo, and many other such search engines. Each has its strengths and weaknesses as a search tool. General search engines can be helpful if one is seeking broad information about Bahá'í communities and their activities; more specialized engines are required if one is looking for information from scholarly or more authoritative sources. Current information about what search engines and technologies are available is easily found, ironically, by writing a direct query into one's current browser search facility.[13]

There are specialized search engines and also metasearch engines. A specialized search engine will focus, for example, on providing results for a particular country, or for a specific subject area, or from within a specific news source such as newspapers or official documents. Google Scholar, for instance, provides for searches from within scholarly materials, rather than from the WWW generally.

"Intelligent Agents" undertake customized Internet searches and automatically return the results to the searcher. Some agents are available for free subscription, while those having more sophisticated capacities are available for purchase or subscription. The powerful software Copernic Agent (at www.copernic.com) combines results from multiple searches into one consolidated results list. The professional edition of this software

(Copernic Agent Professional) allows the researcher to nominate the target as well as the frequency for searches. It is possible to search, for instance, on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis, for Bahá'í references within news sources for Australia or Brazil or the UK, to name a few. Kagira-Watson has produced online a comparative analysis of Bahá'í search engines.

Searching databases on the WWW is another branch of specialized search. Such resources are sometimes called the "hidden web" since an ordinary search may find the homepage of a database but does not have the capacity to enter into the database to find specific resources.

ALERTS

Alert services allow the researcher to nominate topics about which he or she seeks notification. When the nominated topic appears within a product of the information provider, the researcher can receive special notification—usually by e-mail. Such alert services are provided by digital libraries such as ProQuest, periodical publishers such as Wiley-Blackwell, Cambridge, Sage, and Routledge; booksellers (new and used) such as Amazon.com; and news aggregators such as Google News.

The British Library's Zetoc Alert is an example of a current awareness service that can be requested to e-mail alerts on specific keywords. It e-mails tables of contents of targeted journals or details of articles which match some predefined search criteria such as an author's name or keywords from the title. These e-mail alerts are sent on the day the new data is loaded into the database.[14]

HOMEPAGES

In the past decade a significant quantity of information on Bahá'í communities has been posted on the World Wide Web. Significant portals include bahai-library.com, H-Bahai, Bahaindex.com, and the official site www .bahai.org. The religious press now has dedicated websites and search engines, and such sources can track Bahá'í references at such events as, for instance, the Parliament of the World's Religions. For instance, Kung and

Kuschel's report of Bahá'í participation in the signing of a "Global Ethic" at the Parliament of the World's Religions which met in Chicago in 1993 was reported in an article on "Women's Multifaith Perspectives on Global Child Advocacy" in 2000 (Flake). The third international meeting of the Parliament of the World's Religions, held in Cape Town in December 1999, was subject to articles exploring ecumenism: Ruether reported "[t]hat there were probably more members of the Bahá'í and the Mormons than Methodists" present (Gilmour). Calame notes the participation of the Bahá'í community in an initiative to draft a charter for a "responsible, plural and united world."[15] Of course, Web content can change rapidly, and if required, entire websites can be copied using such freely available software tools as winHTTrack. Individual pages can be selectively copied with such commercially available software as Web Research Professional produced by Macropool GmbH. Another means of seeking materials no longer on a particular website is searching at the Internet archive (http://www.archive.org/) which calls itself the "wayback machine."

There are now at least twenty Associations for Bahá'í Studies worldwide, some of which maintain homepages.[16] A few, but not all, of their homepages provide bibliographic information about their respective publications. The Internet addresses for these associations are listed at such sites as http://www.bahai-studies.ca/affiliates and http://www.bahai-studies.org/.

The websites of Bahá'í communities are listed at numerous sites on the Web. Two comprehensive sites are www.bcca.org and www.bahaidirectory.org, while of course Casper Voogt's site, www.bahaindex.com, is an invaluable source for all manner of information on Bahá'í communities and activities. Individual scholars are developing innovative sites, one current example being "Antiopodean Bahá'í Studies" at the initiative of Steve Cooney in New Zealand.

OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

Official documents include statutes, court judgments, and many other types of bureaucracy-generated documentation. A search on the Lexis database

on 24 January 2003 (Commonwealth and Irish Cases, Combined—Grouped by Country—Bahá'í) yielded 85 references; numerous judgments from US courts have Bahá'í references; the findings of all Australian judicial environments are searchable over the Internet (austlii.com.au), including refugee and immigration tribunals, which are a particularly fruitful source of information. A significant number of references in official documents at all levels of the US government can be found by searching firstgov.gov. United Nations documents are a fertile source of Bahá'í references. The holdings of the United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld Library are available through UNBISnet–Bibliographic Search,[17] while a significant number of documents are available through careful searching at the UN site www.un.org.

Digital Libraries

Online digital libraries take many forms. Commercial sites can only be accessed through subscription or through pay-per-item. Others may have a less commercial appearance while still requiring some form of payment for substantial use. Project Gutenberg, one of the pioneer digital library projects, has remained true to its original vision of providing books freely online. Some digital libraries are better described as "portals" through which a far greater number of individual databases are made available. Some of these individual titles are accessible through a number of databases or portals, and quite a few commenced long before the Internet age. The database FirstSearch, for instance, includes a large subset of discipline-specific databases. A search on 21 March 2000 in the World Catalog yielded 1939 records, including 37 for 1999. The database Paper1st yielded 13 papers; Contemporary Women's Issues (CWI) yielded 9 references; and Librarylit—Materials on libraries and librarianship—found 3 references.

   A digital library which has expanded rapidly since its launch in 2004 is Google Books (http://books.google.com/). (A summary of this project's origins is online at http://books.google.com/intl/en/googlebooks/history .html.) Although this project is in some ways controversial, with some

alleging it threatens the payment of royalties to writers and publishers, and others suggesting it heralds the demise of the physical library, its relevance in the current context is that it dramatically increases access to published information on Bahá'í topics. A search on Google Books in July 2010 yielded an astounding 96,000 references (remembering that this is a full-text search of books, not just a title or subject search.[18] Bahá'í documents are also regularly uploaded to docstoc.com and Scribd.com.

A search for Bahá'í content in the commercially available library, Questia (www.questia.com) on 5 April 2007 yielded 439 references within the full text of books, and this number rose to 568 references in full-text books in July 2010.

Computer-based searching need not take place online, as there are an increasing number of software applications that provide searchable interfaces. Such early products as Mars, Immerse, Bahá'í Library, and Ocean have been superseded by Interfaith Explorer[19] and Kalim (http:// www .kalim.info). Books, and even the historic periodical *Star of the West*, are now available on CD-ROM (2001).

Implications for Search

All of the sources for searching for Bahá'í materials and references noted above suggest that the field of possibilities is expanding exponentially. The serious researcher must keep track of search activities completed to ensure minimal duplication of effort at a later date. To store references and materials, bibliographic software such as Endnote is very useful, if not essential. Other similar packages are also available, but it is also possible to record references using a database such as Excel. In addition to recording bibliographic data, Excel can be used to record unique sites visited. Tabs are used in Excel for different categories of search (such as alert services, bibliographies, bookshops, dissertation indexes, search engines, and so on) and on each tabbed page a list is kept of the site searched, the date of search, and the number of references found.

This paper has reviewed significant changes to searching for and retrieving scholarly information in the field of Bahá'í Studies that have

taken place in the recent past. It has emphasized the extent to which new technologies—first the computer and later the interconnectedness of computers through the Internet—have transformed not only accessibility to rare publications, but also the very notion of publication. Rapid access first to catalogs and eventually to full text has introduced the new challenge commonly referred to as "information overload," and now being met through such concepts as "semantic web"—the development of search technologies that not only yield lists, but also seek to provide results based on relevance and meaning. Despite this recent expansion of access—and probably as a consequence of it—there is no central indexing system, no central clearinghouse, and a comprehensive Bahá'í bibliography on global scale may only be achieved through global participation and cooperation.

NOTES

1. A project to survey current Bahá'í literature, the "Report on Scholarship" (three editions, 1997, 1998, and 1999) is online at Bahá'í-library.com.

2. See, for instance, an article by Arjomand in Silk, http://www.trincoll.edu/depts/csrpl/religint.pdf.

3. And numerous others, such as "A Fragmentary Contribution to the Biography of Taj al-Saltana" posted to H-Bahai by R. Jackson Armstrong-Ingram on 12 December 2002.

4. "Abstract: This paper explores the link between religion and ethnic identity among the Tatars people of Tatarstan and the Volga-Ural region. It traces the history of Islam, Russian Orthodoxy, paganism, and the Bahá'í faith in this area, highlighting periods of conflict including current tensions between Tatar Muslim nationalists and some Protestant groups. The paper provides detailed statistics of the geographical distribution of ethnic groups within Tatarstan focusing mainly on the indigenous peoples of the Volga-Ural region, and concludes that one widespread legacy of Communism is that many people find it easier to call themselves atheists than anything else" (FirstSearch@oclc.org accessed 25 January 2002).

5. *America: History and Life* database, accessed 27 June 2001.

6. This is still one of the most enjoyable and rewarding experiences in search-

ing. When writing the present article during a visit to Auckland, New Zealand, in April 2007, the writer's visit to a second-hand bookshop was rewarded by finding three unique books with Bahá'í references: Marjorie Boulton, *Zamenhof Creator of Esperanto*; Florence Bell, *The Letters of Gertrude Bell*; and David Fraser, *Persia and Turkey in Revolt*.

7. See Morton; Gittler; and Runzo and Martin 3.

8. The examples would extend to every field of science: in management one can think of the work of Kambiz Maani's learning organization and Mehrdad Baghai's publications on organizational growth.

9. A July 2001 search was conducted using "SilverPlatter" ERL WebsSPIRS (now OvidSP). The database guide (now at http://ovidsp.ovid.com) gives the following information About ATLA Religion Database + ATLAS: "ATLA Religion Database + ATLAS is produced by the American Theological Library Association's Center for Electronic Resources in Theology and Religion. The ATLAS (American Theological Library Association Serials) project was created for religion scholars by religion scholars. It provides online versions of the entire runs of a core collection of more than fifty significant scholarly periodicals in the field of religion, most of which go back to 1949. ATLAS journals represent a wide selection of Christian traditions (including Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Evangelical, and Pentecostal), Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Shinto, Taoism, Confucianism, and other religious traditions."

10. Now *Periodicals Index Online*, http://pio.chadwyck.co.uk/marketing.do.

11. Seven responses were received from Europe (Belgium, Belarus, France, Germany, Slovenia and Croatia, Sweden, and Switzerland); three from the Americas (Puerto Rico, USA, and Venezuela); four from Asia (Azerbaijan, India, Japan, and Thailand); four from Australasia (Australia, Fiji, Vanuatu, and Western Caroline Islands); and two from Africa (Senegal and South Africa).

12. The Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; The Johns Hopkins University Special Collections, Baltimore; Stanford University Department of Special Collections, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia; New York Public Library Manuscripts and Archives Section; Princeton University Library; National Bahá'í Archives (Wilmette, Ill.); University of Utah Marriott Library; University of Washington Libraries (Seattle); Union Theological Seminary; Burke Library, New York; DeWitt Historical Society of

Tompkins County, Ithaca, New York; and Cornell University Library Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections.

13. There are even specialized websites at www.searchengines.com and www .searchenginewatch.com.

14. See http://zetoc.mimas.ac.uk/about.html, accessed 14 January 2012.

15. http://www.abs.org.nz/.

16. An incomplete list of Associations for Bahá'í Studies includes Africa, Australia, Chile, United Kingdom, French-Speaking Europe, German-Speaking Europe, India, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, North America, Northern Mariana Islands, Persian Language, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, and Venezuela.

17. At http://unbisnet.un.org.

18. The extent to which a specific title is made available over the Internet is determined by the copyright arrangement that exists between Google Books and each individual publisher or project partner; see http://books.google.com/support/bin/answer.py?answer=43729&topic=9259&hl=en, accessed 30 July 2010.

19. Interfaith Explorer can be used online (http://bahairesearch.com/) or downloaded. The project also has a Facebook group: http://www.facebook.com/home.php?ref=home#/group.php?gid= 64517472704.

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