Later this year APA will introduce a new version of PsycINFO that provides substantive changes to the bibliographic database, as well as the other electronic products APA produces. According to Linda Beebe, senior director of PsycINFO, the changes will affect PsycARTICLES®, PsycBOOKS, PsycCRITIQUES, PsycEXTRA®, and PsycINFO. “The updates we are making to PsycINFO will necessitate changes to all the databases because they are so interconnected,” she explained. Every record that appears in PsycARTICLES, PsycBOOKS, and PsycCRITIQUES is also indexed in PsycINFO, providing comprehensive access to the family of APA databases.

The PsycINFO bibliographic record is the foundation for all the PsycINFO products, which is one of the greatest strengths of the databases. All of the material entered into PsycINFO is indexed using the Thesaurus of Psychological Index Terms, now in its tenth edition and long considered an industry benchmark. Consequently, the Thesaurus allows for accurate searching, precise retrieval, and information integrity across the entire suite of APA databases.

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The Product Development team at APA is hard at work making structural changes to the records in PsycINFO. The need for the changes became apparent based on feedback from PsycINFO users, explained Walker. “Our customers told us that the structure is cumbersome and complicated to use,” he said, “and so we are looking at a labeling system that makes more sense.” He stressed that the overall goal is to define each field in a way that eliminates confusion or ambiguity.

One of the most significant changes now being planned includes the elimination of the “Form/Content” type. Form/Content has previously been a mixture of different elements, explained Walker, from document type to content type. He noted that by restructuring the elements formerly contained in Form/Content and placing them into three new fields, Publication Type, Document Type, and Methodology, searching should be greatly enhanced.

The first new field being added is Publication Type, which will capture the type of document indexed in the database, such as book, journal, dissertation abstract, and so on. This is, in effect, the top level of description in the database. “It’s the container for the content,” explained Beebe. This enhanced field will include some new values such as peer-reviewed journal, non peer-reviewed journal, or “peer-review status unknown.”

Document Type is actually a subset of

**Selected Changes**

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Sample Search

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continued on page 5
PsycCRITIQUES: Timely Book Reviews at Your Fingertips with Newest APA Database

When psychologists typically think about book reviews, they often think about the print journal Contemporary Psychology: APA Review of Books. Published since 1956, this respected publication has long been an excellent source of scholarly reviews of the book literature in the field. But this year the journal has been replaced by a new comprehensive and searchable database called PsycCRITIQUES. It is the latest addition to APA's family of PsycINFO databases.

PsycCRITIQUES offers much more than the print journal ever could, with very timely reviews of new books and an archive of nearly 5,000 Contemporary Psychology reviews that currently goes back to 1995. Eventually, PsycCRITIQUES will contain all of the reviews ever published in Contemporary Psychology. Danny Wedding, editor of PsycCRITIQUES and director of the Missouri Institute of Mental Health, noted that librarians have long expressed an interest in getting reviews of the latest psychology books. The electronic format of PsycCRITIQUES makes this possible, with 15-20 reviews added each week. Would-be reviewers are asked to read and review the books within 30 days in order to facilitate the rapid turnaround time. The result, explained Wedding, is that most books are reviewed in their copyright years. As such the currency of the database makes it an excellent collection development tool for librarians.

PsycCRITIQUES also serves a valuable function for researchers, academics, and practitioners who need to be kept up to date on the newest materials being published in the field, including new psychologically relevant films, one of which is reviewed each week. Wedding indicated that practitioners like to stay abreast of relevant films as they are often called upon to comment on these for patients.

“Our goal is to lead psychologists to the new developments in the field,” said Wedding, noting that the field has become too broad for people to keep up with all the material that is published. Psychologists, he said, are generally interested in everything. And PsycCRITIQUES offers them a way to review quickly the major works as they are released.

PsycCRITIQUES also offers more than just basic reviews of the top works in the field. Wedding stressed that reviewers are subject experts and are asked to relate the new work to the current literature and thinking in the field. This makes the reviews especially valuable, he said.

PsycCRITIQUES is easy to use, especially for those who already use PsycINFO. The database can be searched by author, reviewer, title, and other standard search fields. Users can also browse by author, title, and publication year. The database is fully indexed using APA's Thesaurus of Psychological Index Terms vocabulary and the PsycINFO Content Classification Code System to facilitate precise retrieval.

PsycCRITIQUES is available for institutions through EBSCO, as well as through APA's own platform, PsycNET and soon on the Ovid and CSA platforms. Other vendors are expected to load the databases in 2005. Individuals can also obtain access for an annual fee.

PsycCRITIQUES offers a gateway to the most important literature in the field of psychology and is a valuable addition to any research library. For more information about this product or any other in the APA family of databases, see http://www.apa.org/psycritiques.

Editor’s note:

We at PsycINFO would love to get feedback on our new products, including PsycCRITIQUES. We want to hear your comments and learn how we can make our products even more valuable.

Please e-mail your comments to psycinfo@apa.org.

Signing Up to Download MARC Records for PsycBOOKS

Any librarian who would like access to the MARC records for PsycBOOKS on PsycNET, and has not registered to access the password-protected sections of the Librarian's Reference Desk can sign up free-of-charge. To obtain a password, e-mail iaccess@apa.org with your name, title, institution name, address, e-mail address, and telephone number.
PsycBOOKS: New APA Database Provides Access to Essential Scholarly Book Titles

One of APA’s newest heralded products is the electronic database known as PsycBOOKS. Launched in August 2004, the database consists of more than 600 full-text scholarly titles in PDF format. In only a few months, it has become recognized as an excellent resource for both practitioners and researchers and is being viewed as a core component of the social sciences collection of any library.

The contents of PsycBOOKS include hundreds of books published by APA, plus many out-of-print classic books in psychology from other publishers. Furthermore, the database includes an electronic version of the Encyclopedia of Psychology, published jointly by APA and Oxford University Press. More than 1,500 entries from the encyclopedia are included in the database.

“PsycBOOKS fills an important niche,” noted Gary R. Vandenbos, PhD, APA publisher. “It helps us disseminate valuable — and in many cases critically needed — information summarizing the research on a given topic or describing ranked-ordered recommendations for interventions to the desk tops of psychologists. They really need this kind of content in an easy-to-use format.”

The collection of classic books is an important resource for libraries. To date almost 90 out-of-print titles are included in the database; some date back to the early 1800s. Classic titles such as Freud’s Interpretation of Dreams, Pierre Janet’s The Mental State of Hystericals and Charles Darwin’s Expression of Emotion in Man and Animal are included. According to Wade Pickren, APA historian and director of archives and library services, the classic titles included in PsycBOOKS were selected by a panel of psychologists and historians who deemed them as being instrumental in shaping the field.

Researchers and clinicians are discovering the value of the product and have noted that they are making use of the information in the database as they do journal articles, often accessing just one chapter. The database easily allows for chapter searching, as well as browsing by title, author, and year. The fielded search in PsycBOOKS is similar to that in PsycINFO. (See search example on page 4).

One of the greatest strengths of the new database, according to Olin Nettles, manager of PsycBOOKS, is that every PsycBOOKS record and table of contents has an embedded PsycINFO abstract, thus allowing for precise searching and recall.

PsycBOOKS is available via site license through a number of different vendors. Institutions can access PsycBOOKS through APA’s own platform, PsycNET, or through EBSCO, Ovid, or Cambridge Scientific Abstracts (CSA). Contracts with additional vendors are now pending. Annual site licenses for institutions, which are available with data fees tiered by institution size and type, offer unlimited access for all users affiliated with the institution.

Another feature of PsycBOOKS now being offered is access to the MARC bibliographic records for linking to your library’s OPAC. MARC records are updated monthly as new titles are added to the database. Institutions that subscribe to PsycBOOKS through vendors other than APA should contact their vendors for more information. PsycNET users can find links to the MARC records at the Librarian’s Reference Desk at www.psycinfo.com/library/refdesk.

PsycBOOKS offers materials that will be useful in clinical practice, teaching, and research. For more information about this product or any other in the APA family of databases, see www.apa.org/psycbooks.

30th Anniversary of the Thesaurus of Psychological Index Terms

In July 2004, the publication of the Tenth Edition of the Thesaurus of Psychological Index Terms marked the 30th anniversary of PsycINFO’s essential search tool. Over the years, the size and format of the Thesaurus have evolved from a controlled vocabulary of 800 terms in 1974 to a comprehensive search tool including more than 7,800 standard and cross-referenced terms, three display sections, user search guides, and other valuable additions such as the Scope and Historical Note fields.

Despite the increasing online availability of thesauri, many librarians insist the print version is invaluable. According to Glenn Moreton, psychology librarian for the University of Maryland Libraries, the Thesaurus has remained a staple in their reference collection. “We recently weeded through the numerous vocabularies held by the University’s libraries, but not the APA Thesaurus. It has great value in covering the social science terminology. Most databases have an online thesaurus, but the print still remains useful. Especially when looking for related terminology or tracking subtle differences between terms, the print eliminates scanning through multiple screens. Users are able to shift more easily between terms and return to where they started or where they want to end up.”

For more information about the Thesaurus of Psychological Index Terms, Tenth Edition, including a selection of new terms added, visit our website at www.apa.org/psycinfo/products/thesaurus.html.
Search example for PsycBOOKS

Search scenario: A researcher wants to find studies on the survival techniques of women exposed to a traumatic event.

Strategy: Using the fielded search function, the researcher enters the terms “surviv*,” and “trauma” in “all fields” and limits the population group to female.

Sample book record:

Title: Abused women and survivor therapy: A practical guide for the psychotherapist.

Select a book.

View table of contents and select a chapter.

Print chapter.
Publication Type and will capture what a document is, as opposed to what the document is about, explained Walker. For example, the types of items found in a journal in addition to “journal article” will be contained in this field, such as journal letters, editorials, and book reviews. This change, which users have long requested, will have an impact on librarians as they help patrons conduct their searches.

Methodology Type will allow users to limit their searches to records using the precise methodology that is of interest to them. This field will contain a subset of values such as clinical case report, empirical studies, literature review, and so on, and should prove to be very useful to advanced users.

Mapping Projects

In addition to the mapping that is required for the structural changes to the records in PsycINFO (all of the changes to the Form/Content Type will involve mapping new values to old records), the new version will also include two new mapping projects. Walker’s team is busy mapping the “Test/Survey appended” field to older records, thus enabling users to easily find materials that have actual tests or surveys attached to them. The Product Development team is also mapping new 2005 thesaurus terms to older records. This change enables users to retrieve content even when using brand new terms. Both changes will improve the quality and richness of the databases.

Timing of New Version

The new version of PsycINFO will be released to vendors in late August 2005. APA will be tracking when the vendors load the new version and will post that information on the PsycINFO website.

The updates to the other databases will follow in the months after August; details will be available soon.

These are just a few of the enhancements that will be implemented with the new version of the PsycINFO databases. Details about other changes will be published in the May version of PsycINFO News and via the PsycALERT listserv.

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