



SUNYConnect Database Survey

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The OLIS recently conducted an online survey that asked SUNY libraries to rate the current *SUNYConnect* databases and to make database and subject coverage recommendations for future consideration. The survey was undertaken at the request of the [SUNYConnect Advisory Council \(SAC\)](#), with the results to be used by that body and by [SLiCAT](#) in the ongoing effort to develop the [SUNYConnect database collection](#). Response to the survey was outstanding, with 60 campuses completing it.



The first part of the survey asked libraries to rate the six currently available databases. While some of these databases have been made available by OLIS for several years, the fast-changing environment for electronic databases makes it important to reassess current products as well as to examine new ones.

Because they are valuable to the broadest spectrum of users, it is not surprising  that the two most comprehensive databases, the FirstSearch Base Package and Expanded Academic ASAP, received the highest scores in response to the question, "How useful is [Database Name] to your library users?" On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest, Expanded Academic scored 4.7 and FirstSearch 4.1 among all campuses. Also not too surprisingly, the more specialized databases scored somewhat lower. Literature Resource Center was at the high end with a "usefulness" rating of 3.9, and AP Photo Archive and UnCover Reveal shared the low end at 2.5 each. Associations Unlimited fell in the middle at 3.4.



While these results might suggest that UnCover Reveal and Photo Archive should be replaced with products more likely to be useful to the SUNY community, other factors need to be taken into account. For example, the two products just mentioned are the least expensive by far of those currently available through *SUNYConnect*. For example, their combined cost is only about 12% that of Expanded Academic. The number of inexpensive electronic databases from which to choose is very limited so it might be difficult to find suitable replacements.

The second part of the survey asked libraries to identify both subject areas and specific database products they would like to see added to the *SUNYConnect* offerings. A total of 44 subject areas were named, with the top five being:

- 1) Business, Economics and Management
- 2) Science, Technology and Mathematics
- 3) Psychology
- 4) History
- 5) Law and Criminal Justice

More than half of all subjects named received only one mention.

The request to identify specific databases produced a list of 80. The great majority received only one mention, but there were some clear favorites. Topping the list was PsycINFO, which appeared on the lists of 13 campuses. Interestingly, although this product is available through a number of different vendors, no vendor preferences were expressed.

That was definitely not the case with CINAHL (Nursing and Allied Health), the next most popular database with 12 mentions. One campus specifically wanted CINAHL Direct, while another wanted it through EBSCO, saying CINAHL Direct was "too difficult to use." OVID was the preferred interface of yet another campus, while a fourth would be happy with any interface other than FirstSearch. Obviously, it would be impossible to satisfy all these preferences if and when SUNYConnect receives sufficient funding to consider such a purchase.

Another frequently mentioned product was Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe. However, if one of the objectives of SUNYConnect is to get "the most bang for SUNY's bucks" through consortium purchasing, then Academic Universe is not a sensible candidate for consideration. The reason is that the lowest possible price has already been achieved through the Nylink offering and a SUNYConnect purchase would not result in any greater savings.

The high ranking given to history as a subject area was reflected in multiple mentions of several databases. These included America: History and Life, Historical Abstracts, History Resource Center and HarpWeek.

It was somewhat unsettling to see recommendations to add AP Photo Archive and Health Reference Center. The former is already offered through SUNYConnect and the latter is available via the New York State Library's EmpireLink. Perhaps this points up the need for continued reminders of what's freely available now.

OLIS is very grateful to all those who took the time to respond to the survey. The results will be very useful in the months ahead as SLiCAT, SAC and OLIS continue to plan for an expansion of SUNYConnect database offerings.



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