

Databases Bring Wealth of Information to Small Kansas Library

KAN-ED--WHERE KANSANS ACCESS THE INFORMATION AGE.

When commenting on the impact of the Kan-ed Educational and Research Databases, Polly Bloom, Director of Douglass Public Library in south central Kansas, shared, "The Kan-ed sponsored databases give us a wealth of information that we would not have access to otherwise because our library's budget could not afford to pay for these databases."

Prior to having access to the databases sponsored by the State Library of Kansas and Kan-ed, the library had to purchase hard copies of resources, which could be cumbersome at times. Now, the online databases provide a convenient way to focus on the topic of interest. For example, Bloom remarked, "Chilton's automotive repair manuals are very expensive, and they're so big and heavy that they're hard to make copies of. Everybody who comes in and looks something up online really likes being able to print off a copy. You can expand the size of the diagrams, which is very popular. There are some things that you can't do with the information in books that you can do with what's online. For instance, when a wiring diagram is printed in the book, you can barely read the print. You can enlarge it on the computer and make it much more useful to your patrons. I also try to teach patrons how to access the databases from home. I've got truck drivers now who are accessing the Chilton's manuals on a regular basis from their homes and are thrilled with it."

If the library's access to the Kan-ed sponsored databases was removed, patrons would be further inconvenienced because the library would be unable to afford to have the databases. Bloom hypothesized, "Without the Kan-ed database, if they wanted to access that kind of material, they would have to drive about 20 miles to a larger library that hopefully would be able to afford to have those databases." Bloom describes that three databases are particularly useful in the library, including Gale, HeritageQuest, and World Book. More specifically, she shared, "Consumer Reports is another one that we do use on a regular basis. We have several people who never make a purchase without looking it up in Consumer Reports. It is pretty easy for the individual to go in, look up the item, and print off the information forms so they can do their comparison shopping."

Ultimately, the library and patrons "very much appreciate having the databases and hope the state will continue to supply the resources." Bloom continued, "Not only is it great for our library, but the people that I have taught how to use the databases at home have really been excited about the knowledge that they now have with access. The unfortunate thing is that our databases are one of our best hidden secrets in Kansas. I try to tell people about them all the time, but if Kan-ed could get some media coverage on what's out there and available to people that would be helpful."

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Douglass Public Library
Serves: 2,600+ patrons
Kan-ed member since:
March 27, 2003



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Chilton's: do-it-yourself reference manual for automotive repair