

Educational Growth and Career Preparation Promoted by Kan-ed Databases

Wichita Public Library

Serves: 150,000+ patrons

Kan-ed member since:

February 25, 2003

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At the Wichita Public Library, patrons at library locations and through their home computers have access to a plethora of Kan-ed services that enable the expansion of their education and employment opportunities. Through the Kan-ed sponsored Educational and Research Databases, primary, secondary, and post-secondary students can access full-text academic, scientific, and medical journals for required course research and Kansas and national assessment test preparation. Job seekers have access to the Learning Express database that has GED preparation, workplace skills training, and tutors to help write résumés and cover letters. Rex Cornelius, Wichita Public Library's Digital Services Manager, states, "The Kan-ed databases are just critical to us. We could not begin to offer that kind of content ourselves."

Carol Kotsch, Children's Librarian at Wichita Public Library's Evergreen Branch, notes, "One Kan-ed resource that heavily impacts Kansas students is access to academic journals through the Gale database. College professors are saying their students' research sources have to be certain kinds of magazines; they have to be from magazine databases, not stuff off the Internet. This is what the teachers at public schools want their students to have also." Jamie Prothro, Customer Service Manager of Wichita Public Library, describes, "There are instances where students really do need in-depth research, and smaller facilities are just not able to support on-site that scope in the collection. Kan-ed databases have been very valuable to be able to help somebody on-site without referring them elsewhere."

The databases are used by private, public, distance education, homeschool, and virtual school students. Amy Ramsey, Children's Center Manager at Wichita Public Library's Central Library, describes how nontraditional Kansas students benefit by Kan-ed services availability, "Learn Test, Learning Express for Home School, has the Kansas State standardized tests on there, so parents of homeschooled students know if their child is meeting those standards." Ken Warner, General Reference Librarian at Wichita Public Library's Central Library, comments, "There's been a dramatic increase of the research databases usage with online students and the virtual high schools. They utilize the electronic databases remotely a lot more frequently."

Community members also use the database resources sponsored by Kan-ed to gain workforce training and assistance in developing application materials. Warner notes, "Learning Express has had educational and vocational tests from the beginning. Within the last year, they have added resources for job seekers that are terrific." These added Learning Express features are something they're using in their partnership with the Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas. Cornelius describes the tool, "The Learning Express product [offers] lots of tutoring on doing things like preparing résumés and cover letters." Julie Linneman, Programming/Outreach Manager at Wichita Public Library, says, "We have people that want GED books and SAT books, all those exam books that are hard for us to maintain. I bet we refer people to the Learning Express database on a daily basis." Warner says, "Since the employment situation in our community has taken a downturn, it's even escalated the use of those exam prep services."

Cornelius adds, "The content is no good without the access to it. The transition is from the good ole' green bound readers guide to using the power of a computer data mining program for students and people to get to information in periodicals that may not even be on the newsstands yet. That's just kind of a librarian's dream come true." Kan-ed is promoting this dream come true through the access it gives the Wichita Public Library to offer these educational growth opportunities to area students and job preparation resources for community members.