



# MUSE NEWS

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## Project MUSE® Newsletter

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## Project MUSE: More Content, More Value in 2002

**W**ITH 19 NEW JOURNALS AND THREE NEW publisher partners currently confirmed for 2002, Project MUSE continues to offer institutional subscribers access to more quality full-text journal content online. While expanding our offerings, we remain aware of library budgetary concerns, and are pleased to announce that MUSE prices for the next subscription term have come in well below projections announced earlier in the year!

During User Group meetings at both the ACRL and ALA Annual conferences, MUSE management committed to a 2002 list price of no more than \$15,500 for the Full Database collection. The actual list price for the Full collection for next year will be only \$14,000. This collection will include at least 190 full-text titles, nineteen of them new to the database for 2002. More new titles are anticipated during the term and will be available to current subscribers at no extra charge.

MUSE will again offer two discipline-oriented journal collections: Arts & Humanities and Social Sciences. The former, with 138 titles in 2002, will have a list price of \$10,400, and the latter will offer 94 titles for a list price of \$7,300. Several publisher collections will also continue to be offered.

New publishers participating in MUSE for 2002 include the Ohio State University Press, Princeton University Press, and Slavica Publishing of Indiana University. Several current partner presses will be contributing additional titles to the collection, expanding the database's offerings in geography, economics, higher education, public affairs, and ethnic studies, among others.

Exciting additions to MUSE for 2002 include *Shakespeare Quarterly*, now published by the Johns Hopkins University Press for the Folger Shakespeare Library, and *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, the #1-ranked title in its field, from the Princeton University Press. Other new journals include *International Organization* (MIT Press), *Aztlan: A Journal of Chicano Studies* (Duke UP), *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* (Penn State UP), *Labor*

*Studies Journal* (West Virginia UP), *Journal of Money, Credit, and Banking* (Ohio State UP), and *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* (Slavica). A complete list of confirmed titles may be found on the MUSE web site. It is expected that more new titles will be announced prior to the end of the current calendar year.

Regretfully, we must announce that four titles will not be continuing in the MUSE database after the current calendar year term. Some of these titles have been acquired by for-profit publishers, making them ineligible for participation in MUSE, while others are being halted due to concerns over permissions issues or the journal's on-time status. Subscribers may rest assured that all issues of these titles already published online will remain in MUSE and available to current subscribers. However, no new issues

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### SEARCH INTERFACE UPGRADE Use Analysis and Testing Provide Important Focus

by Elizabeth W. Brown  
Project MUSE Metadata Coordinator

**A**S THE LAUNCH OF OUR CURRENT SEARCH ENGINE nears its first anniversary this fall, MUSE is preparing to implement its first interface upgrade. We are planning adjustments to make the existing interface clearer, as well as adding some useful new features. Announcements about the updates will be sent out beginning in August, and the first of these changes will be available on MUSE in September.

Our strategy has been to allow users to grow accustomed to the new search engine's features over the course of the year, during which we have culled as much information as we can to guide us in our evaluation. For instance, we have examined search behavior as recorded in our search log, user e-mail messages with comments and questions about searching, and feedback received at conferences. To assess how searchers are using specific features we have also designed a variety of reports to

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mine as much data as possible from our search logs, including numbers of searches in basic versus advanced screens as well as use of the different search fields, multiple boxes in the advanced screen, and multiple Boolean operators in the advanced, limits, and sort options. We've also designed reports to help us track "problem searches"—specific kinds of searches we've identified that show possible misinterpretation of our search interface.

### LET THE USER BE YOUR GUIDE

We have used this analysis and feedback as a guide to identify any changes needed to improve the user experience. Determining what should be adjusted is not a problem, but making sure that proposed changes will have the desired results poses more of a challenge. To get the best possible feedback, we turned to the experts: librarians and their users.

First, we talked in person with librarians who select, teach, and provide reference for electronic resources. At the ALA Conference in San Francisco, we conducted focus interviews lasting an hour or more with 10 "self-selected" librarians from a variety of higher education institutions. We were pleased to get a good representation from our customer base: college libraries with wide subject or just humanities focus, university main libraries and branch libraries, institutions with a varying numbers of electronic resources available, and institutions with both the full MUSE database or partial subscriptions.

During the interviews, we demonstrated an alternate interface with changes we were considering in order to make the interface clearer. We asked a set of questions about the changes as well as existing features. We have incorporated the excellent ideas and feedback we received into the new search interface. This feedback also provided crucial guidance in designing usability testing of the MUSE search engine, which is underway in July and August while we finalize our work. For the usability tests, we have adapted a standard method where testers are asked to do a series of tasks

while their comments and behavior are tracked. Each task is designed to answer a specific question or concern we have about the usability of the search interface. We also have done tests where testers are asked to define different terms on the search screens, such as those in our search field pull-downs.

While feedback we regularly receive through e-mail and informal conversations at conferences remains crucial in helping us determine what steps we need to take, observing how users experience the search interface through their own eyes has been invaluable.

### CHANGES TO THE INTERFACE

The upcoming changes to the interface are guided by the desire to steer users to the best possible search options for what they need to search. For instance, we have noticed users trying to enter more advanced searches than the basic screen allows, in particular trying to combine phrases or use complex Boolean statements. Indeed, most of the librarians we interviewed at ALA noted that they prefer to send users directly to advanced search screens in general because they provide more options and lead to better results. Usability testing showed that users will often latch onto MUSE's advanced search option once they notice the link to it; in some cases, testers tried to use the basic search as though it were "advanced." Our current goals for the interface include, therefore, making the links to the advanced screen easier to notice while retaining a slightly simpler basic screen that won't "fool" users into thinking it has more functionality than it does.

Another major issue we have focused on is Boolean operators. Our search software eliminates the need to type in Boolean expressions. Unfortunately, searchers who want to use Boolean expressions cannot do so at all but must rely on what the interface gives them, e.g., radio buttons in the basic search to combine simple terms with "AND", "OR" or as a phrase or exact match. We have changed terminology on the basic screen to eliminate extra words to make usage clearer.

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## UPCOMING CONFERENCES

### IFLA CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

August 19–23, 2001

Boston, MA

*Project MUSE Booth #2308*

### CHARLESTON ADVISOR VENDOR SHOWCASE

October 31, 2001

Charleston, SC

### PALINET ANNUAL MEETING 2001/VENDOR FAIR

November 12, 2001

Harrisburg, PA

### ONLINE INFORMATION 2001

December 4–6, 2001

London, UK

*Project MUSE Stand #631 (Gallery)*

### ALA MIDWINTER MEETING 2002

January 19–21, 2002

New Orleans, LA



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*Project MUSE's* classification of journals by subject has been expanded to reflect the many new titles now available in the database. Brand new subject areas were added, and the existing subject list was re-tooled to allow for finer distinctions between subjects and more precise searching.

For example, Philosophy and Religion, previously a single subject area, has been split into two separate categories. Journals are now included in more than one subject area when applicable; for example, *American Jewish History* is now under both Judaic Studies and History, and *Economia* is found under both Economics and Latin American Studies. Among the new subjects added are Music, Economics, Demography, Folklore, Anthropology, Sociology, and Science. The expanded subject list shows the greater breadth of content now found in *MUSE* journals, as well as growing lists in subject areas such as Latin American Studies, Native American Studies, Asian Studies, African Studies, and Women's Studies.

The list of journals by subject is available on the main Journals page (<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/>), from the "Subject" link at the top of the list of titles. A user may also search across these same subject groups from the Advanced Search Screen by selecting the "limit by subject" option. 🌐

### More Content . . . continued from page 1

of these titles will be put online after 2001. The journals no longer participating in *MUSE* are *Anthropological Quarterly*, *Hopscotch: A Cultural Review*, *Resources for American Literary Study*, and *Transition*.

We are pleased to continue our current policy of offering discounts to several categories of libraries, including community colleges, high schools, special libraries, public libraries, and very small academic institutions. Our consortium discount program remains unchanged, providing volume discounts to library consortia based upon the number of participating institutions. The average discount among current subscribers to one or more *MUSE* journal collections is 48% off list price. For 2002, this translates to a very reasonable average price per title of \$35–\$37.

Please watch the *Project MUSE* web site at [http://muse.jhu.edu/journ\\_descrip/whats\\_new.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journ_descrip/whats_new.html) for further details on the journal collections, titles, and prices offered to institutional subscribers in 2002. Questions regarding *MUSE* subscriptions may be directed to [muse@muse.jhu.edu](mailto:muse@muse.jhu.edu). 🌐

By Elizabeth W. Brown  
Project *MUSE* Metadata Coordinator

*Project MUSE* has, since its launch in 1995, provided indexing of articles using Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH). Because of its breadth and familiarity to many *MUSE* customers, LCSH has provided a good controlled vocabulary that can easily be applied to the entire *MUSE* collection. Users take advantage of subject terms or headings for more focused searching via the *MUSE* search interface.

Taking the commitment to quality subject indexing even further, *MUSE* has recently begun to contribute subject headings and subject heading changes to LCSH through the Library of Congress's Subject Authority Cooperative Program (SACO). When indexing articles where the "perfect subject heading" has not yet been established, *Project MUSE* authorities librarian/indexer Bill Kulp formulates a new, appropriate heading then sends in a proposal. Contributing new headings allows *MUSE* to provide better subject indexing while adhering to a consistent vocabulary. Thus far, *MUSE* has contributed over 20 new subject headings, which are now available for use by catalogers everywhere.

Kulp, who was previously involved with *MUSE* as a contractor, came on board full time as the principal indexer in fall 1999. With over 20 years cataloging experience in

libraries such as the University of Arkansas, the Smithsonian, and University of Maryland, he has brought considerable skill and expertise to the *MUSE* program. Kulp received his undergraduate degree from Oberlin Group Member College of Wooster, his MLS from Syracuse University, and has a second master's degree in theological studies from Drew University.

The subject headings submitted thus far reflect the diversity of *MUSE's* content. To date, the focus has been primarily on pattern heading submissions, but *MUSE* indexers anticipate expanding their SACO operation to make significant contributions with areas such as ethnic groups and languages. For example, the December 1999 issue of *Oceanic Linguistics* contains articles on different specific Polynesian and Austronesian languages, but we were not able to provide headings for all of the languages as they had not yet been added to LCSH.

Sample *MUSE* LCSH contributions include:

- Sermons, Syriac
- African American critics
- African American women critics
- Miller, Daisy (Fictitious character)
- Gay composers
- Stock car drivers
- Transvestites in literature
- Holt, Felix (Fictitious character)
- Women circus performers in literature
- Women circus performers in art



## New Journals Manager at Hopkins

We are pleased to announce that Bill Breichner has taken the helm as the new Journals Manager at the Johns Hopkins University Press. Bill has been the Production Manager in the Journals Division since 1996. He brings with him many years of experience in the field of publishing and a strong desire to unify and improve the JHU Press. Management responsibilities in the Journals Division and *Project MUSE* are undergoing restructuring, so Bill will also oversee *MUSE* during this process.

Bill was born in Hagerstown, Maryland and attended Baltimore's Loyola College, where he studied English and Writing. Educated during the Watergate era, a time when "the media were heroes," his plan was to break into the newspaper business. After doing some freelance work in this field, he accepted a position at the University Park Press in Baltimore, and has been working in the printing and publishing industries ever since.

In his personal life, Bill enjoys reading, the outdoors, and spending time with his wife and five children. In his professional life, Bill has ambitious plans both for the Journals Department and *Project MUSE*.

What can we expect? Bill intends to move forward with a number of ideas, such as: implementing various linking initiatives; providing individual access to *MUSE* journals; and addressing the concerns and suggestions of *MUSE* users. Further expansion of the collection is also one of his goals.

Bill's overarching objectives at the Press are these: to foster communication between all the departments, to create an environment of inclusiveness and cooperation, and above all—to get things done!

We wish Bill Breichner the best of luck! 🌐

## BY THE NUMBERS

### MUSE Summary Statistics As of June 30, 2001

#### SUBSCRIBERS

Total Database  
Package Subscribers 932

New Subscribers  
(since 1/1/2001) 85

#### By Institution Type:

Large Academic (>2,000 FTE) 534

Small Academic (<2,000 FTE) 165

Community/Junior College 162

Public Libraries 8

High Schools 19

Other Special Libraries 45

#### By Location:

United States 788

International 145

#### By Collection:

Full Database 725

Arts & Humanities 23

Social Sciences 9

Johns Hopkins University Press 175

#### USAGE

Database Hits 38,215,294  
Increase over June 30, 2000 42%

Article Views 2,886,808  
Increase over June 30, 2000 107%

#### Top 5 Journals by Usage:

*Journal of Democracy*

*Postmodern Culture*

*Modern Fiction Studies*

*Callaloo*

*ELH*

Participating Titles 177

Participating Publishers 25

In our efforts to provide changes but not disrupt repeat users, the MUSE search screens will still be completely recognizable. Some of the terminology used will be different, such as in radio buttons that appear under the search box in the basic search and in the pull-down menus for the search fields. We are collapsing five search boxes in the advanced search to four, and incorporating search boxes for authors. We are also trying to simplify the display of our limits, which we have discovered can be very confusing to users.

While we make these adjustments, we are looking carefully at how the interface displays in different browsers and on different platforms.

### ADDING MINOR ENHANCEMENTS

In addition to making some adjustments in the display, we have been working this summer on new functionality. Below is a list of some of the additions to look for this fall:

**Context-specific help links.** For example, we have received suggestions in the past year that we should explain the search fields with a link next to the pull-downs.

**Display of search statements at the top of the results pages.** This enhancement has been requested, for example at the MUSE User Group meeting at ACRL in March. We had suppressed our search engine software's default display because it was lengthy and contained confusing query statements. We're now doing the necessary programming to create a simple, user-friendly display. We believe the new search statement displays will be very helpful to users in general, as well as help users understand how to enter their searches better.

**Date limits.** Searchers can now specify a date range from the advanced screen.

**Enhanced search results.** We plan to make the features for refining search results clearer and easier to use. We are also looking at user requests for better navigation from MUSE articles back to the results.

**MUSE start dates specified in journal title limits.** With MUSE's recent expansion in content beginning in 2000, we want to make the coverage for individual titles clearer. Because the start dates of journals in MUSE can vary from 1993 to 2001, having the dates display in the journal title limits will alert users to what kind of results they can expect for each journal. This enhancement met with 100% positive response at ALA and tested very positively.

### MORE TO COME!

The changes we are currently making are the outcome of the analysis of data and feedback and hands-on testing and focused conversations with MUSE customers described in this article. Our goal is to address any usability issues with the current interface and continue testing and adjusting as needed. We intend to expand upon our usability testing efforts to get a more comprehensive analysis of the user experience with the search engine.

We will also move forward with evaluating other enhancements suggested by our users. Some enhancements we would like to make may require a change in search software.

We cannot do the kind of planning and technical work needed without your help, however! We will be looking for more ways to solicit additional feedback to help us prioritize future changes. In the meantime, we continue to invite suggestions, comments and feedback to [musesearch@jhu.edu](mailto:musesearch@jhu.edu). 🌐



## Pass on the Good MUSE

You can help promote usage of *Project MUSE* on your campus by distributing free bookmarks and computer calendars, as well as displaying *Project MUSE* posters.

The convenient academic year calendars adhere to computer keyboards or monitors and include the *Project MUSE* URL. The bookmarks, an ideal giveaway at library counters or as mailbox stuffers, have a brief description of MUSE, the URL, and a list of participating publishers. The attractive MUSE posters can be displayed at computer stations in the library, or given to appropriate departments on campus. These materials also make great handouts to students and faculty at library open houses and orientation sessions.

Please email us at [muse@muse.jhu.edu](mailto:muse@muse.jhu.edu) to request any of these materials. Be sure to indicate the quantity needed, deadline (if any), and an address for shipping. 🌐