



▼ ADVISOR REVIEWS—STANDARD REVIEW

Nineteenth Century Masterfile

Date of Review: July 19 and 20, 2005

Composite Score:

★★★★ 3/4

Reviewed by: Norman Desmarais
Acquisitions Librarian, Providence College
Providence, RI 02918
<normd@providence.edu>

Pricing Options

Nineteenth Century Masterfile may be purchased as a full subscription to all five series or by individual series with Series I the only mandatory license. Pricing is based on the Carnegie Classification for academic libraries and on population size for public libraries. Paratext offers consortial pricing and Rights in Perpetuity/One-Time Purchase options, with each case considered on an individual basis. (See Table 1.)

Product Description

Nineteenth Century Masterfile covers more than 60 indexes to periodicals, books, newspapers, patents, and U.S./UK. government documents prior to 1925. It is “a vast ‘index of indexes’ to the entire output of pre-1925 Anglo-American publishing—books, periodicals, newspapers and government publications.”

The product comes in five series:

Series I: Multi-Title Periodical Indexes is a monumental index of 750,000 citations from more than 6,500 periodicals in various languages. It includes Poole’s *Index to Periodical Literature*, *Index to Legal Periodical Literature* (Jones and Chipman), the *Religion Index*, and, most recently, the *Catalogue of Scientific Papers, 1800–1900* from the Royal Society (Great Britain). It also covers the transactions of the European academies and other learned societies.

Series II: Indexes to Books contains the ALA Index to General Literature, while **Series III:** Indexes to Newspapers includes the *New York Times Index*, *New York Daily Tribune Index*, *Palmer’s Index* and more.

Series IV: Indexes to Individual Periodicals covers *Harpers Weekly*, *Atlantic Monthly*, and *North American Reviews*, which have free links to the full text.

Series V: U.S. and U.K. Government Documents Indexes and U.S. Patent Index includes the *Congressional Record 1789–1925*, *Annals of Congress 1789–1824*, *Register of Debates 1824–1837*, *Congressional Globe 1833–1873*, *Papers of the President*, *Hansard’s Parliamentary Indexes*, and patents. It has more than 600,000 citations covering all aspects of American life, from the Constitutional Convention through the Industrial Revolution. There are also links to the image files of the *Congressional Globe*, *Annals of Congress*, and *U.S. Patent Index* from 1789 forward (Nineteenth Century Masterfile is the only place to find this index in e-form).

Subscribers can license individual series or all five. They can also limit their search to an individual series or any combination of products they license.

RECENT AND FORTHCOMING ENHANCEMENTS

Nineteenth Century Masterfile has a simpler, cleaner interface for searching and browsing. Intermediate displays permit both a more comprehensive view of the results sets in all five series (based on the subscription level) and a greater selectivity in narrowing down search terms and parameters. Exporting options in both RefWorks and Endnotes formats are also new.

The first installment of the *Catalogue of Scientific Papers, 1800–1900* has recently been added to the database. This represents 750,000 citations from 1,555 periodicals in various languages. Paratext is completing the editing of Swem’s *Virginia Index*, which will become a part of Series I. The *ALA Portrait Index* will be added to Series II later in July, 2005. This index includes citations to over 40,000 images in texts from numerous sources of the period. Series IV will see the addition of links to 50,000 full-text journal articles from 11 additional journals from the University of Michigan’s Making of America project. Additions to Series V will include the index to Hickcox’s *Monthly Catalog of United States Government Publications 1885–1894* and the indexes to the *GPO Monthly Catalog 1895–1899*.

Nineteenth Century Masterfile will become Open URL compliant, which will facilitate linking to full-text articles at JSTOR, American Periodical Series, and other nineteenth century journal digitization projects. Paratext is a partner with Blackboard Building Blocks, which means that professors can have direct links from their course management page to the Paratext services to which the library subscribes. Paratext is working to develop similar capability with WebCt and other course management systems.

Critical Evaluation

Nineteenth Century Masterfile is an indexing service that provides citations to the items retrieved. Except for those items in Series IV that have links to the full text, readers will still have to locate the sources or try to obtain them on interlibrary loan. Given their age, many of these items will be hard to obtain and/or will be in poor condition because of the deterioration of acidic paper. Microfilming and digitization projects still have a long way to go to convert and preserve this material.

Some material will be referenced by several indexes and provide alternative references. For example, the Lincoln Douglas debates can be found in several books as well as the *New York Times*. Presidential addresses, such as inaugural addresses, will appear in newspapers, magazines, and books like Richardson’s *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*.

TABLE 1 Annual Subscription Rates for Nineteenth Century Masterfile (NCM)—2005

Academic Libraries						
Carnegie Classification	Series I	Series II	Series III	Series IV	Series V	Total 10% Discount
Associate Coll	\$ 495	\$ 395	\$ 495	\$ 395	\$ 395	\$ 1,958
Baccalaureate	\$ 995	\$ 395	\$ 995	\$ 395	\$ 495	\$ 2,948
Master's	\$ 1,495	\$ 395	\$ 1,195	\$ 595	\$ 695	\$ 3,938
Special Libraries	\$ 1,495	\$ 395	\$ 1,195	\$ 595	\$ 695	\$ 3,938
Doc—Intensive	\$ 1,995	\$ 495	\$ 1,795	\$ 895	\$ 895	\$ 5,468
Doc—Extensive	\$ 2,495	\$ 495	\$ 1,995	\$ 995	\$ 995	\$ 6,278

Terms of Access:

Series I subscription is mandatory.
 IP authentication with unlimited users from approved IP addresses.
 Campus listed separately by Carnegie Classification must apply for a separate license.

Public Libraries						
Population Size Served	Series I	Series II	Series III	Series IV	Series V	Total 10% Discount
Small (less than 250,000)	\$ 495	\$ 395	\$ 495	\$ 395	\$ 395	\$ 1,958
Medum (250,000 to 999,999)	\$ 1,495	\$ 395	\$ 1,195	\$ 595	\$ 695	\$ 3,938
Large (1,000,000 to 2,999,999)	\$ 2,495	\$ 495	\$ 1,995	\$ 995	\$ 995	\$ 6,278

Terms of Access:

Main Library only. Branch libraries may access for an annual surcharge of 5 percent per branch.
 Series I subscription is mandatory
 IP authentication with unlimited users from approved IP addresses.

The search engine organizes the results by series and indicates how many items it found in each component of the series. The display ranks the citations by relevance and indicates the source database along with the title and full bibliographic information. The researcher must check one or more items before clicking the Select button to view the items. Citations appear twenty to a page. We found some instances, particularly in Series II, where clicking the box to select a desired item produced the message “no selections checked.” Returning to the results list and clicking on the number of hits will display the list of citations. One can sort the results by author, title, year of publication, language, or classification in either ascending or descending order. If the results number more than 3,000 items, the engine will select only the first 3,000 to sort.

The Next Page and Previous Page buttons are located in the navigation bar on the left of the screen rather than at the top and/or bottom of each page. However, there are buttons at these locations to go to a specific page.

When one selects or clicks on an item, the display shows the title, author, citation, notes, and subjects. A table beneath the citation identifies the language, call number, LCCN, Dewey Decimal number, and ISSN/ISBN as appropriate. Not every item will have all of this information filled in. There is also a button to search for other works by the same author. This is a “literal” search and will not pull up variations of an author’s name. For example, pursuing such a search on “Chesterton, G” will retrieve two citations but not the 22 under G.K. or the ones under Gilbert or Gilbert Keith.

We were surprised to find that a search of “Belloc, H” produced 56 hits, but a more specific search for “Belloc, Hilaire” produced 63 hits, many of which were not included in the previous search.

Nineteenth Century Masterfile offers several download options. One can select individual items to save and then display just the saved items;

this is a convenient way to create a bibliography. Otherwise, Nineteenth Century Masterfile will download the entire list of search results. The brief format is the most convenient for creating a bibliography that can be cut and pasted into a paper; it displays the title and citation. The full display shows all of the information, along with the leader and MARC tags. The MARC format, on the other hand, produces a single line of ASCII text suitable for importing into an OPAC or other MARC database. There are also two options for downloading tagged citations. They both provide the same bibliographic citation as the brief format but one is tagged for export to Reference Works and the other for Endnote.

We found no option to download to disk, though. The program downloads the data to a new window in the Web browser. One copies the window’s contents to the appropriate destination or into an intermediary file for further manipulation. Upon completion of this stage, one returns to the database by clicking on the browser’s back arrow button. As the download window replaces the results window, clicking the red box with the X in the upper right corner will close the browser.

A Title List button appears at the top of some screens (or in the navigation bar on the left of other screens) and opens Adobe Acrobat, which displays a spreadsheet that lists 2,330 periodical titles covered in the database. One can also link to the current title list for Series I Periodical Titles at <<http://poolesplus.odyssey.com/titleList.pdf>>. Each entry gives the extent of coverage and the span of years indexed by William Frederick Poole’s *Index To Periodicals*, William T. Stead’s *Index to Periodicals (1890–1906)*, L.A. Jones and F.E. Chipman’s *Index to Legal Periodical Literature, 1786–1922*, or Richardson’s *Index To Periodical Articles In Religion, 1890–1899*. There is some duplication in this list, because the same title might be indexed in more than one source.

Series IV: Periodical Indexes with Full Text Links contains free, full-text links to *Harpers New Monthly Magazine*, *Atlantic Monthly*, and



Nineteenth Century Masterfile Review

Score Composite: ★★★★★ 3/4

The maximum number of stars in each category is 5

Content: ★★★★★

This is the most comprehensive research tool for nineteenth century studies. It should be the researcher's first stop to explore the literature.

Searchability: ★★★★★

The search engine and user interface are clear and user friendly. The peculiarities come from the original sources, and researchers who use a variety of search terms and techniques will maximize this product's utility.

Pricing Options: ★★★★★

The variety of pricing options is equitable. This product could even be considered a "best buy" given the extent of coverage and its importance to the field of nineteenth century studies. Paratext aims to add a lot of content and functionality while keeping the cost low so that every size library can have access.

Contract Options: ★★★★★

The contract is reasonable and easy to understand. It allows for reasonable use beyond confines of the library. IP authentication makes the product librarian-friendly.

North American Reviews at Cornell University Library's Making of America site. By press time, it should have 11 more titles from the University of Michigan site. *Harpers Weekly* (1857–1916) and its sister publication, *Harpers New Monthly Magazine* (1891–1899), are indispensable tools for nineteenth century studies. Nineteenth Century Masterfile indexes *Harpers Weekly* but it does not have links to the full text as does *Harpers New Monthly Magazine*.

The electronic full text of *Harpers Weekly* is available from a different publisher under the title HarpWeek. Similarly, other publishers offer electronic versions of the full text of other collections such as government publications and Richardson's *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*.

Among the many results produced by a search for Lincoln and Harpers, are a couple for I.N. Arnold's article entitled the "Baltimore Plot to Assassinate Abraham Lincoln." One of these is drawn from Poole's, the other from the Harpers database. The citation from the Harpers database has a link to the full text at Cornell but not the one from Poole's, even though the reference is to the same article.

A search on the terms plot, assassinate, Lincoln retrieved two instances of the citation drawn from Poole's but not the one from the Harpers database because the title is indexed under Lincoln, Abraham, Assassination of. The author's name also appears in several variants (I.H. Arnold, J.H. Amold, Isaac H. Amold), leading to duplication of citations.

As already mentioned, many of the items referenced will be hard to obtain because of their age and poor condition. Fortunately, the Library of Congress's American Memory project and the Making of America projects at several leading universities are digitizing and preserving these items, like the *Congressional Globe*. As they become available, Paratext is linking to them, making Nineteenth Century Masterfile a much more valuable and useful tool.

Series II: Indexes to Books, Nineteenth Century Monograph Records, while pretty thorough, should not be considered a complete inventory of nineteenth century book production. A search for a sample of twenty titles from A Checklist of American Imprints for 1946 found half of them included in Nineteenth Century Masterfile. Sometimes a citation will not produce a bibliographic citation for the book itself but for a literary notice.

Titles of nineteenth century books tend to ramble, offering a lot of keywords for searching. However, books contain a lot more information than can be conveniently described in a title. It would be nice to have access to the tables of contents of these materials to be able to determine whether an item might have desired information.

Awareness of a product's peculiarities and the use of a variety of search techniques can maximize its utility. Nineteenth Century Masterfile is the most comprehensive tool available for researchers studying this period. Many libraries do not own copies of the indexes it includes. This is an indispensable tool for researchers and students of the nineteenth century. It should be the first step in their research. It is a great product that keeps getting better.

Contract Provisions

Paratext allows distance learners, alumni, and other off-campus affiliates to access Nineteenth Century Masterfile if their internet access is through the campus network. This includes downloading and printing citations for personal use and archiving contents on their personal computers. They may send one copy by e-mail, print, or fax to one person at another location for that individual's personal use. If one interprets this to mean that a librarian can send an item to another library as an interlibrary loan, this product is exceptional for that reason alone.

Contact Information

Paratext Production and Editorial: Paratext

111-M Carpenter Drive, Suite 201

Sterling VA 20164

Phone: (703) 318-0285

URL: <<http://www.paratext.com>>

Paratext Administration: Paratext

P.O. Box 342707

Austin, TX 78734

Phone: (512) 266-5718

Nineteenth Century Masterfile is available for use 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Paratext reserves the right to shut down Nineteenth Century Masterfile periodically for data and software upgrades and for general maintenance.

Authentication

Nineteenth Century Masterfile uses IP address range to authenticate users, so there's no need to memorize passwords.

References

Shigo, Kimberly. "Paratext, ABC-CLIO Create Database Links." *Computers in Libraries*, 23, no. 4 (April 2003): p63, 2p.

"Paratext Links to ABC-CLIO Databases." *Information Today*, 20, no. 3 (March 2003): p. 49, 1/4p.

About the Author

Norman Desmarais is Acquisitions Librarian at Providence College in Providence, Rhode Island. He was former editor of *CD-ROM Librarian* and *CD-ROM World*. He is the author of several books, including *Acquisitions Systems for Libraries*, *ABCs of XML: The Librarian's Guide to the eXtensible Markup Language*, and *Multimedia on the PC: A Guide for Information Professionals*. His most recent book, *Battlefields of Freedom: A Historical Guide to the Battlefields of the War of American Independence*, was published in June. ■