The ideal situation would be for the ISAP records for articles from these journals to include both the hard-copy references as well as the URLs. This is, however, not yet possible, since the indexers do not work online, and access to both the electronic and printed versions of a journal article are not always available simultaneously. For example, the printed version of *Kleio*, no. 33 (2001) was indexed on 9 April 2002, yet the online version was not available when the author checked its site a week later.

The NLSA is also conducting a project to refine search results on the ISAP database and to make a complete list of the indexed journals and thesauri available to users.

**Conclusion**

ISAP is a relevant and useful database for South Africans. An attempt has been made in this article to show how the different formats in which it is published help to make it more accessible to all users. The ISAP policy of indexing articles retrospectively is a further attempt to ensure access to all the information available on ISAP.

**References**


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Madely du Preez is an ISAP indexer and is in the University of South Africa Department of Information Science, PO Box 392, Unisa 0003, South Africa; email: preezm@unisa.ac.za

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**ISAPOnline as an enhancement of a service to community libraries making use of technological development**

Antoinette Kotze

The article highlights the features of the ISAP Online database with specific reference to community libraries: internet access, affordability, user-friendly searching, comprehensive and multi-level information content, and its role as a complete information service.

ISAP – the Index to South African periodicals – is a subject index of articles in periodicals published in South Africa and managed under the authority of the National Library of South Africa (NLSA). Online entries date back to 1942. The database is updated with records received from indexers on a two-weekly basis, which the NLSA makes available on contract to other database providers, such as Sabinet (South African Bibliographic and Information Network) and NISC (National Inquiry Services Centre). ISAP is the most used indexing database on Sabinet, and the most used database on NISC’s South African Studies CD-ROM, which is made available internationally. ISAPOnline is the internet version of the ISAP database and was launched in September 2000. This article highlights five main features of ISAPOnline and its value for community libraries and library automation in Gauteng.

**ISAPOnline and internet access**

The term ‘access’ is used here in the sense of enabling or offering entrance but also in the sense of initiating an approach to obtain the entrance offered. The fear that the benefits of the Internet will intensify rather than ease existing inequality in society (Fallows, 2000) is known as the ‘digital divide’. James Fallows (2000) maintains that access to the Internet involves two different things: ‘whether people can make a connection to the Net, and whether they actually choose to do so’.

In her report on a SCCECSAL (Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern African Library and Information Associations) meeting on public libraries in Africa, held in Windhoek, Namibia, on 15 April 2000, Rykie M. Cillié (2000) notes a decision on the responsibility of public
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librarians to move forward and find solutions as opposed to complaining about difficulties. The following symposium, the Community Library and Information Technology Symposium (organized by the Gauteng Directorate Library and Information Services) in May 2001, is proof of action following the decision noted.

As far as available internet connections are concerned, the infrastructure for the Gauteng information communications technology network should enable community librarians to participate in internet communication. Subscribing to ISAPOnline provides support in meeting the need for periodicals information within this environment.

ISAPOnline can be chosen from the NLSA’s home page at www.nlsa.ac.za or directly from ISAPOnline’s web page at www.nlsa.ac.za.isap (Fig. 1). It may be accessed without subscribing to the database, but full bibliographic details for journal references are then withheld.

Affordable internet rates

Elke Hansen (1999) maintains that the survival of community libraries and information services in South Africa will depend on legislation for, amongst others, the sharing of resources by information providers at affordable costs. The NLSA offers ISAPOnline at very affordable prices, the annual rate depending on the type of institution:

- R200 (±£13.50) per annum (individuals, publishers, government departments, municipal and provincial libraries, non-governmental organizations and state educational institutions)
- R500 (±£33.74) per annum (private schools, universities and colleges)
- R1000 (±£67.48) per annum (businesses and companies)

Users may pay online or be invoiced. At these prices one can argue that community libraries cannot afford not to subscribe to ISAPOnline.

User-friendly searching

Under the original policy for ISAP, dating from 1940, the library and information user was identified as the focus in stipulating criteria and guidelines for the project. This focus has been maintained and extended as the product developed. This can be illustrated by the following examples of ISAPOnline index fields.

- In the ‘Keyword’ index field, searches use the same natural-language terms as everyday communication. The Word Wheel allows users to browse through terms in an index field and add additional relevant terms complementary to the subject. For example, when searching using the term ‘community librarianship’ the terms ‘community libraries’ and ‘community library and information service’ are also visible in the browsing list. These are obviously complementary to the subject, if a user should find an extended search applicable.
- Searching the index field for ‘Title, Author or Abstract’ is useful when only a word or phrase in the title of an article is known, or an author’s surname. Terms in the abstract of a record are searchable, but the function of an abstract is mainly to indicate the scope or purpose of an article.
- The ‘Journal Title’ index field allows searching on more than 680 South African periodical titles. Community libraries do not need to have copies of or access to these periodicals, as the NLSA can supply copies of articles (see below).
- Users may search using the ‘Year of Journal’ index field to obtain articles by date. Current issues of periodicals get preference for indexing to provide up-to-date information. Indexing of retrospective issues of research and academic journals is done as funds allow, and when requested by users.
- The ISAP thesaurus includes mainly broad subject terms. The ‘Thesaurus’ index field can be searched to obtain wider recall and a greater number of items. If a broad thesaurus term is searched in combination with a natural-language keyword term, the result is more precise recall with fewer records, as shown in Fig. 2.

Whether using the hybrid system of combining narrow and broader terms as indicated above, or searching only on natural-language terms, time and money can be saved with economic online searching on ISAPOnline.

Comprehensive and multi-level information

P. J. Lor (Louw, 1993) describes community information as ‘the information that every person needs to fulfil his/her multiple roles in the community successfully’. He also identifies two kinds of community information: survival information, such as that related to health, housing, income, legal protection, economic opportunity, political rights, etc., and citizen action information, which is needed for effective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEYWORD</th>
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<th>RESULT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community libraries + Libraries</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community libraries + Information services</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community libraries + Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Refining the search strategy by using keywords and thesaurus terms
participation as an individual or as a member of a group in social, political, legal and economic activities.

As already mentioned, more than 680 periodicals are indexed on ISAPOnline, covering the following comprehensive range of subject areas (Fig. 3):

A: Natural sciences, technology, industry, agriculture  
B: Humanities, social sciences  
C: Theology  
D: Medical science, health  
E: Library and information science  
F: Law  
G: General

Apart from a comprehensive range of subject areas, periodicals on ISAPOnline also cover several levels of information (Fig. 4):

1. subject research and subject academic  
2. subject general  
3. popular

Periodicals that are used in schools by students and teachers have also been added to the database, in consultation with the Gauteng Department of Education. Community libraries using ISAPOnline would therefore be able to assist schools with their information needs.

ISAPOnline’s comprehensive and multi-level coverage seems to match the information needs of community libraries with ease and competence. Libraries are welcome to send suggestions for specific periodical titles to be indexed, if a subject is found to lack coverage on ISAPOnline.

**Complete service**

Using the ‘shopping basket’ facility, complete articles for indexed records can be ordered from ISAPOnline. By clicking on the ‘add to the basket’ field, the record is added and the user is shown how many items (articles) have been ordered.

A flat rate of R25 (±£1.70) per item is charged for document delivery, although electronic delivery is not yet fully available. Copies of articles can, however, be faxed, posted, or collected in person.1

**Conclusion**

This brief article has illustrated ISAPOnline’s suitability for use as part of an information and communications technology network. Community libraries (amongst others) are thus virtually empowered with ISAPOnline to become part of an integrated information service.

**Note**

1. For further information on this service contact the NLSA Cape Town Reference Section at tel.: +(27) 21 424 6320; fax: +(27) 21 423 3359, or email: info@nlsa.ac.za. Requests that are not dealt with by the Cape Town Reference Section can be addressed to the NLSA Pretoria Reference Section at tel.: +(27) 12 321 8931 X 141; fax: +(27) 12 325 5984 or email: infodesk@nlsa.ac.za

**References**


Antoinette Kotze is ISAP Project Leader, National Library of South Africa, PO Box 397, Pretoria 0001, South Africa. Tel.: +27 12 321 8931 x 147; fax: +27 12 325 5984; email: antoinette.kotze@nlsa.ac.za