



HARCUM COLLEGE LIBRARY LODESTAR

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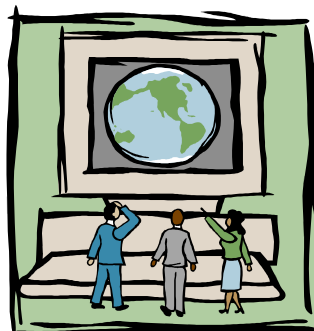
Library Lowdown: The New World of Online Encyclopedias

Wikipedia

A wiki is a web application that allows any user to add content, for example on a web site, and also allows users to change the site. The result is a site that is continually being updated, in a collaborative effort (by possibly thousands of people) to share information. A good, trustworthy wiki is administered by a community of volunteers, who monitor the content to make sure that inappropriate, false or offensive materials are quickly removed or corrected.

Wikis have grown rapidly and there are now many of them in existence, covering various topics. Exploring the world of wikis can be fun and informative, but one must always remember to “let the user beware.” There is no way of knowing who has contributed the information, how well the site is administered (if it is a site

about which you have no unbiased information), or how recently the site has been changed or checked for accuracy. At all times you have to use your own, best judgment or that of another, trusted source.



One of the best known and most useful wikis is **Wikipedia**, an online encyclopedia. You can access it by going to <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia>. Founded in 2001, it is run by a non-profit foundation, and uses thousands of volunteers to check content and quickly remove errors, hoaxes or biased material. Wikipedia’s goal is to present all sides of any controversy, however not everyone agrees that all their articles are completely objective. So, if you are using it to research topics, related to politics or other controversial issues (such as stem-cell research, intelligent design, reproductive rights, etc.) be sure to look into

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ABOUT OUR NAME

A lodestar is any star that is used as a point of reference (like Polaris, the brightest star in the Little Dipper). The word can also refer to a guiding interest, principle or ambition. At Harcum College Library, we aim to guide members of the Harcum Community toward what is of interest to them and to serve as a “point of reference” for information seekers.

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RECENT REFERENCE BOOKS: IN THE LIBRARY

The lower level of the Rotunda of Harcum College Library is stocked with every kind of reference book imaginable. From dictionaries and encyclopedias to volumes loaded with statistics, images, and facts (medical to historic to linguistic) you can find reliable information you need right here. For help, speak to a librarian or use the HC Library online catalog. You can do a "Power Search" and put "reference materials" in the box marked location. Here are some examples of recent reference works.

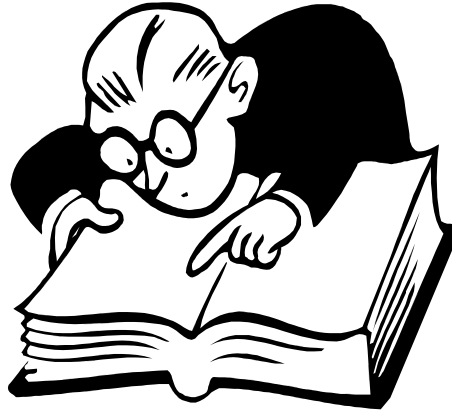
GENERAL

The World Almanac and book of Facts: 2005. A compact book that puts an amazing number of facts at your fingertips. Find out about recent events and current statistics or look up facts you need to know about history or geography. Check on how many people live in Indonesia, what language they speak in the Sudan, or what the top selling albums of all times are. The list goes on (and on). If you have some general questions, you can probably find the answer here within minutes.
REF 317.3 .W927 2005

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Peterson's Four-Year Colleges: 2005. If you're thinking of furthering your education, this guide will let you ponder the possibilities. Look up schools by location, major, cost range or even degree of entrance difficulty. You can also read brief articles about standardized tests, college visits, and financial aid.
REF 378.73 P484 2005

300 Best Jobs Without a Four-Year Degree. If you're not sure exactly how you plan to use your degree or you want to find a career that best fits your interests, this book can be a great help. You can look up job titles by interest (from arts and entertainment to medical and health) and then read detailed descriptions about what people in that position do...and what salaries they make.
REF 331.702 F239 2003



BIOGRAPHY

The African American Century: How Black Americans Have Shaped our Country. Written by Henry Louis Gates, Jr and Cornel West, both world-renowned scholars and authors, this book contains one hundred original profiles of the most influential African-Americans of the twentieth century. Organized by decade, this book provides photographs and life stories of men and women who are important figures in social thought, the arts, business, civil rights, sports and more.
REF 920.009296.G259 2002

HEALTH

The Gale Encyclopedia of Alternative Medicine Want to look up herbal remedies for common respiratory or digestive disorders? Want to know what doses of Vitamin A, C or E are safe and effective? Are you thinking of trying chiropractic for back pain or acupuncture for headaches? You can look up the basic facts on all these topics and many more in this four volume set of over 700 full-length articles about many major aspects of complementary medicine.
REF 615.503. G151 2001

Pets

Cat: The Complete Guide. Cat owners will find all the basics on how to care for a cats in sickness and in health. Cat lovers will swoon over the beautiful photographs that illustrate cats' appearance and behavior throughout their life span and depict cat breeds from well-known American shorthairs to exotic breeds from around the world.
REF 636.8 .B557 1999

Remember: Keep the Reference Room in mind, the next time you want a reliable, easy to use information source!

What's Up? Meet Ryoko Watanabe: Student Assistant

Since May 2004, Ryoko has been working as a Library Assistant at Harcum College. It started as a way for Ryoko to improve her English skills and give the staff a hand, but now, over a year later, Ryoko has become an invaluable and trusted member of the library staff.

Ryoko Watanabe was born in the central section of Tokyo, but when she was a baby her family moved to Tokyo's "Old City," a historic neighborhood. Ryoko, an only child and the youngest of several cousins, had an idyllic, sheltered childhood. As a result, starting elementary school at the age of six was rather a shock, because some of her schoolmates teased her about being taller and darker-skinned than the typical Japanese person. Fortunately, close friends helped Ryoko cope. While in elementary school, she began to learn English in an after-school program designed to make language-learning fun through enjoyable, age-appropriate activities. English became one of her favorite subjects, along with world history. When Ryoko was 13, she and her mother visited family friends in upstate Pennsylvania and toured New York City. It was her first experience of visiting an English-speaking country.

After high school graduation, Ryoko attended a college of foreign language study in Japan for two years, where she continued her English studies. While there, she made the decision to study in the United States, with the goal of English fluency. Around the same time, one of Ryoko's friends had a child, and Ryoko (who previously had little experience with young children) discovered a love for children and began to consider a career working with them. Remembering her positive experiences in the after-school English classes, she realized she could combine her interests in English and young children and become a teacher herself.

During Ryoko's first year at Harcum, she put most of her energy into improving her language skills, taking ELA classes as well as a computer and a psychology class. Last year, she began taking liberal arts courses, including writing and women's studies, in part to strengthen her skills in reading and writing in English. Ryoko espe-

cially enjoyed reading the short story "A Worn Path" by Eudora Welty for her composition class. It recounts an elderly rural woman's efforts to get medicine for her grandson, an endeavor that encapsulates all the struggles of this strong-minded woman's life.

Ryoko started volunteering in the library in the spring of 2004. She helped out at the circulation desk, tracked the receipt of periodicals, and shelved books and magazines.

In the fall, because of her reliability, helpfulness and accuracy, Ryoko was hired as a part-time Library Assistant to help library staff with the ever-increasing requests for AV equipment and laptops. Ryoko prepares all the needed equipment the night before faculty or staff need it.

Currently, Ryoko is focusing on Early Childhood classes. In spring 2005, she completed Arts in Education (which explores different arts activities for young children including clay, finger-paint, drawing and multimedia) and Educational Psychology, which

focuses on how children experience learning. The group discussion in this class allowed Ryoko to learn more about American education. Ryoko enjoys observing and interacting with the children at Harcum's Children's Corner. Her favorite activities involve interactive storytelling and drawing. Last semester, she created a puppet show with handmade puppets to present to the children.

Ryoko is an aficionado of Disney animated films, with a special affinity for the character Princess Jasmine. Her taste in reading is strongly influenced by her current interest in children's lives and development. She recently read the book *The Lost Boy: A Foster Child's Search for a Family* by Dave Pelzer. The book had a powerful impact on her, opening her eyes to the realities and effects of child abuse as well as to the difference that one person can make in another's life. Exploring U. S. culture, the English language and creative ways to work with children, along with her library job, keep Ryoko busy. If you have any questions about Japanese culture, the Early Childhood Education program, or what it's like to be an international student, talk to Ryoko the next time you see her in the library! ■



Ryoko holds puppets she made for class

Online Encyclopedias (Continued from page one)

other sources of information as well. Wikipedia makes this easy to do, by linking readers to other web sites. Wikipedia, unlike more conventional encyclopedias, is a good place to find information about really current events, like Hurricane Katrina or the latest Supreme Court nominee.

When an article deals with a current, still-changing topic, such as H5N1, the strain of flu that is now in the news, it is clearly labeled as “current event.” There may be a warning posted that the article needs to be updated. In such cases, the information can still be useful for background and context before you begin to search in other ways, for example by doing a Google news search.

Wikipedia is also useful for looking up popular figures of the present or past like Kanye West or Lucille Ball, current technology like iPods or blogs, and pressing topics like the USA Patriot Act or avian flu. You’ll find clear overviews that are easy to navigate. Most articles come with tables of contents that let you jump right to the information you want and contain links to other online sources to help you to zero in on what you are looking for. Wikipedia is also available in

languages other than English, including Japanese, French and Italian.

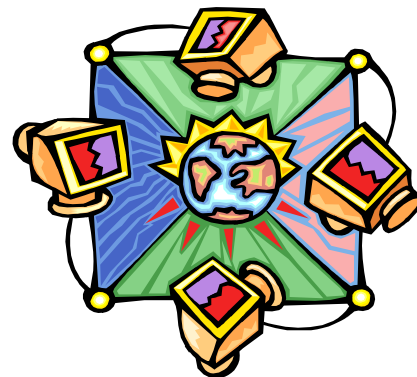
Britannica Online

For a wonderful, diverse encyclopedia resource that is available from Harcum College Library, go to our web site

(www.harcum.edu/library) and click

on “Find Journal Articles” and then scroll down to the link to Britannica Online. Please note that this resource can only be used in the library, not from off-site.

Clinking on this link takes you to a web page where you can search several different encyclopedia resources at once.



Using Britannica Online is an excellent way to get a number of choices of articles, with different degrees of detail and complexity. It is especially useful if you need straightforward, completely trustworthy information in fields like history or science. One of the encyclopedias you can search is the Britannica Student Encyclopedia, whose clear explanations make it easy to read about a topic you are encountering for the first time.

In addition to giving you several encyclopedia articles that fit your search, for most topics you’ll receive a list of “the web’s best sites” and several multimedia links. For example, if you type in “popes” you’ll get a brief summary article, a list of popes, and related articles, from a general article on the papacy to an article on the election of the latest pope. A search on “parasites” will lead to hundreds of resources, with the best and most useful at the top. The results from the student encyclopedia are especially helpful, dividing the topic into sub-topics, such as human parasites, plant parasites, methods of transmission, and effect on host.

Acquaint yourself with Wikipedia and Britannica Online and your toolbox of information will be greatly enhanced!

Library Vital Statistics

How to Contact us

Harcum College Library
750 Montgomery Ave.
Bryn Mawr PA 19010
Phone: 610-526-6066
Fax: 610-526-6086
Email: kklocko@harcum.edu
Web site: <http://www.harcum.edu/library/>

Library Hours for 2005

Monday-Thursday: 8 am to 10 pm
Friday: 8 am to 4:30 pm
Saturday: noon to 4 pm
Sunday: 1 pm to 5 pm, 6 pm to 9 pm

Hours may change during holidays and between semesters