

Reliable Information A Click Away: Databases for Students & Educators

Saskatchewan School Library Association

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In the age of global networks and with the advent of “Googling,” finding information is not a problem. Our challenge as educators is to connect our students to reliable and current information and to equip them with the attitudes, knowledge and skills to become 21st century citizens who are confident, lifelong learners. The acronym N.E.E.D.S. helps students target credible, online information. Students are encouraged to begin their online search with magazine and newspaper databases and to “Google” as a final step.

- N: Newspaper and Magazine Databases
- E: Encyclopedias and E-Books
- E: Experts Online
- D: Subject Directory
- S: Search Engine

The Multitype Database Licensing Program (MDLP), the flagship initiative of the provincial Multitype Library Board, provides access to quality, licensed resources to everyone in Saskatchewan regardless of geographical location. As a purchasing consortium, the MDLP involves all school divisions within the province, all public libraries, the universities, SIAST, other post-secondary libraries, as well as a number of special libraries such as the Stewart Resource Centre. Resources include over 9,000 unique journal titles, major Canadian daily newspapers, e-books, reference books, French language materials, literacy support resources, and encyclopaedias (refer to the handout *Online Databases* and *MDLP Product Listing* for detailed information). Resources support Pre-K through adult learning. Saskatchewan students have benefited from these resources since the late 1990s.

Access is available to the MDLP resources through the following:

- Saskatchewan Ministry of Education website
- Public Library website (library card and PIN number required)
- Direct authentication from a school division computer (arrangement made through Provincial Library)

The most effective way to introduce students to the databases is through the inquiry process. The handout *The Big Idea: Climate Change* provides an organizer for students to explore the issue of global warming and its impact on the polar bear. Students may need some instruction to help them to navigate the databases and their different interfaces. Vendors usually provide free tutorial materials for educators which are accessible through their websites.

Students also require easy access to the online resources. Links to the resources should be made available through school library and/or school division websites. Links to individual databases, e-books and reference books may also be embedded in the library on-line public access catalogue.

The organization [Partnerships for 21st Century Skills](#) states that our mission is “to create the best possible learning environment for this generation of students.” The reality is that our students are connected in new and innovative ways. No longer limited to a physical environment, today’s school library needs to embrace online, virtual, and remote resources and demonstrate to students that interesting and reliable information is just a click away!