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Databases A to Free: Open Access Databases' Presence on the Databases A to Z Page

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Databases A to Free: Open Access Databases' Presence on the Databases A to Z Page

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About the Research

- The inspiration for our research was the **lack of traffic to our government documents and open access research guides.**
- Which of these free, OA databases can make the jump to the more frequented A-Z list of proprietary databases?
- What are other Virginia libraries are doing?
 - What OA databases are included on other libraries A-Z list?
 - How are the OA databases represented?

Method

- Analyzed 70 VIVA (Virginia Virtual library consortium) Databases A-Z lists.
- Tallied databases with OA icons or wording.
- Scrubbed data to assure listed OA databases are OA and combined similar sites into same category (ie. CensusData and FactFinder).

Findings

- Of the 70 libraries evaluated, **18 libraries indicated OA** (government documents or unrestricted) databases on their A-Z list.
- The **18 libraries listed 433 OA databases total.** The most frequently listed OA databases are listed in center panel.
- Virginia Tech had the most OA databases with 162 or 22% of their overall databases.

Surprises:

- **Google Scholar** is not one of the top OA databases and was only included on four A-Z pages.
- Two libraries reversed their icons and indicated databases that were licensed material rather than indicating what databases were open.

Our complete findings can be found at the below link:



Actions Taken

Changes that we made to our A-Z page after completing this research:

Added:

our Digital Commons, arXiv.org, Chronicling America, HathiTrust, DPLA (Digital Public Library of America), Crime in the US, Public Library of Science Govinfo, Google Scholar, US Census Info.

Added but rethinking:
data.gov and ICPSR

Top OA Databases on A to Z Pages



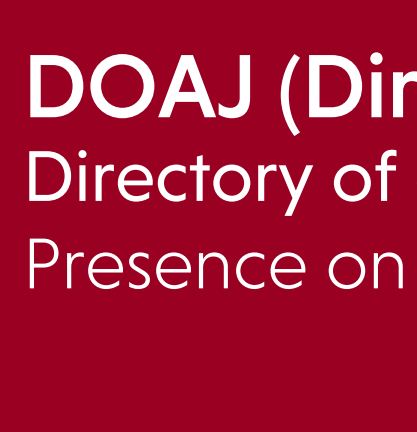
PubMed
Biomedical research from the NIH
Presence on A-Z page: 72%

arXiv.org

Archive of STEM scholarly articles available from Cornell University
Presence on A-Z page: 50%



ERIC (Education Resource Info Center)
Education research from the Dept of Education
Presence on A-Z page: 50%



DOAJ (Directory of OA Journals)
Directory of quality, OA, peer-reviewed journals
Presence on A-Z page: 44%



HathiTrust
Digitization partnership of academic and research libraries
Presence on A-Z page: 39%



BHA (Bibliography of the History of Art)
From the Getty Research Institute
Presence on A-Z page: 33%



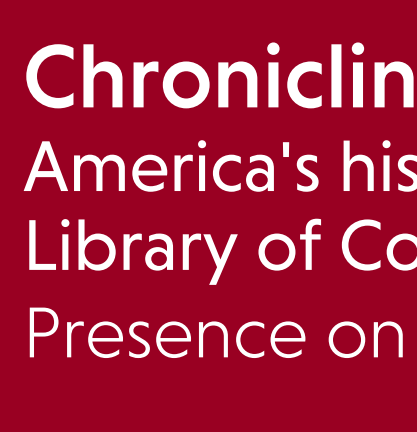
Digital Commons
Individual institutional repositories
Presence on A-Z page: 33%



PLOS (Public Library of Science)
Open access publisher
Presence on A-Z page: 33%



Virginia Heritage
Database of finding aids from Virginia libraries special collections
Presence on A-Z page: 33%



Chronicling America
America's historic newspapers 1777-1963 from the Library of Congress
Presence on A-Z page: 28%



Govinfo
U.S. Government branches search
Presence on A-Z page: 28%



Science.gov
Gateway to U.S. federal science
Presence on A-Z page: 28%



Main Takeaways

- **OA and Government databases are not well-represented on VIVA libraries' A-Z database lists.**
 - Government and OA databases provide quality research, so their presence on the A-Z page is beneficial to our students.
- Students need to know what is available to them once they no longer have institutional access to paid research, so bringing attention to the presence of OA information sources pre-graduation is a priority.
- A surprising number of libraries have not used icons to indicate open resources on their A-Z pages to their students despite being committed to open in many other ways.

How Do We Communicate Open to Our Students?

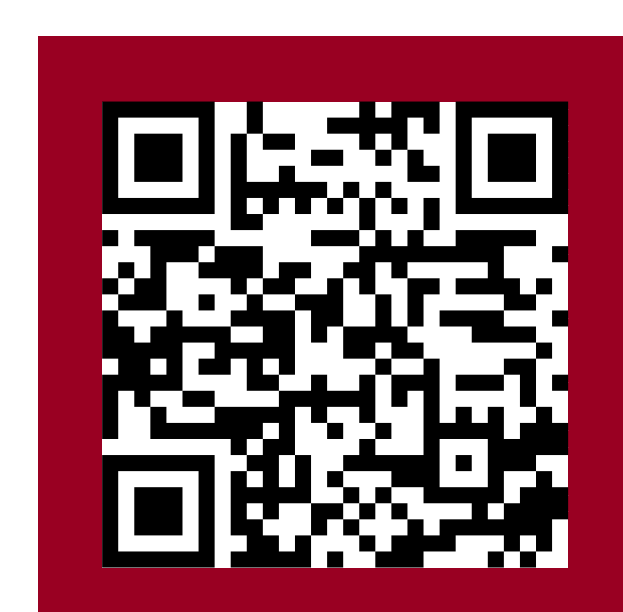


- The 18 libraries that indicated open databases used **7 different icons or wording to indicate OA**, (see above for examples).
 - The most commonly used icon was the **Universal OA unlock symbol** created by PLoS, which was used by 8 of the 18 libraries (44%).
 - Most libraries use some version of an unlock symbol, but the globe symbol is used by 3 VIVA libraries to indicate open.
- How do we educate the importance of these databases beyond icons?
 - Information about open access content on our research guides or our A-Z page.
 - Educate our students on the importance of open in class during library instruction.

Further Research

- Analysis of VIVA libraries' OA and government document research guides.
- Comparison of traffic to A-Z OA database links and our research guides.

Help Us With Our A-Z Page!



Want to talk to us more about this?
Email us at research@bridgewater.edu