

Jost Hindersmann, **MLAIB und ABELL: Periodische Fachbibliographien, CD-ROM- und Online-Datenbanken zur Anglistik. [MLAIB and ABELL: Serial Bibliographies, CD-ROM- and Online-Databases for English Studies]**. Anglistik/Amerikanistik, 4. Münster: LIT, 1997, 96 pp., DM 19.80.

There are two major serial bibliographies for English Studies: the *MLA International Bibliography* (hereafter referred to as *MLAIB*) published by the Modern Language Association of America and the *Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature* (hereafter referred to as *ABELL*) published by the Modern Humanities Research Association. Both bibliographies appear in print since the early twenties and both have become available in electronic versions in the last years. Although both *MLAIB* and *ABELL* try to list all research in the field of English Studies, they differ largely in scope and organisation. Most research guides therefore recommend to consult both bibliographies but so far there is no detailed comparison of the two.

This study tries to analyse *MLAIB* and *ABELL* in print, the *MLAIB* CD-ROM and the *MLAIB* and the *ABELL* online databases. The aim of this book is to give users some advice how to use these bibliographies and databases most effectively and to help subject librarians decide which one to buy.

In chapter 1 the *MLAIB* in print is presented. It tries to cover literary and linguistic scholarship of all languages. Its detailed classification system causes a lot of problems, because it tries to list authors according to time and their nationality. Hence, multicultural authors like Doris Lessing, Salman Rushdie or Isaac B. Singer are difficult to locate.

Chapter 2 deals with *ABELL* in print. In contrast to *MLAIB*, *ABELL* restricts itself to scholarship about English literature and language. Every volume is published considerably later than the respective volume of the *MLAIB* and does not include as many citations from the current year as the *MLAIB*. *ABELL*'s classification is not as complicated as that of the *MLAIB* but due to inadequate subject indexing *ABELL* cannot be used as effectively as the *MLAIB*.

In chapter 3 the print versions of the two bibliographies are compared to find out which one lists more titles. Therefore a random sample of 30 authors, 10 from the U.K., 10 from the U.S., and 10 from the so-called New Literatures in English, is chosen. While *ABELL* has more entries for the British authors, *MLAIB* offers better coverage for authors from the U.S. and New Literatures in English. In general, there are so many citations which are included in one bibliography only that the use of both reference works together is recommended.

Chapter 4 deals with the electronic versions of the bibliographies. The *MLAIB* CD-ROM is currently available through SilverPlatter. A major advantage of the CD-ROM is the included MLA Thesaurus which is not available otherwise.

The *MLAIB* online database can be searched through OCLC's FirstSearch. Although it is updated more frequently than the CD-ROM (10 times per year versus 4 times per year), the CD-ROM allows better search requests, especially for trained users.

*ABELL* is available as an online database from the MHRA at Cambridge. Currently there is only a telnet connection possible but *ABELL* will be published on the World Wide Web in the near future. Compared with the *MLAIB* databases *ABELL* online is not very effective to use but at the same price as the *ABELL* hard copy it is certainly a bargain.

As a result, this study shows that *MLAIB* and *ABELL* should always be used together to retrieve the greatest amount of citations. Anyone having access to the electronic versions should use them because they allow search requests which are not possible in the print products. Subject librarians should buy both.

The book concludes with a bibliography and sample print-outs from the databases.

A revised version of the chapter on the *MLAIB* CD-ROM has been published in *Zeitschrift für Bibliothekswesen and Bibliographie* 44:4 (1997), pp. 439-442 (also available online under the URL: [http://www.klostermann.de/zeitsch/osw\\_444.htm](http://www.klostermann.de/zeitsch/osw_444.htm)).