

The CIOS and University Libraries: An Intelligent and Logical Partnership

Spend less and receive more

Today's economic climate presents severe challenges for university and library budgets. Your library's access to high quality electronic databases is essential, but commercial services have become painfully expensive. In the current economic landscape, high quality for far less than what commercial publishers charge is crucial. The good news: at least in the communication field, it is also entirely possible.

With a subscription to ComAbstracts from the not-for-profit Communication Institute for Online Scholarship (CIOS), your library can afford to offer students and researchers in the communication field unparalleled historical depth and the most comprehensive disciplinary coverage in an open-URL compliant abstracts database unique in its respect for the field's boundaries.

Commercial databases often lack depth, or cover only one publisher's titles, or range wildly to include materials of questionable relevance to the discipline; but **the CIOS' ComAbstracts database has been designed with the understanding that a database should not be a dumping ground** – that disciplinary boundaries matter – and that depth of coverage is essential in the communication field. Inconsistent coverage, shallow coverage, coverage of gray literature (e.g., materials without academic standing such as brochures, association newsletters, trade magazines), or coverage of ad hoc journals from other disciplines reduces the value of a database with a disciplinary focus. Yet these are common features of expensive commercial databases.

By maintaining a comprehensive database that does not exceed the field's boundaries, the CIOS adds value to what you'll agree is by far the most cost-efficient electronic database available in support of communication education and research.

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Disciplinary integrity with unprecedented technological innovation and added value: ComVista and the Visual Communication Concept Explorer

ComAbstracts provides access to abstracts of the communication field's core research. **Adding value to ComAbstracts is ComVista** – a new kind of database that profiles departmental records of scholarship for students investigating academic programs and for administrators seeking to evaluate the relative productivity and national standing of their department and faculty members. **ComVista shows users where the field's centers for new knowledge are today**, which departments are defining the field for tomorrow, which scholars are leading in areas of research, where the field's graduate programs are located, who staffs them, and what each scholar has contributed to the core journal literature of the field over the course of his/her career.

ComAbstracts is uniquely augmented with the Visual Communication Concept Explorer (VCCE), a dynamic graphical tool showing interrelationships among keyword-triggered concepts in the field's sub-disciplines. The VCCE portrays links between concepts and authors and serves as an intelligent data-mining tool for ComAbstracts. With CIOS' comprehensive coverage and strict adherence to disciplinary boundaries, students and researchers are assured that search results conform to the field's core literature – all of it, not just the most recent few years.

For education's sake, not for profit's sake

As you are aware, an uncontained spiral of pricing for journals and databases produced by commercial publishers imperils your library's ability to support scholarship and education at your university. Libraries and not-for-profit providers must join forces.

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By subscribing to CIOS services, you ensure that your patrons are given access to the best possible pool of useful resources; and you are paying for it at a cost that is both reasonable and sustainable.

In the name of scholarship

The mission of the CIOS is not only to provide quality databases, but to advance scholarship and improve technological access to communication's academic resources. **One vital tenet of this mission is accomplished by helping libraries to maximize their budgetary resources.** By working together, the CIOS and our library partners help each other and students and scholars at your university.

ComAbstracts	Typical of Commercial Databases
Integrity: maintains the boundaries of the field by including a comprehensive but conscientiously chosen pool of the field's central and legitimate scholarly resources	Includes gray literature, non-academic materials, and resources from a hodge-podge of disciplines. Or limits to one publisher's journals
Deep historical coverage	Inconsistent or shallow depth of coverage
Low cost	High cost
Sustainable cost	History of excessive cost increases
Leading in technological innovation – VCCE and ComVista	No history of innovation
Two levels of keywording: basic keywords plus meta-level keywords	Single level of keywording
Keywords assigned using a controlled vocabulary derived from a statistically driven textual analysis of the field's core peer reviewed literature	Uncontrolled or only haphazard, author-supplied keywording, or keywording using a non-disciplinary specific dictionary

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A system of record for the field

ComAbstracts and ComVista's uniquely accurate disciplinary focus and consistent deep historical coverage have made these databases a touchstone for the communication field's assessment of its history and productivity. See these reports for examples from the field's leading journals:

Stephen, T. (forthcoming). "Clustering research activity in communication doctoral programs: Relationship of publication productivity and department size." *Journal of Communication*.

Stephen, T. (2008). "Measuring reputation and productivity of communication programs." *Communication Education*. 57, 297-311.

Stephen, T, & Geel, R. (2007). "Normative publication productivity of communication scholars at selected career milestones." *Human Communication Research*. 33, 103-118.

Stephen, T. (2001). "Concept analysis of the communication literature on marriage and family." *Journal of Family Communication*. 1, 91-110.

Stephen, T. (2000). "Concept analysis of gender, feminist, and women's studies research in the communication literature." *Communication Monographs*. 67, 193-214.

Stephen, T. (1999). "Computer assisted concept analysis of HCR's first 25 years." *Human Communication Research*. 25, 498-513.

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