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I chose to review iConn, Connecticut's research engine. IConn was established in 2000 as a partnership between the Connecticut State Library and the Department of Education. It was established with funds that were allocated from the Connecticut General Assembly to purchase licensed databases for Connecticut schools and libraries, which can be accessed by going to <http://iconn.org>. This project is important to the state as well as the individual because it provides free access to resources that individual libraries would not be able to afford otherwise. (Alwang 2001)

The State of Connecticut and the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services, an organization which is devoted to supporting access to information and ideas for everyone, currently fund IConn. (<http://www.ims.gov>) The digital library has established four goals as follows: (retrieved from <http://www.iconn.org/AboutIconn.aspx>)

- To ensure universal access to a core level of library and information resources for every resident of Connecticut through their public library, school, college, and from home.
- To help provide necessary information resources to every school in Connecticut so that all students are prepared to function in an information society.
- To provide information resources to the increasing number of students taking advantage of on-line courses at Connecticut's colleges and universities.

- To support the information needs of all Connecticut citizens.

The collection of resources is set up much like a large search engine, in that you may search every item at once, or individually. Each library that uses the iConn databases is provided with either a proxy URL, to access the information from within the library, or the patron is asked to provide their library card number in order to login to the resources from home. In addition iConn has structured a statewide library catalog "Request" that enables you to search over 400 of Connecticut's library catalogs.

(<http://www.iconn.org/staff/ContributingHoldings.aspx>)

The resources available through iConn include anything from popular magazines to scholarly databases or programs devoted to job seeking resources and genealogy searches. The collection has over 2,000 electronic journals from large vendors like Ebsco, Proquest, and Gale. There are also downloadable audio books as well as links to Connecticut libraries digital collections. (<http://www.iconn.org>)

The metadata and descriptions of the resources vary depending on what type of format the resource is. For example, the audio books have very thorough descriptions and metadata structures, the entries for each book include not only the title, author, narrator, and publisher; but subject headings, a plot summary, and file size. However, the resource descriptions for the e-journals and databases are difficult to find, and the vendor provides most of the descriptive information.

IConn offers a number of services on their website. The most obvious feature is there metasearch engine, which allows you to search all of their e-journal collection with just one keyword. The other very handy feature of using iConn is the

ability to search other Connecticut library catalogs and request those items for inter-library loan through your own local public library. In addition to these, they also offer services for librarians, such as online database training and technical support for setting up access to iConn databases in their own libraries. There are also some less conspicuous features available on the website, mainly through their audio book directory. You can find reviews from other patrons, as well as suggested titles for further audio book titles, and titles that will become available to download in the coming months.

The technologies used on the iConn digital libraries website are similar to what you would find on an academic libraries website. The e-journal collection is managed by Serial Solutions, and the metasearch, Power Search, is run by Gale-Cengage Learning. The website also provides html code to embed iConn widgets into individual library websites. The interface design is clear and easy to use, and the different systems work smoothly with one another.

Overall, iConn is an incredibly valuable resource for students and library patrons in Connecticut. The vast number of resources combined with the various topics of information makes it a great tool. My only criticism of the site would be that at times it is difficult to navigate when the user is looking for a specific tool. Although searching the various online resources all at once can be done with ease, narrowing the search to one particular area, such as Connecticut Digital Collections, takes additional steps that many novice users may find confusing.

## Works Cited

Alwang, G. (Winter 2001). Connecticut's Digital Library What's It Good for? Is It here to Stay?. In *FOCL Point: Newsletter of the Friends of Connecticut Libraries*.

*iConn, Connecticut's Research Engine*. Retrieved February 5, 2011, from <http://www.iconn.org>.

*Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)*. Retrieved February 5, 2011, from <http://www.imls.gov/>.