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The Subject Librarian Newsletter, Communication, Spring 2017

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NSC NEWSLETTER

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IN THIS AGE OF “TRUTHINESS,” “fake news,” and “alternative facts” comes more disturbing news from Stanford University: in a report released this past November, Stanford researchers find that both high school and college undergraduate students have difficulty judging the credibility of online information.

The report, *Evaluating Information: The Cornerstone of Online Civic Reasoning*, released by the Stanford History Education Group (SHEG), shows a dismaying inability by students to reason about information they see on the Internet, the authors said. Students, for example, had a hard time distinguishing advertisements from news articles or identifying where information came from.

“Many people assume that because young people are fluent in social media they are equally perceptive about what they find there,” said Professor Sam Wineburg, the lead author of the report and founder of SHEG. “Our work shows the opposite to be true.”

The study, begun in January 2015, covered news literacy, as well as students’ ability to judge Facebook and Twitter feeds, comments left in readers’ forums on news sites, blog posts, photographs, and other digital messages that shape public opinion.

“The kinds of duties that used to be the responsibility of editors, of librarians now fall on the shoulders of anyone who uses a screen to become informed about the world,” Wineburg told NPR. “And so the response is not to take away these rights from ordinary citizens but to teach them how to thoughtfully engage in information seeking and evaluating in a cacophonous democracy.”

An executive summary of the Stanford study is available at:
<https://sheg.stanford.edu/upload/V3LessonPlans/Executive%20Summary%2011.21.16.pdf>.

Library Construction Update

The fifth floor of the Hitt Library will be closed during spring semester for the construction of a new quiet study space. Library administrative offices and Special Collections and University Archives on that floor will remain open, accessible by the south staircase and the bank of three elevators. The fourth floor will remain in use as a quiet study floor.

LIBRARIES SECURE \$346,000 IN TECHNOLOGY FEE GRANTS

Through a series of successful Technology Fee proposals submitted in Fall 2016 totaling almost \$350,000, the Libraries have been able to increase the number of primary source and research methods databases available to UCF students, faculty, and staff. These databases are one-time purchases with perpetual access.

Among the collections that have been purchased and are listed alphabetically on the Libraries’ database page
<http://guides.ucf.edu/databases>:

- *Asian Films Online I & II*
 A comprehensive repository of documentaries, feature films, and shorts that provide first-hand perspectives to contemporary Asian issues through the voices of Asian filmmakers and content providers.
- *Black Abolitionist Papers*
 The collection ranges from 1830-1865 and contains more than 15,000 abolitionist documents from the United States, Canada, England, Scotland, Ireland, France, and Germany. Included are reform newspaper articles, essays, editorials, speeches, sermons, lectures and more.
- *Black Thought and Culture*
 Consists of 100,000 documents spanning 250 years of African American history. Included are letters, speeches, essays, pamphlets, interviews, and periodicals from prominent leaders such as Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, Malcolm X, James Baldwin, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and others. Highlights include the transcript of the Muhammad Ali trial, a full run of *The Black Panther* newspaper, and 2,500 pages of exclusive Black Panther oral histories.
- *Caribbean Studies in Video: The Banyan Archive*
 Contains over 1,100 hours of programs with cultural personalities and indigenous people covering festivals, rituals, theatre, dance performances, and cultural practices.
- *SAGE Research Methods Cases*
 SRM Cases are stories of how real research projects were conducted. The collection provides more than 500 case studies, showing the challenges and successes of doing research, written by the researchers themselves. They explain why the researchers chose the methods they did, how they overcame problems in their research and what they might have done differently with hindsight: the realities of research that are missing from journal articles and textbooks.
- *SAGE Research Methods Data Sets*
 A collection of teaching datasets and instructional guides that give students a chance to learn data analysis by practicing themselves. This bank of topical, engaging practice datasets, indexed by method and data type, are optimized to use in classroom exercises or in exam papers.
- *Slavery and Anti-Slavery: A Transnational Archive*
 A collection of primary sources that consists of 1.5 million pages of historical documents: 7,000 books and pamphlets, 80 newspapers, and a dozen manuscript collections. The scope of this collection ranges from the U.S. to Africa, Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

In 2007 Florida Legislature amended Florida Statutes, Section 1009.24, to establish a technology fee at Florida state universities beginning with the fall term of the 2009-2010 academic year. The revenue from this fee shall be used to enhance instructional technology resources for students and faculty.

Since the creation of the Technology Fee, the UCF Libraries have been awarded funding for several technology-based projects. These projects range from acquiring new digital collections and resources for student use, to new technology for student checkout, and the renovation and creation of the Knowledge Commons on the second floor of the Hitt Library.