

SHARPE ONLINE REFERENCE

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CONTENT Since *LJ*'s last review of **Sharpe Online Reference (SOLR)** in the 9/1/09 issue, the database has evolved considerably. It now includes the content of 25 Sharpe print works (up from seven) ranging from *Colonial America* to the *Encyclopedia of World Trade* and covers global, in addition to U.S., history and culture. Users have access to 10,000 articles (compared to 3000 in 2009), 3000 images (formerly 1000), and thousands more bibliographies, web links, and primary sources. A new section, "Teacher's Resources," has been added, and coming soon is the section "Global Voices: Foreign Perspectives on the United States," a collection of 125 international, multimedia primary sources that reveals changing attitudes toward the United States throughout history. As noted in my 2/11/11 E-Views blog post (ow.ly/6ti8k), Sharpe has also been busy making search, navigation, and interface improvements. Titles in the file are updated annually at no additional cost.

USABILITY In 2009 the Quick Search "Emma Goldman" resulted in 76 hits. This time it produced 115 results: 107 articles, six images, and two primary documents. The first item was the full text of a 1917 essay, "Anarchism: What It Really Stands For," from Goldman's *Anarchism and Other Essays*. This was followed by several images and more articles, all clearly identified by type, Sharpe source, and relevancy, and accompanied by a brief description providing sufficient context to alert researchers to items of interest.

Clicking into the body of an article reveals that Sharpe has kept the useful toolbar at the top of the text and improved it by relabeling *See also* references as "Further Reading." They have also wisely maintained the link that creates article citations in MLA, Chicago, and APA formats; the automatic font "sizer" for legibility; and the buttons to bookmark, make notes, email, and print. The back button at screen top is more prominent, and it returns users to the results list (previously it did not).

The relevancy rankings now make better sense, with the first five listings (the Goldman essay, two images of her, and two articles devoted to her) getting 100 percent relevancy. This is another major improvement since the inaugural version of SOLR.

A quick search of the phrase "September 11, 2001" really showed what this resource can deliver. The results overflowed with 2,956 articles, 382 primary source documents, 97 images, and 12 maps. The first of the maps is a chilling but clear depiction of the routes taken by the four hijacked planes, accompanied by a time line from takeoffs to crashes. The first article in the results list, "September 11, 2001: Attacks and Response (Overview)," is a 15-screen signed account (by Edward Mickolus) of the attacks with photos and maps and followed by further reading. Though that article is impressive, even more so is the collective information from the first ten articles in the list, which include "September 11, 2001: International Reaction (Overview)," "September 11, 2001: Political, Legal, and Social Issues (Overview)," and the entry covering the attacks from the publisher's *Encyclopedia of American Folklife*.

Primary-source documents among the results range from the "AAUP Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure, Statement on Academic Freedom in the Wake of September 11, 2001, November 3, 2001" to presidential addresses, UN and OAS resolutions, executive orders, and more material related to the attacks and ensuing global reactions. Only the first 20 or so images are relevant, however, and the well-known image taken this year of President Obama and his national security team watching the assault on Osama bin Laden's compound is dated May 1, 2001. The "Search Within Results" feature is great—adding the term "Pentagon" to the "September 11, 2001" search narrows the results to the 113 items involving that building, for example—a real time-saver. Though most users will perform quick searches on SOLR (at least in the beginning), it's very easy to search within individual books or groups of books as well as within the database's material categories (Articles, Primary Documents, Images, Chronologies, Glossary, Maps, Cultural Landmarks, or Master Bibliography).

SOLR's transdisciplinary content is its outstanding feature. The resource presents a broad overview as well as details on its subject matter, and it does so in an accessible yet sophisticated way. The "Teacher's Resources" section is a welcome enhancement. Created for history teachers, it includes guidelines for evaluating websites, curricular information, and links to 100 vetted websites. It took almost a minute for the Guided Tour to load, though this is a minor concern.

PRICING SOLR is a one-time purchase. There are tiered pricing schedules for school libraries (based on number of high schools per district), public libraries (based on population served), and academic libraries (based on FTE). Titles may be purchased individually for as little as \$130 (for *Encyclopedia of the Jazz Age* for school and public libraries) or by collections (U.S. History and Culture, Global History and Culture, or both), ranging from as low as \$1600 to \$5900 and depending on number of collections purchased and type of library, with substantial discounts for purchasing entire collections. These prices compare very favorably to those from 2009—kudos to M.E. Sharpe for holding them down while increasing valuable content.

BOTTOM LINE Sharpe has polished this product into a jewel for school and public libraries as well as for undergraduate research. Enthusiastically recommended; a ten.