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Challenges

- Providing students with access to research materials possessing an international or global perspective.
- Ensuring beginning college students who lack academic investigatory skills have access to and use reliable and trusted research sources.
- Ease of students finding and using authoritative trusted sources for their research on the open web.

Solutions

- Gale's *Global Issues in Context (GIC)* database

Results

- Usage levels improve dramatically as new students choose GIC resources over free online alternatives.
- Saving time for faculty as GIC is easy to use and ensures that student papers are of higher quality since they are using better sources.

University Librarian Seeks Research Materials with International Perspective for Beginning College Students

Sara Rizzo is a reference librarian at Nazarbayev University in Kazakhstan. She is also the lead advocate for the school's library and a key conduit between new college students and a well-rounded global perspective.

Helping Students Overcome Academic Research Inexperience

Rizzo's position as a subject librarian often requires her to swoop into a classroom, at the request of a professor, and provide first- and second-year students with narrowly defined reference materials needed to complete research projects and multipage essays.

To ensure students have the materials and perspective the university desires, Rizzo turned to *Global Issues in Context (GIC)* database from Gale, a part of Cengage Learning. *GIC* is a cloud-based platform designed to promote global awareness by supplying authoritative multidisciplinary and multimedia rich content that spans continents and cultures.

"It's probably my favorite Gale product and I would recommend it to anyone," Rizzo enthusiastically said.

The *GIC* database, which integrates news, global viewpoints, and primary source documents in a single search, connects students at Nazarbayev University with content and perspective they might not otherwise acquire due to them just beginning to learn about academic research and its importance.

Reliable, Topical, and Timely Research Materials

Prior to *GIC*, Nazarbayev did not have one place where students could find reliable and authoritative information on current issues. Additionally, some of the source materials they were using to complete presentations, class projects, and term papers were not very reliable. Students would find them by running a basic search and were not yet aware of how to distinguish between a good source and one that might not be highly respected.

"They were using Wikipedia and sources like that," Rizzo said regarding the reference materials on which students were relying to complete classwork. "There was never really a clear cut place to go; a lot of the students were just wading through Google and seeing what popped up."

However, once students began accessing the trusted content available through *GIC*, Rizzo says librarians and professors immediately noticed a marked increase in

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the quality of student work. "I think *GIC* is a really good fit for us because we're no longer worried about the source material," Rizzo said. "It's a database that's always working, never broken and always up to date. We all know it's reliable because it came from Gale."

Besides being trusted, content is grouped and arranged on *GIC's* homepage in ways that provide students quick and easy access to material that is trendy or timely. More specifically, information is grouped in a manner designed specifically for students in search of research data with a global perspective.

The availability of videos and podcasts makes it easier for students to understand hot topics and important events happening in their region. Rizzo is also a fan of *GIC's* global map, which provides an overview of each country with links to relevant and timely news stories.

She likes that *GIC* is constantly updated and always includes current information. Students have on-demand access to source materials with the international point of view their courses require.

GIC Usage Surges to Record Levels and Results in Increased Student Achievement

"Wow," was Rizzo's reaction when told her university was ranked number one in student *GIC* use over the past 12 months. "We promote GIC to the professors and students and I think the best ways to get them to use the resource is showing them in their classrooms, word of mouth, and sending email reminders. I'm really glad that it seems to be working!"

In addition to providing students with reliable international sources, record *GIC* use is also attributable to the platform's ease of use. The database is designed to anticipate hot research topics, organize a collection of like sources, and deliver it all to students on demand.

"Finding articles or news using Google is difficult for students because we don't know what type of news sources they are getting their information from. Now with *GIC* we don't need to worry – we know that the content is reliable because they got it from Gale," Rizzo said. "And for the students, their papers are better because they are looking at better sources than [what you find] on Google, so it's a lot better for everybody."

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