

11-2012

## Internet Reviews: Biodiversity Heritage Library

John Creech

Central Washington University, [creechj@cwu.edu](mailto:creechj@cwu.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.cwu.edu/libraryfac>



Part of the [Biology Commons](#), and the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Creech, John, "Internet Reviews: Biodiversity Heritage Library" (2012). *Faculty Scholarship from the Library*. Paper 7.  
<http://digitalcommons.cwu.edu/libraryfac/7>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Library at ScholarWorks@CWU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Scholarship from the Library by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@CWU.

**Biodiversity Heritage Library.** Access: <http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/>.

The Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) project is a collaborative effort of academic, natural history, and botanical libraries and now spans six continents, offering a trove of public domain monographs and journals dating back to the 15th century.

Initial coverage has expanded since 2009 to include server nodes and access to collections in Europe, China, Brazil, Australia, and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. The current combined collections contain more than 50,000 titles, 107,000 volumes, and 39 million pages in more than 60 languages, and represent the most comprehensive digital collections covering biodiversity in the world. The collections provide information on more than 1 million scientifically identified species, and BHL serves as the functional digital component of the online *Encyclopedia of Life*. The 21 digital collections include 330 of the surviving books from Charles Darwin's library, along with the scientist's annotations; a selection of books authored by or about Carl Linnaeus; materials from the Ernst Mayr Library of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University; Smithsonian Institution collections; and rare books from the collections of the Missouri Botanical Gardens dating to the 17th century.

Numerous features and functions highlight the value of the site. The "Years" tab allows users to browse collections by century and by discrete time periods within centuries. The earliest period available, Pre-1700: 1450-1699, for example, includes more than 250 rare publications. The "Map" feature marks collections across the planet and provides pop-up menus that link to all titles available from targeted geographic regions. BHL uses

uBio's TaxonFinder taxonomic recognition algorithm to search the text of items digitized in BHL and display scientific names. Users can also download PDF files of entire books or single pages of text.

No session is complete without visiting the stunning array of images available via the site's Flickr photostream. A number of library API tools are available along with a variety of data export types, including catalog records, page level data, and scientific name data, and the data is provided for reuse via a Creative Commons license.

BHL provides an amazing treasure of invaluable historical materials covering biological diversity from many resources formerly unavailable to most students and faculty engaged in life sciences research. As many of these items have very limited distribution, BHL will serve a central role in expanding the role of scientific exploration in the developing world, as well as in leading U.S. and European institutions.—*John Creech, Central Washington University, john.creech@cwu.edu*

**Duke University Libraries Digital Collections.** Access: <http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/>.

Duke's Digital Collections Web site contains an impressive selection of digitized materials from the university's extensive Special Collections. Culling material from nearly 50 individual collections, the digital collections contain more than 90,000 photographs, advertisements, books, broadsides, posters, and diaries.

Duke's digital offerings are particularly strong in the area of "Advertising & Consumer Culture." With more than 41,000 digitized items, the collection contains photos of billboards, murals, and signs, as well as ads from various print publications, posters, and other formats. A convenient set of tabs lets the user select from the following categories: company, product, date, publication, format, subject, medium, headline, and audience.

---

Joni R. Roberts is associate university librarian for public services and collection development at Willamette University, e-mail: [jroberts@willamette.edu](mailto:jroberts@willamette.edu), and Carol A. Drost is associate university librarian for technical services at Willamette University, e-mail: [cdrost@willamette.edu](mailto:cdrost@willamette.edu)