Researchers and practitioners from a variety of disciplines have become interested in recent years in the concept of "family." Phrases like "family values" dominated the 1992 presidential campaign. But, what exactly defines a family? Politicians, sociologists, psychologists, journalists, political lobbyists and others have attempted to give us the answer to this question, but little consensus exists even among members of the same profession. Given the current level of interest in this very broad topic, however, it appears that the study of the family will grow in importance during the coming decade.

An evolving body of electronic resources in family studies is currently available in a variety of formats, including online (pay-per-use), CD-ROM, and through the Internet. These resources include different types of data, such as bibliographic databases, full-text databases, and electronic conferences. This article will list and describe many of these electronic tools.

For the purposes of this article, "family studies" will be defined in a broad sense. It will include perspectives from psychology, sociology, social work, and other disciplines where emphasis is placed on the family system. This would include diverse areas of study such as family medicine, child psychology, marriage counseling, family law, and anthropology. Families are defined here as encompassing a variety of lifestyles, including traditional two parent (heterosexual) families, gay couples, single parents, and extended families. Most of the resources discussed in this article contain information about both traditional families as well as nontraditional or alternative family systems.

ONLINE DATABASES

Under this rubric we will discuss databases that are available through commercial online services, such as DIALOG, BRS, and OCLC.

Inventory Of Marriage And Family Literature Online

Perhaps the most ambitious online database in marriage and family studies is the Inventory of Marriage and Family Literature Online (IMFL), previously known as the Family Resources Database. IMFL originated as a printed volume at the University of Minnesota, and later moved to the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR). The online version was developed in the early 1980s. In 1992 DataTRAQ International began to produce and distribute IMFL for the NCFR in both print and online formats. A CD-ROM version is planned for release in 1993.

IMFL contains over 120,000 bibliographic citations from English language books, journal articles, audio- and videotapes, unpublished research, newsletters, government publications, instructional materials, conference proceedings, doctoral dissertations, and work in progress. IMFL also includes a human resource directory of family specialists willing to be contacted by the public, an "idea bank" of works in progress, and a directory of family life research agencies. These nonbibliographic records only include information through 1990, and are no longer being updated. Thus, although this information is now still fairly up-to-date, it will become less and less useful as time goes by. Most of the records for journal articles in IMFL have very brief abstracts, while the records for books list only the table of contents. Twenty fields are searchable in IMFL, but individual records often have a smaller number of fields due to incomplete information or differences in media type (e.g., books have a field for price, while journal articles do not). IMFL includes citations from materials published from 1970 to the present, and is updated bimonthly.
One of the strengths of IMFL is its multidisciplinary nature. Records are drawn from a variety of fields, including education, psychology, sociology, health sciences, anthropology, law, theology, economics, and social work. Topics covered include over 100 subject areas, gathered together under the following broad categories:

- Trends and Change in Marriage and Family
- Organizations and Services to Families
- Family Relationships and Dynamics
- Mate Selection
- Marriage and Divorce
- Issues Related to Reproduction
- Sexual Attitudes and Behavior
- Families with Special Problems
- Psychology and Sociology
- Family Counseling and Education
- Ethnic Groups
- Aids for Theory and Research

No thesaurus (print or online) is available for searches of IMFL. The database producer suggests the use of free-text searching, since the controlled vocabulary and classification codes in IMFL are not completely consistent.

One of the strengths of IMFL is its multidisciplinary nature... including education, psychology, sociology, health sciences, anthropology, law, theology, economics, and social work.

About 1,000 journals are scanned each year for coverage in IMFL, although only a small percentage of these are indexed cover to cover. Thousands of individuals and organizations are contacted annually to determine the books, newsletters, and other media that might appropriately be added to the database. Most of the materials indexed in IMFL are available in print form through the database producer. A variety of users access IMFL, including librarians, researchers, sociologists, government agencies, physicians and other health professionals, attorneys, and the clergy.

IMFL is available (at $66/hour) through DIALOG, BRS, and ETSI (Executive Telecommunication System, Inc.—a bureau of National Affairs Human Resources Information network). Terri Lee Cogger is the President of DataTRAQ, and can be reached at 612/755-4867, or by mail at P.O. Box 488, Anoka, MN 55303-4867.

Child Abuse And Neglect And Family Violence Database

Another important online resource for family studies is the Child Abuse and Neglect and Family Violence Database (CANFV). This file is produced by the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. CANFV includes information from 1965 to the present, is updated semiannually, and contains approximately 15,000 records. It includes citations and abstracts of English language materials taken from books, book chapters, journals, research reports, government documents, conference proceedings, curricula, and unpublished papers.

The subject content of CANFV is narrowly defined. It includes all kinds of family violence, focusing on child abuse but also including spousal abuse and elder abuse. Documents indexed in CANFV cover the following areas: definitions (of child abuse and family violence); etiology; treatment strategies; policy making; report procedures; research projects; service programs; training programs; and social and economic factors. Due to a recent change in legislation, CANFV is no longer adding family violence information to its database (unless that information specifically relates to child abuse). However, all previously added family violence information will be retained in the database. There is a print thesaurus that sells for $26.

Those interested in this database would include health professionals, family therapists, social workers, attorneys, teachers, and public policy makers. CANFV is available through DIALOG (File 64) at $35/hour. Inquiries concerning the nature of the database should be addressed to Sandy McCloud at 703/385-7565 or P.O. Box 1182, Washington, DC 20013.

Other Related Online Databases

There are many other online databases that can be useful for those searching for information in marriage and family studies. These include PsycINFO (available through DIALOG, BRS, DataStar and EPIC); Sociological Abstracts (DIALOG, BRS, DataStar and EPIC); Exceptional Child Education and ERIC (available through DIALOG, BRS, and EPIC); MENTAL HEALTH ABSTRACTS (only available through DIALOG); Social Work Abstracts (only available through BRS); and Social SciSearch (DIALOG, BRS and DataStar).

AgeLine... covers many issues related to the family, including the psychology of aging, family relationships, retirement, employment, and public policy.

The aging of our society concerns many family-oriented professionals today. AgeLine, which recently became available through both DIALOG and BRS, covers many issues related to the family, including the psychology of aging, family relationships, retirement, employment, and public policy. AgeLine is produced by the American Association of Retired Persons.

The presidential campaign of 1992 and the agenda of the Clinton administration have brought the governmental aspects of the family into the national spotlight. PAIS International (Public Affairs Information Service) is an online database that covers a variety of public policy topics related to the family, including demographic studies, social policy, and family legislation. It is available through DIALOG, BRS, and EPIC.

Related to PAIS is the HUD USER ONLINE database, produced by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and is available only on BRS. It includes government...
reports (federal, state, and local) as well as commercially published materials, and covers housing finance, affordable housing, economic development, fair housing laws, housing for the elderly, and public housing.

Another online database relevant to family studies is the DRUGINFO and Alcohol Use and Abuse database. It is now a widely accepted axiom among family therapists, drug counselors, and social workers that substance abuse and chemical dependency dramatically affect the family. Parents, spouses, and children interact with one another in markedly different ways when alcohol or drug addiction is a factor in the household. DRUGINFO and Alcohol Use and Abuse Database is an excellent tool for researchers and practitioners working with families impacted by drug or alcohol addiction. It covers the educational, psychological, and sociological aspects of alcohol and drug abuse, as well as material on treatment evaluation, chemical dependency, family therapy, and alcoholism among various ethnic groups. It is available only through BRS.

All of the databases previously mentioned are primarily bibliographic in nature. However, some family studies information may be available full text through the growing number of online full-text sources through DIALOG. Two journals available online that are representative of this phenomenon are Children Today, available in File 647 (MAGAZINE ASAP), and Child Health Alert, available in File 149 (HEALTH PERIODICALS DATABASE). Westlaw also offers some full-text journals in family law, such as Journal of Family Law and the ABA Family Law Quarterly.

CD-ROM DATABASES

Cross-Cultural CD

SilverPlatter introduced a series of CD-ROM databases in 1989 called Cross-Cultural CD, consisting of four volumes of information dealing with society and the family. These full-text files were extracted from the Human Relations Area Files, and cover life in sixty different cultures throughout the world during the 19th and 20th centuries.

The first three volumes are currently available, and deal with the following subjects: Human Sexuality and Marriage (Volume 1); Family, Crime, and Social Problems (Volume 2); and Old Age, and Death and Dying (Volume 3). Volume 4, to be released in 1993, will cover Childhood and Adolescence, Socialization and Education. Volume 5, to be released in 1994, will cover Religious Beliefs and Religious Practices.

NATASHA is a CD-ROM database that contains statistical data from 82 studies on health, sexuality, and fertility in the United States over the last 40 years.

While Cross-Cultural CD has some relevance for family researchers from all disciplines, it is most appropriate for anthropologists, historians, and cross-cultural specialists. The series is available from SilverPlatter Information, Inc., 100 River Ridge Drive, Norwood, MA 02062-5026; 617/769-2599.

NATASHA

NATASHA is a CD-ROM database that contains statistical data from 82 studies on health, sexuality, and fertility in the United States over the last 40 years. It is produced for the National Archive on Sexuality, Health, and Adolescence by the Sociometrics Corporation. Some of the studies include the 1971 U.S. National Survey of Young Women by Zelnik and Kantner; the 1980 U.S. Census survey using women, men, and children as selected variables; and the 1979-1980 national survey by A. Torres of U.S. teens seeking abortion services.

NATASHA is a useful tool for trained social scientists who desire access to comprehensive statistical data on sexuality and adolescence. For more information, contact the Sociometrics Corporation, 170 State St., Suite 260, Los Altos, CA 94022; 415/949-3282 or 800/846-3475.

ClinPSYC

The American Psychological Association has recently announced the availability of a CD-ROM subset of PsyclINFO called ClinPSYC, to be distributed by three different companies: SilverPlatter, CD Plus, and Compact Cambridge. (Note: SilverPlatter has now assumed the publishing activities of Compact Cambridge.) ClinPSYC is different from PsyclINFO and PsycLIT in that it focuses exclusively on the clinical aspects of psychology. It covers such topics as psychological disorders, treatment and assessment of mental health, and neuropsychology.

ClinPSYC will be helpful to social workers, clinical psychologists, and other mental health professionals. It will be especially useful to family therapists and others who work closely with families in crisis.

For more information about ClinPSYC, contact the American Psychological Association, 7750 First Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20002-4242.

INTERNET RESOURCES

The Internet provides access to information through three primary methods: Files through anonymous FTP, databases accessed with the telnet command, and listserver or electronic conferences. In the following paragraphs I will describe Internet resources on the family that can be accessed through these methods. While many listservers are actually located on BITNET, they can almost always be accessed through the Internet.

Electronic Conferences

One important electronic conference for family studies is FAMLYSCI, the Family Science Network. Based at the University of Kentucky, it is intended for scholars and researchers in marriage and family therapy, family sociology, family science, and the behavioral aspects of family medicine. The purpose of this list is to support family research programs and to enrich communication among family researchers. Questions should be addressed to GWBROCK@UKCC.

Related to FAMLYSCI is SOCWORK, a discussion list devoted to social workers and others interested in any aspect of social work. Subscriptions should be sent to SOCWORK@SOCIETY.ORG.

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Another list related to the family is BEHAVIOR (Behavioral and Emotional Disorders in Children). This electronic conference will be most useful to social workers, child psychologists, pediatricians, and family counselors. A SUBSCRIBE command can be sent to LISTSERVER@ASUACAD.BITNET.

Y-RIGHTS is a list that concerns the rights of children and teens. The list owner, Kenneth Udut, welcomes all subscriptions from anyone interested, including faculty members, teenagers, parents, manual laborers, or students. He can be contacted at KUDUT@HAMPVMS.BITNET.

FAMILY-L is a listserver for family medicine faculty (part-time or full-time) and research fellows who are interested in medical education and family medicine research. FAMILY-L contains research ideas, job opportunities, and discussions of issues pertinent to family medicine practitioners and researchers. Subscribers are limited to those involved in teaching, research, or administration in family medical practice in some capacity, although one does not have to be a physician to join. Questions should be addressed to Joe Stanford, M.D., at FCMJOE@MIZZOU1.BITNET.

Comserve is an integrated online interdisciplinary center for students and scholars from various human communication disciplines. Comserve supports approximately 35 network listservers or "hotlines," including topics such as journalism, mass communication, and linguistics. One of the Comserve hotlines is FAMCOMM, which deals with marital, family, and relational communication. Questions should be addressed to the Comserve Support Staff at SUPPORT@RPI.ECS.BITNET.

Other BITNET/Internet listservers related to family studies include:

- ADDICT-L@KENTVM (addictions)
- ALCOHOL@LMUACAD (alcohol and drug studies)
- AUTISM@SJUVM (developmentally disabled)
- BISEXU-L@BROWNVM (bisexuality)
- DRUGABUS@UAMB (drug abuse education information and research)
- FAM-MED@GAC.EDU (use of computer technology in the teaching and practice of family medicine)
- PSYC@PUCC (psychology, neuroscience, and human behavioral issues)
- SENIOR@INDYCMS (senior citizen health and living)
- STOPRAPE@BROWNVM (sexual assault activist list)

Anonymous FTP
A useful resource for discovering family studies electronic conferences is the Internet/BITNET Health Sciences Resources list, compiled by Lee Hancock at the University of Kansas Medical Center. Questions about downloading this resource through anonymous FTP should be addressed to Le07144@UKANVM.

MAPP combines full-text materials with bibliographic sources to provide a helpful compendium of data related to the family.

The Social Sciences Research Data Bank is an electronic archive at the Australian National University in Canberra, containing papers written on various topics in the social sciences. Many of the documents are related to marriage and the family, although most of them look at this topic from a cross-cultural perspective. Questions about downloading the material via anonymous FTP should be sent to sean@coombs.anu.edu.au.

Telnet To Databases
MAPP is the National Cooperative Extension Family database, edited by Dr. James Van Horn (Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology) at Pennsylvania State University. It contains research briefs, reference materials, media materials, census data publications, news releases, program ideas, and bibliographies. The MAPP database focuses on current information in family, child, and marital studies, but older documents are also available. MAPP combines full-text materials with bibliographic sources to provide a helpful compendium of data related to the family.

I did a sample search (for articles about "marriage") on MAPP, and found some of the following full-text articles: "Finding Someone to Love and Marry"; "Child at Risk"; "Is Divorce Transmitted to the Next Generation?"; "Do Couples Who Play Together Stay Together?"; "Suggestions for Successful Marriages"; "Current Theorizing on the Family: An Appraisal"; "The Marriage Myth." While few of the documents available could be considered full-blown research projects or "scholarly" articles, the database is still a useful tool for family educators, sociologists, family therapists, social workers, and others. The search interface for MAPP is not highly sophisticated, but it does allow for simple Boolean AND searches.

To access MAPP, do the following:
(1) Type telnet PSUPEN@PSU.EDU
(2) Enter the 2-letter abbreviation for your state at the Username prompt.
(3) No password is required.
(4) Follow the menu instructions to enter the MAPP database.

Any questions about using MAPP should be addressed to Computer Support at SUPPORT@PSUPEN.PSU.EDU. They will provide a user's guide for PENpages, the database system that encompasses MAPP as well as several other resources.

SUMMARY
This article has described a variety of electronic resources related to family studies. Librarians, researchers, and practitioners have a large pool of electronic data available to them as they seek out information related to children, marriage, or the family. Given our society's interest in these topics, it seems certain that electronic family studies information will continue to proliferate during the next few years.

Communications to the author should be addressed to Mark Stover, Library Director, California Family Study Center, 5433 Laurel Canyon Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91607; 818/509-5959; Internet—enq4mes@mvs.oac.ucla.edu.