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2 retain the margins/fonts and spacing as shown. Keep the general
3 format and head titles as indicated by the yellow highlights. Do
4 not add extra paragraph returns between paragraphs and do not
5 type with the cap lock on unless the word or words must be set
6 all caps (as with Boolean terms).

7
8 Advisor Reviews--Standard Review
9 House of Commons Parliamentary Papers online (HCPP) - Nineteenth
10 century

11 Date of Review: February 3rd, 2006

12 Composite Score: ****

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19
20 Pricing Options

21 \$90,000 (USD) one-off purchase (list price for nineteenth century
22 version) plus modest annual hosting fee

23
24 Product Description

1 The House of Commons Parliamentary Papers online provides an
2 index to all British parliamentary papers from 1801 to 2004.
3 Searchable full text is currently provided for the period 1840-
4 1891 and 1901-1904. The nineteenth and twentieth century papers
5 are available separately although the index covers the full
6 period. It is intended that full-text content provision for the
7 entire nineteenth century collection will be completed shortly.
8 Twentieth century full-text provision will be completed by the
9 end of 2006; updates to current parliamentary proceedings will be
10 made quarterly. This review covers the nineteenth century
11 section.

12

13 **Critical Evaluation**

14 This is a superb, if high cost, resource and vital to any
15 institution whose patrons have a strong interest in the primary
16 sources relating to the history of the nineteenth century. Given
17 the world dominance and global activities of Gt Britain during
18 most of that period, the content is of very considerable value to
19 global historians and especially those with an interest in any
20 events and developments that transpired in that momentous period
21 whether in Britain or on the world stage. The system interface is
22 intuitive and capable of advanced manipulation; output is
23 customizable in a variety of 'quick read', 'readable', PDF and
24 TIFF formats for maximum utilization.

25 The product has emerged from the almost indigestible yet
26 indispensable microfiche versions of British Parliamentary Papers

1 produced by Chadwyck Healey between 1980 and 1983. The fiche
2 version carried the attraction of being a major shelf space-saver
3 for libraries and was built on the accurate assumption that
4 microfiche offers a truly long-term preservation solution.
5 However, Chadwyck Healey was acquired by University Microfilms
6 International (UMI) (forerunners of Proquest Information and
7 Learning) in 1999. UMI itself was already part of the Bell &
8 Howell Company (now renamed Proquest Company) from 1985 onwards.
9 The resulting concentration of the world's best expertise in the
10 field of large scale digitization and record preservation has
11 produced a world class resource in HCPP. We should be clear that
12 providing a full-text version of these papers on this scale is a
13 considerable undertaking. Proquest's own product description
14 further confirms this both in value of content and the size of
15 the task in producing it:

16 'The House of Commons Parliamentary Papers are vital to the
17 historical record of Britain, its former Colonies and the wider
18 world. They are among the richest and most detailed primary
19 sources for the history of the past two centuries, and are
20 fundamental to an understanding of current legislation, policy
21 making and the political environment. HCPP online, with
22 searchable full text, and detailed subject indexing, makes it
23 possible to fully exploit the enormous potential of this resource
24 for the first time.

25 The origins of HCPP online lie in the Chadwyck-Healey microfiche
26 edition of the nineteenth century House of Commons Sessional
27 Papers. Published between 1980 and 1983, the microfiche edition

1 includes filmed images of 79,527 papers, covering 4.2 million
2 pages. The accompanying 5 volume index, Peter Cockton's '*Subject*
3 *Catalogue of the House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 1801-*
4 *1900*', was the first thematic listing of the complete set of
5 parliamentary papers.'

6 The design of HCPP provides an example of current best industry
7 practice in a number of ways.

8 First, the product is easy to access regardless of the variation
9 in the type of local authentication system in use. Proquest
10 offers a variety of alternatives to cover the login process
11 ranging from IP-based authentication to referring URL and, in the
12 UK, ATHENS/ATHENS DA. Given Proquest's considerable involvement
13 in this market through other information products, it would be
14 reasonable to expect a timely, shibbolised access point in due
15 course.

16 Second, the interface has been highly customized for the specific
17 purpose of identifying the materials in question. It is totally
18 fit for this purpose. British Parliamentary papers are not the
19 easiest materials for a beginner to use. Even use of the earlier
20 fiche version required the user to understand the difference
21 between House of Commons Papers, Command Papers (and their
22 various sequences), House of Lords Papers, Bills, reports,
23 debates in each house etc - not to mention a trawl through
24 substantial, printed index volumes to get there. In contrast, the

1 search interface for the online version is truly intuitive (even
2 for those with no great knowledge of parliamentary papers) and
3 has been clearly designed with the user in mind. There is a quick
4 search box for general enquiries and even that has context-
5 sensible delimiters (such as limit to full-text records only).
6 For more detailed search requirements there are means to search
7 by paper title, subject index, chair or author and session
8 (parliamentary 'year'); all with the sensible option of limiting
9 search by document type (bill, paper, report etc.) and optional
10 A-Z lists. Furthermore there are a number of additional search
11 and limit options. The ability to limit by Paper Number is very
12 useful. The mysteries of the various sequences of command papers,
13 for example, c, cd, cmd etc. are therefore avoided - although it
14 would be even more helpful if the search engine recognized an
15 'open' format e.g. cd33 as well as it retrieves the technically
16 correct cd.33. Searching can also be limited to a range of years,
17 by format of document (Maps/Plans, Tables/Graphs,
18 Illustrations/Photographs). Additionally, the results sort and
19 display options can be set before the search is made and 'clear
20 search' allows the user to enter entirely new search options
21 without the need to clear a number of input boxes.
22 Following a successful search, the user only has to select an
23 item or items from the 'browse' list of records. The link 'by
24 title' leads to a descriptive 'bibliographic' record (with a

1 'next record' option as well as a link to full text and a durable
2 URL (for personal listing purposes)). The display list also
3 provides direct access to both of the latter. At any point, it is
4 very easy to navigate out of the search session, back to the list
5 of retrieved records or to other parts of the system (including a
6 new search). It is also possible to save results (and search
7 strategies) to an online 'archive' for retrieval at a later date
8 or to download bibliographic citations - remembering that this
9 type of material is not otherwise easy to describe correctly.
10 Records can also be 'marked' for later downloading as a group, e-
11 mailing, printing, viewing, or adding to the personal online
12 'archive'.

13 Additional flexibility is provided by a series of viewing and
14 download options. Full-text results permit download in .pdf or
15 .tiff format (a greater variety than many other information
16 systems) together with an enhanced-quality 'reading' viewing
17 option. Immediate printing from the .pdf file version is also
18 available. The full-text view also allows you to further search
19 within the displayed document for additional search terms or to
20 jump to a specific page or range of pages.

21 It should be clear by now that HCPP is a feature rich resource
22 totally fit for the purpose of interrogating and exploiting its
23 complex data sets. But there is more. By using Peter Cockton's
24 *Subject Catalogue of the House of Commons Parliamentary Papers,*

1 1801-1900 as the indexing source, it has been possible to
2 establish a three-level subject catalogue which can be browsed
3 and expanded easily at the whim of the researcher. This is useful
4 in identifying resources whose indexing (however sophisticated)
5 may not always retrieve them to the best benefit of the user,
6 especially those looking for records relating to broader subject
7 areas. It is perhaps a minor weakness that the system loses its
8 trail once a record has been retrieved in full text (although not
9 at description level) so the user has to re-enter the subject
10 browse system if looking for similar records.

11 In terms of help systems, HCPP once again excels through the
12 availability of an online demo and easy-to-follow 'pop-up' online
13 help screen invoked from a well-situated drop-down menu. If
14 required, technical support is available using e-mail or phone
15 contacts and, in my experience, is not only well-informed but
16 promptly delivered. To aid those unused to British parliamentary
17 terms there is an online glossary of terms and a useful summary
18 description of parliamentary papers organization and even a list
19 of the principal ministers in the British parliament of the
20 nineteenth century. It is equally good to find a product of this
21 size with very acceptable response times and which can be
22 accessed using Netscape Navigator, Internet Explorer and Firefox.
23 As might be expected from such a well-defined product, HCPP is
24 compatible with EndNote, ProCite, Reference Manager and RefWorks.

1 In conclusion, HCPP is a fully-featured resource which has
2 greatly improved scholarly access to much of the world's most
3 important primary materials relating to the history of the
4 nineteenth century.

5
6 **Contract Provisions**

7 Institutional access on- or off-campus. No restrictions on
8 concurrent user numbers.

9
10 **Authentication**

11 Available on- and off-campus; in the UK authentication can be
12 arranged using ATHENS or ATHENS DA, alternatively by IP address
13 range and/or username and password and referring url.

14
15 **Author's Selected References**

16 None

17
18 **Advisor Additional References**

19 More references to be supplied by The Charleston Advisor.

20
21 **Author's Biography**

22 Martin Myhill is currently Acting University Librarian at the
23 University of Exeter UK. A library science graduate, Martin is
24 specifically charged with responsibilities for library staff,

1 space utilization, systems and special projects. His career to
2 date has involved considerable international library and
3 information systems activity, especially in Europe and also
4 countries which are part of the former Soviet Union and Mongolia.
5 He has published regularly, particularly in studies relating to
6 the procurement, use and evaluation of library systems. See
7 <http://www.ex.ac.uk/~MRMyhill/lib/mm.html> for a fuller
8 description of his professional activities and recent
9 publications and conference participation.

10

11 Composite Score Box:

12 Your Product Name Review Scores Composite: ****

13 The maximum number of stars in each category is 5.

14 Content: ****

15 Full-text provision for the nineteenth century papers is not yet
16 complete (but imminent)

17 Searchability: *****

18 Both searching and results management are the epitome of best
19 practice

20 Pricing Options: ***

21 This is a huge resource which provides the major primary evidence
22 relating to the events of the nineteenth century; the list price
23 unfortunately reflects the value of the data and the quality of
24 the resource

1 **Contract Options:** *****

2 Subject to user licence. The Higher Education licence terms can
3 be regarded as standard within the industry

4 **Contact Information**

5 Proquest Information and Learning Company

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7 P.O. Box 1346

8 Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

9 Telephone: 734.761.4700

10 <info@il.proquest.com>

11 <www.il.proquest.com>

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