
End user searching and data: the Graduate Business Resource Center experience

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Introduction

The Graduate Business Resource Center of Baruch College, C.U.N.Y. is a technology based facility located in close proximity to the School of Business but physically separated from the library. It is an attempt to serve a population of approximately 3000 graduate students and faculty in the School of Business and Public Administration without having an actual graduate level business library. Since there are so many of them, and so few of us, we have emphasized enduser applications wherever possible. Moreover, we feel that part of our mission is to prepare the graduate students for

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the "real" world of business they'll discover upon graduation. We aim, therefore, to make available to them those data sources which they are likely to encounter within the business community or to which they can request access once employed by a firm.

Our goals are to use access points that are as user friendly as possible and to teach the students where and how to obtain the data. We do not attempt to analyze the data, but do make available such software programs as Lotus 1-2-3 to help them analyze it on their own. Of course, many of our constituents, particularly faculty members, have complex data needs beyond those of the average student/enduser. These needs are referred to our Data Resources Service, headed by Professor Siman and our Computerized Information Services, headed by Professor Lowe. Since both of my colleagues have already addressed to you, I'd like to concentrate on those areas of our service which do indeed focus on enduser and user-friendly services and which meet the needs of the average data user at this level.

Many of our constituents need data that is readily available to them once they know it exists. For example, our students often request such data as demographics, market share, market segmentation figures, advertising reach, financials, and usage of materials in production. Our role in the GBRC is to publicize the available data, emphasize new user-friendly methods of access, and teach the endusers how to meet their own data requirements.

Spreading the Word

Publicizing the available sources is a major function of our Center. The GBRC publishes NewsAlerts several times each semester to alert both students and faculty to new data sources,

programs, demonstrations, and services. (See figures #1 and #2). By bringing new datafiles and services to the attention of our constituency, we are trying, in essence, to "create a market" of potential users. Typically, our users may not even be aware that such data exists and, if they are, may not realize how they can use it in their research. Some NewsAlerts focus on new datasets available through the Data Resources Service while others announce workshops and demonstrations of data available through commercial vendors via online information retrieval.

Teaching

This, in turn, brings us to the second major function of our program. Once we have interested our researchers in the available data, we then proceed to introduce them to it. We let them try it out for themselves so that they will learn how to access data without the intervention of an intermediary. Since enduser searching is becoming increasingly the norm in the business community, we want our students to feel confident that they can access the information they need long after they've completed their degrees. In addition to the more or less formal training obtained through our seminars, we also offer point-of-use assistance through Access Guides (brochures we prepare to guide endusers) and one-on-one help in the person of trained professional consultations to assist each researcher in the selection of the most appropriate data sources available both at Baruch and elsewhere.

Availability

Finally, to fulfill the third part of our perceived mission, we bring the data to them in as user-friendly a format as possible. This has, until recently, meant that we provide the students with after-training access to the Dow Jones News/Retrieval Service (which is available to us on a prepaid monthly basis as an educational institution) and Prosearch (which provides user-friendly access to both the Dialog and BRS information services). For budgetary reasons, the latter must be monitored closely and limited to research for theses, dissertations, and articles for publication. More recently, the advent of CD Rom technology has allowed us to make several of these same data sources available to a much larger audience since they, too, are prepaid. Although our facility is still small we are able, through CD Roms, to make the Disclosure database (including Spectrum Ownership) and Standard and Poor's Corporations available to our students and faculty along with such bibliographic databases in CD Rom format as PsycLit, ABI/INFORM, and ERIC.

Dow Jones News/Retrieval Service

One of the most pressing needs for data we have at the GBRC is for company financial information. Our students are constantly on the lookout for income statements, balance sheets, key ratios and the like. One of the easiest ways to make this data available to them is through the Dow Jones News Retrieval Service. We have arranged to prepay for the service and have configured our PCs to automatically dial up, connect, and enter a password through Smartcom. Through Dow Jones News, our students have access to Disclosure (including extracts from over 10,000 publicly held

company's 10-K report and other SEC filings see figure #4), Media General (detailed corporate financial information on approximately 4,300 companies and 170 industries), Standard and Poor's (which provides brief profiles of over 4,500 companies including earnings, dividend and market for the current and past four years), Historical Quotes (including daily volume, high, low and close for stock quotes and composites), Historical Averages, and Current Quotes, among others. Our students make particularly good use of Dow Jones News' "Quicksearch" feature. By simply entering "/"quick" and a company's ticker symbol, they can immediately key into a wealth of financial information drawing from multiple Dow Jones News/Retrieval files (see figure #5). Data includes current quotes, latest news stories, a financial and market overview, earnings estimates, company profiles, and investment research reports. (see figure #6). The students may print their Dow Jones News/Retrieval results and/or save the information to a diskette for future use.

Prosearch

Dialog and BRS databases are also available at the GBRC. To make searching available for our endusers, we provide Prosearch software. The software is very user-friendly. We do, however, require both students and faculty to attend a short training seminar before beginning to use it. We also provide some back-up support in the form of trained graduate student assistants who also monitor usage (this costs money per connect hour, per record downloaded or printed, etc.). Within a very short period of time most graduate students (and even most faculty) become proficient at accessing the databases with minimal assistance.

Among the business, economic and demographic databases most in demand at the GBRC are the PTS family of databases (Forecasts, Times Series, and Annual Reports Abstracts as well as the bibliographic database PROMT - excellent for market share information, and MARS - useful for targeting advertising audiences). In addition, students and faculty make great use of Donnelly Demographics and Cendata for additional demographic information (see figure #7).

In order to use Prosearch, the researcher merely highlights the desired category and subject by using the up and down keys and the return key. By the way, all of this is done while offline, so no charges are accumulating for typing time. Once the researcher has selected a subject, he or she selects a database from the "catalog cards" screen (see figure #8) and enters the search request on a grid designed to enter fields with the mere touch of a key. The researcher uses Boolean connectors in the usual way and, when the request is complete, connects automatically to Dialog or BRS by simply hitting the F5 key. Although we often send our students to the Library to use the PTS print sources, their ability to use Boolean logic easily through Prosearch greatly enhances their chances of finding the exact statistical or demographic table they need.

Graphic Presentations

We have also begun to make software available for our students to analyse and present the data they've found. Although we do not teach the use of Lotus 1-2-3 and other statistical packages, we do have a copy available for knowledgeable students to use. We also provide access to a plotter, laser printers, and a scanner which our students use to create graphic representations of their findings (see figure #9).

CD Roms

At present, the GBRC provides access to both Standard and Poor's Corporations and Disclosure in addition to bibliographic databases in CD Rom format. Once again, having this prepaid data allows us to make it available to a much wider audience. Instead of being limited to online searching for thesis, dissertation, or publication purposes, all our constituents may access this business and financial data at any time. We hope in the near future to enhance our capabilities through the acquisition of a new CD Rom product, Lotus One Source which contains both the data our students need and Lotus 1-2-3 on a single laser disk. Another anticipated acquisition is Batelle's America 2000 software package which will enable the students to make economic projections based on extensive data included in the package.

In sum, there is quite a bit of data in the fields of business and economics which can be made available to the novice user who does not require raw data or anything very sophisticated in the way of data manipulation. The way to get this data to the user is threefold: publicity, teaching, and availability. Through our publications, training sessions, and consultations, we at the Graduate Business Resource Center try to give our students access to the data they need and, more importantly, the skills to continue to meet their own requirements for information.□

Illustration 1

BARUCH
COLLEGE
LIBRARY
GB
RC
GRADUATE
BUSINESS
RESOURCE
CENTER

News Alert

October 13, 1988
Telephone: 725-7114
Editor: Roha Ostrow

GBRC Announces Fall Programs, Services and Hours

Welcome to the fall 1988 semester! The Graduate Business Resource Center plans a series of workshops and new services designed to meet specific research needs.

Workshops

Online Information for Endusers

Learn to access *Dialog* databases online without the assistance of a professional intermediary. Participants receive training, hands-on experience, and access to online information. Professor Ida Lowe will conduct all seminars in Room 1224, 360 Park Avenue South. Workshops are open to all Baruch faculty and graduate students.

Dates and Times

Friday, October 21, 1988
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Friday, November 4, 1988
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 8, 1988
3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

To register, please complete the attached application and mail to: Professor Ida Lowe, GBRC, Box 262, or phone 725-7114.

Fall Hours

Monday-Thursday 9:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Friday 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Saturday 2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

The GBRC is not open when the College is closed. On days when there are no classes, but the College is open, the GBRC will close at 4:00 p.m. The Information Lab will not, at present, be open on Saturdays.

CD ROM Demonstrations

The newest innovation in information technology is the database in compact optical disk format (CD ROMs). Now, without professional assistance, any researcher may access both bibliographic and informational databases free of charge.

Currently available CD ROM databases at the GBRC include *Compact Disclosure*, *PsycLIT*, *ABI-INFORM*, *ERIC*, and *Standard & Poor's Corporations*.

Professor Ida Lowe will demonstrate how CD Roms can benefit research in a series of programs to be given at the GBRC, Room 1224, 360 Park Avenue South. The programs are open to all Baruch faculty and graduate students.

Dates and Times

General Introduction to CD ROM Databases

Thursday, October 20, 1988
12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Business Information on CD ROM: ABI-Inform and PsycLIT

Thursday, November 3, 1988
12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Social Sciences Information on CD ROM: Eric and PsycLIT

Thursday, November 17, 1988
12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Corporate Directories on CD ROM: Disclosure and Standard & Poor's

Thursday, December 1, 1988
12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. (over)

Illustration 2

BARUCH
COLLEGE
LIBRARY



GRADUATE
BUSINESS
RESOURCE
CENTER

News Alert

March 20, 1986
Telephone: 725-3381
Editors: T. Atkins
R. Ostrow

1985 GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEYS

The 1985 General Social Surveys (GSS) are here. Produced by the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center (NORC), the General Social Surveys provide a cross-sectional sample of the United States adult population. The data has been collected almost every year since 1972 (no survey was done in 1979 or 1981).

The surveys are based on a 300 question interview which identifies respondents' attitudes and opinions on such issues as the family, social mobility, social control, race relations, sexual mores, and national morale. This high quality data is used for research and instruction in many fields including sociology, marketing, psychology, and consumer behavior. In 1982 the National Opinion Research Center oversampled the black population, thus providing an excellent data set for studying this minority group.

This data set is now available in machine-

readable format on computer tape at the CUNY/UCC. It is a cumulative data file, with each annual survey contained in a separate subfile. Merging all 12 yearly files greatly simplifies the use of the General Social Surveys for trend analysis of specific questions. Subsets of the data may be created for research or instructional purposes. The subsets may be used on the mainframe, either on tape or on disk, or downloaded for use with microcomputers. Special data modules may be prepared for student exercises and classroom work using these files.




In order to access the data, you will need the following information for Tape CDA 115: File 1 is the raw datafile; file 2 is a set of SPSS control cards; file 3 contains the SPSS control cards for the first half of the data; file 4 is the SPSS control cards for the second half of the data; and file 5 is a file of SPSSX control cards for the data.

CONTENTS OF TAPE VOLUME - CDA 115

//FILE NUMBER	DSNAME	RECFM	LRECL	BLKSIZE	BLOCK EST.	
					COUNT	FEET
1	ICPSR.GSS8435.A	FB	80	32000	744	337.1
2	ICPSR.GSS8435.B	FB	80	5120	37	4.3
3	ICPSR.GSS8435.C	FB	80	5120	22	3.1
4	ICPSR.GSS8435.D	FB	80	5120	17	2.6
5	ICPSR.GSS8435.E	FB	80	5120	37	4.3

Illustration 3

Figure #3: Sample page of an Access Guide.

<p>▶ Proximity Operators Proximity operators specify relationships between terms.</p> <p>Operator: Relationship: w# First term within # words of second. pre# First term precedes second by exactly # words. w#eq Both terms present in same database field.</p> <p>EXAMPLES: communications w/7 satellite federal pre7 commission jan w#eq 1987</p> <p>▶ Searching by Field To search for a term only within a specific database field, type the field name (or abbreviation). Then enclose the term in parentheses (). Most commonly used field names and abbreviations.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Title</td> <td>TI</td> <td>Duns</td> <td>DU</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Journal</td> <td>JO</td> <td>Terms</td> <td>TE</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jrnlcode</td> <td>JR</td> <td>Codes</td> <td>CD</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Date</td> <td>DA</td> <td>Abstract</td> <td>AB</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Company</td> <td>CO</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>EXAMPLES: company (sears) terms (direct mail) CO (Glucorp) JO (Forbes)</p> <p>▶ Search Sets Search sets can be reused and combined by using the set number enclosed in square brackets [].</p>	Title	TI	Duns	DU	Journal	JO	Terms	TE	Jrnlcode	JR	Codes	CD	Date	DA	Abstract	AB	Company	CO			<p>#40 HOW TO USE The ABI-INFORM BUSINESS DATABASE</p> <p>Prepared by Ida Lowe 1988</p> <p>▶ Complex Search Expressions Use parentheses () to group terms.</p> <p>EXAMPLES oil spills and (litigation or torts) (interactive w/10 (video or videodisc) and retail)</p> <p>IMPORTANT KEYS</p> <p>[F1] HELP. Opens and closes HELP windows. HELP windows are specific to the user's current location in the program.</p> <p>[F2] COMMANDS. Press F2 repeatedly to see all of the active commands on the bottom line of the screen.</p> <p>[F3] SEARCH. Press [F3] to begin a new search or modify the current search.</p> <p>[F4] PRINT. Prints the current item or the title list.</p> <p>[F10] RESTART. Clears all previous searches and returns to the Main Menu.</p> <p> PREVIOUS SEARCH. Allows return to a previous search exactly where it terminated.</p> <p> CHANGEDISC. Allows change to any UMI CD-ROM disc.</p> <p> ENTER. Completes entry and moves forward through the program.</p> <p>[ESC] GOBACK. Moves backward through the program — retracing steps.</p>
Title	TI	Duns	DU																		
Journal	JO	Terms	TE																		
Jrnlcode	JR	Codes	CD																		
Date	DA	Abstract	AB																		
Company	CO																				

Manager and Editor of Library Publications, Mary O'Connell

Illustration 4

Figure #4: Disclosure Database (Spectrum Ownership)

DISCLOSURE		INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MACHINES CORP INSTITUTIONAL OWNERS		
RANK	NAME	SHARES HELD	LATEST QTR CHANGE	FILING DATE
1	WELLS FARGO BANK N.A.	9,543,720	-1,205,830	06/30/87
2	MORGAN J P & CO INC	8,533,000	-271,000	06/30/87
3	BANKERS TRUST N Y CORP	7,990,373	-253,664	06/30/87
4	COLLEGE RETIRE EQUITIES	7,785,100	-124,600	06/30/87
5	BERNSTEIN SANFORD C & CO	5,773,247	69,055	06/30/87
6	MELLON BANK CORPORATION	5,675,094	-169,164	06/30/87
7	MICHIGAN STATE TREASURER	5,496,029	557,000	06/30/87
8	NEW YORK ST COMMON RET.	5,175,000	-111,000	06/30/87
9	WELLINGTON/THORNDIKE	4,564,513	-709,284	06/30/87
10	CHASE MANHATTAN CORP	4,311,346	-10,225	06/30/87
11	CAPITAL GUARDIAN TRUST	4,068,000	-39,200	03/31/87
12	CAPITAL RESEARCH & MGMT	3,447,700	30,000	06/30/87
13	ALLIANCE CAPITAL MGMT	3,321,999	-879,861	06/30/87
14	STATE STREET BOSTON CORP	3,295,125	62,008	03/31/87
15	PNC FINANCIAL CORP	3,135,723	-293,795	06/30/87
16	CALIF PUBLIC EMPL RETIRM	3,099,100	-26,500	03/31/87
17	MANUFACTURERS HANOVER TR	3,032,505	-177,552	06/30/87

Illustration 5

Figure #5: "Quicksearch" start-up screen.

QUICKSEARCH

COPYRIGHT (C) 1987
DOW JONES & COMPANY, INC.

An automated method for accessing
quotes, company news, financial data and
profile information from eight
News/Retrieval services

Press To

- 1 Search by company stock symbol
- 2 Access a QuickSearch help menu

Or enter as much of the company name as
you're sure of and press return
ibm

END

PRESS FOR

- 1 IBM CREDIT CORP.

OR ENTER ANOTHER NAME OR /T FOR TOP

Illustration 6

Figure #6: Part of a Dow Jones News/Retrieval Quicksearch.

DOW JONES QUICKSEARCH
IBM CREDIT CORP.

PRESS FOR

- 1 CURRENT QUOTES - N/A
- 2 LATEST NEWS ON D.I.A.D - N/A
- 3 FINANCIAL AND MARKET OVERVIEW - N/A
- 4 EARNINGS ESTIMATES + N/A
- 5 COMPANY VS INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE - N/A
- 6 INCOME STATEMENTS, BAL SHEETS
- 7 COMPANY PROFILE
- 8 INSIDER TRADING SUMMARY - N/A
- 9 INVESTMENT RESEARCH REPORTS - N/A

TYPE PRINT FOLLOWED BY ITEM NUMBERS, SEPARATED BY COMMAS, TO PRINT
SELECTED SECTIONS OF THE REPORT AT REGULAR USAGE RATES.
EXAMPLE: PRINT 1,3,9

PRESS RETURN FOR INSTRUCTIONS AND PRICING INFORMATION.

all

DISCLOSURE	FIVE YEAR SUMMARY		IBM CREDIT CORP	
YEAR	SALES	NET INCOME	EPS	
1986	640,147,000	118,118,000	1.41	
1985	504,176,000	103,033,000	1.46	
1984	296,429,000	63,691,000	1.42	
1983	182,655,000	41,670,000	1.40	
1982	118,017,000	31,274,000	1.39	
*5-YR GROWTH RATE (%)	110.6	69.4	0.4	

DISCLOSURE	INCOME STATEMENT		IBM CREDIT CORP	
QUARTERLY REPORT FOR:	03/31/87			
NET SALES	164,993,000			
COST OF GOODS	110,689,000			
GROSS PROFIT	54,303,000			
R & D EXPENDITURES	NA			
SELL GEN & ADMIN EXP	20,813,000			
INC BEP DEP & AMORT	33,490,000			
DEPRECIATION & AMORT	NA			
NON-OPERATING INC	NA			
INTEREST EXPENSE	NA			
INCOME BEFORE TAX	33,490,000			
PROV FOR INC TAXES	7,614,000			
MINORITY INT INCOME	NA			
INVEST GAINS/LOSSES	NA			
OTHER INCOME	NA			
NET INC BFF EX ITEMS	25,876,000			
EX ITEMS & DISC OPS	NA			
NET INCOME	25,876,000			
OUTSTANDING SHARES	NA			

Illustration 7

FILE 575

DONNELLEY DEMOGRAPHICS

DIALOG FILE 575

SAMPLE RECORD

DIALOG Accession Number
 005198
 ST. LOUIS CITY MO

LV → Level: CITY
 ST → State: MO
 CV → City or Place: ST. LOUIS CITY MO

	1980 Census	1984 Estimate	% Change 80 to 84	1989 Projection	AG ₁ AP ₁
Total Population	AA → 453,085	440,198	-2.7%	423,019	
Total Households	AG ₁ → 178,048	177,796	-.0%	172,327	
Household Population	AC ₁ → 441,305	430,418	-2.8%	411,239	
Average Household Size	AL → 2.5	2.4	-2.6%	2.4	
Average Household Income	AF → \$11,712	\$14,860	26.9%	\$19,279	AJ ₁ AK ₁ AL ₁

	1980 Census Number	Percent	1984 Estimate	1989 Projection	
TOTAL POPULATION BY AGE	453,085	100.0%	440,198	423,019	
0 - 5	BG → 38,447	8.5%	BL → 38,447	CB → 38,447	8.8%
6 - 13	BC → 49,814	11.0%	BM → 49,814	CC → 49,814	10.9%
14 - 17	BD → 30,175	6.7%	BN → 30,175	CD → 30,175	5.3%
18 - 24	BE → 61,143	13.5%	BP → 61,143	CE → 61,143	10.3%
25 - 34	BF → 64,774	14.3%	BQ → 64,774	CF → 64,774	17.3%
35 - 44	BG → 37,347	8.2%	BR → 37,347	CG → 37,347	12.5%
45 - 54	BH → 42,939	9.5%	BS → 42,939	CH → 42,939	7.9%
55 - 64	BI → 48,526	10.7%	BT → 48,526	CI → 48,526	9.0%
65 +	BK → 79,920	17.6%	BU → 79,920	CU → 79,920	18.1%
FEMALE POPULATION BY AGE	249,293	100.0%	241,490	230,645	
0 - 5	19,065	7.6%	19,065	19,065	7.8%
6 - 13	24,568	9.9%	24,568	24,568	9.9%
14 - 17	15,078	6.0%	15,078	15,078	4.9%
18 - 24	32,362	13.0%	32,362	32,362	9.4%
25 - 34	33,704	13.5%	33,704	33,704	16.5%
35 - 44	20,385	8.2%	20,385	20,385	12.0%
45 - 54	24,043	9.6%	24,043	24,043	8.0%
55 - 64	28,068	11.3%	28,068	28,068	9.5%
65 +	52,020	20.9%	52,020	52,020	22.0%
MALE POPULATION BY AGE	203,792	100.0%	198,708	192,374	
0 - 5	19,382	9.5%	19,382	19,382	9.8%
6 - 13	25,246	12.4%	25,246	25,246	12.2%
14 - 17	15,097	7.4%	15,097	15,097	5.9%
18 - 24	28,781	14.1%	28,781	28,781	11.3%
25 - 34	31,070	15.2%	31,070	31,070	18.2%
35 - 44	16,962	8.3%	16,962	16,962	13.0%
45 - 54	18,896	9.3%	18,896	18,896	7.8%
55 - 64	20,458	10.0%	20,458	20,458	8.3%
65 +	27,900	13.7%	27,900	27,900	13.4%
Median Age Total Population	31.6		32.4	31.5	
Median Age Adult Population	45.9		44.0	42.9	
TOTAL POPULATION	453,085	100.0%	440,198	423,019	
White	DA → 242,576	53.5%	DE → 242,576	DE → 242,576	49.7%
Black	DB → 206,386	45.6%	DF → 206,386	DF → 206,386	49.2%
Other	DC → 4,123	.9%	DG → 4,123	DG → 4,123	1.1%
Spanish	DD → 5,531	1.2%	DH → 5,531	DH → 5,531	1.2%
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
\$ 0 - \$ 7,499	EA → 59,999	33.6%	EJ → 59,999	ES → 59,999	19.8%
\$ 7,500 - \$ 9,999	EB → 18,776	10.5%	EK → 18,776	ET → 18,776	6.4%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	EC → 30,501	17.1%	EL → 30,501	EU → 30,501	12.1%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	ED → 40,518	22.7%	EM → 40,518	EV → 40,518	27.3%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	EE → 18,080	10.1%	EN → 18,080	LW → 18,080	20.1%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	EF → 7,382	4.1%	EO → 7,382	EX → 7,382	10.2%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	EG → 2,316	1.3%	EQ → 2,316	FY → 2,316	3.1%
\$75,000 +	EH → 878	.5%	ER → 878	LZ → 878	1.1%

Illustration 8

Figure #8: Prosearch selection screens.

The Database Selection Screen

After you select the high-level interface, the Database Selection screen appears:

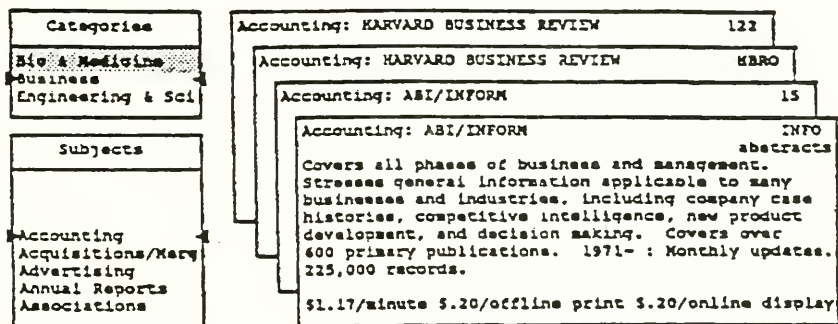


Illustration 9

Figure #9: An example of student graphics completed at the GASC.

Ques 8: Product Selection of Consumers

