

Book Notes

Books & Authors Creates Bookshelf Of Dreams

(NAPSA)—For many book-lovers, the volume of titles flying off the presses every year inspires awe—and also some small degree of alarm.

More than 42,000 titles rolled into print in 2006—in adult fiction alone. That figure represents a 17 percent increase over 2005 releases and is four times the number in 2003. It's an embarrassment of riches for any booklover, and one that's making it harder for independent-minded readers to find the gems they're looking for in the growing bounty.

A decade or so ago, anyone who craved fare beyond the author or genre du jour could check out the corner bookstore or local library for a menu of unconventional options.

But the realities of contemporary life have made serendipitous finds in the bookstore aisles or library stacks difficult—who, after all, has time to drive to a store or library, park, wander and then purchase?

Oprah Winfrey has done much to bring unknown authors, under-read classics and unfamiliar genres out of obscurity. But even Oprah can only do so much.

That's where a new Web-based subscription database called Books & Authors (<http://books.wiseto.com>) can help. The service, developed by Gale, offers numerous ways to mine published titles—such as by genre, theme, author, topic, title, etc.—all at Internet speed. For Gale, the database represents an innovative extension of its acclaimed What Do I Read Next? print series to the Web and to a wider universe of avid readers.

The service features easy-to-follow menus that let users



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broaden and narrow their searches according to author, title or series, awards or other criteria. An “if you like” search connects readers to the themes and genres that may have otherwise gone unnoticed.

Most important is the service's capacity to foster communities of like-minded readers. Users can communicate with—and get recommendations from—those who share their specific interests.

Ideal for reading groups and book clubs, Books & Authors is also a valuable tool for libraries. By engaging readers in an interactive search, patrons are able to explore the shelves of their local library and ultimately return to the library time and time again.

This means they will never have to sit through another discussion of a “consensus” book they have absolutely no interest in reading or talking about. It also means many fresh opportunities for discovering new books and for sharing them with friends. For more information, visit <http://books.wiseto.com>.