The Persée Digital Library
www.persee.fr, Accessed 24 February 2014
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Persée, a digital repository of scientific journals, is a collaborative effort between the French government and several French institutions. The Ministry of Higher Education and Research of France and the University of Lyon initiated the project in 2003. Development of the repository continued until 2004 and the Persée Portal, the main interface, was launched in 2005. Improvements were made continuously thereafter and by 2007 over 100,000 documents had been made accessible online. The University of Lyon has maintained involvement in the project and it currently serves as the location of the team members responsible for program development, digitization, processing and several other functions. The National Computer Center for Higher Education (CINES) is tasked with preserving and maintaining the digital files and a monitoring committee, made up of information professionals and academics, also oversees Persée.

As a service Persée has a set of objectives that include the promotion and facilitation of scientific publications written in the French language. The term "scientific" is used here rather traditionally as the journals and proceedings found in this repository, while treating topics within the sciences, including anthropology, linguistics and psychology, also cover subjects such as philosophy, history and literary theory. These journals are grouped within two main sections, each found in the website's tab structure: Scientific Journals and Proceedings & Series. According to Persée, over 108 journals have been made accessible to date, which account for most of the 350,000 documents found on the site. Of the latter number, nearly 140,000 are scientific articles, of which around 14,000 have accompanying audio versions.

One benefit for the user of Persée is the variety of journals that are offered, which, as mentioned, treat a wide range of subjects and disciplines. The scope of the publication dates is also broad, ranging from the mid nineteenth century to the present. Another strong point is the advanced search ("Refine search") and sorting features. These can limit or expand a search via expected fields, such as publication, format, date and subject, but they can also account for image restrictions, accessibility and aspects of the resource that would be specifically desired. Additionally, a search scope tool can sort results down to a particular journal or item.

Access to the Persée database is free to everyone, but there is also an option to create an account, which is also free. Doing so gives the user access to features such as bookmarking, notation tools and comment/tagging capabilities. One of these, the notation tools, is a unique and potentially quite useful feature. At the article level, a user can make

annotations in relation to the item being viewed. These annotations can be accessed by returning to any article and accessing the annotations tool. The user can also access, when navigating any part of the site, a light-blue box icon that remains floating along the right-hand border of each page. Clicking on this box brings up a menu displaying multiple tabs, one being "Notes". Within this tab are stored all annotations made by the user at the article level.

In respect to similar resources, some comparisons can be made with Persée in relation to access and usability. Taking JSTOR and Project Muse as examples, these sites prominently display subject headings on their home pages. Persée does not offer such a display, with general subject headings eventually being found within the advanced search feature. The scope of these headings is minimal yet does seem to capture the relatively specialized subject areas. Similar to JSTOR, the entire set of journals and proceedings found in Persée are grouped under these headings, which could greatly benefit an advanced search attempting to sort from multiple publications. If performing a reference role, this aspect of the site may be of the most benefit to the archivist.

There are, though, several issues which may make the use of Persée difficult. The first to note is the language barrier: often, when engaging with the site, the ability to read French can be necessary. The site does offer an easily accessible feature that will translate French text into either English or Spanish. Yet, when this feature is activated it does not produce consistent results and certain areas of the site will remain untranslated. Perhaps nullifying this issue is the likelihood that Persée primarily attracts French-reading users.

Another issue to note is found In the Proceeding & Series section, where several reports and journals are accessible, each with its own landing page that displays available issues. When navigating to particular journal issues, it is not immediately apparent that full access is possible. Once at the issue level, the user is presented with a page of metadata including an image of the cover. Hovering the mouse over the fields or image of the cover reveals nothing: the mouse pointer does not change form. Yet, the issue cover is a link that leads to another page, which does provide access to article PDFs.

Weighing the favorable and unfavorable aspects mentioned in this review, Persée should ultimately be considered a valuable and useful resource. The digital library does fulfill its main purpose, to make accessible French scientific journals, and it does this while providing some tools that are beneficial to the user as researcher. Confronting the potential barriers to access is that they are for the most part superficial and could be overcome by most members of the target audience.