Developing direct links

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Business information comes in many forms. The authors of RUSA's *Business Research Competencies* cite the importance of understanding the different types of sources unique to business (Reference and User Services Association, 2019). Indeed, vendors of academic business databases often include a wide range of resources including valuable third-party content such as company and industry reports along with more traditional material—think periodical articles. For example, ProQuest includes *First Research Industry Profiles* within its *ABI/INFORM Collection* database. RUSA's competencies also go on to state how business information can be formatted or presented in a way that hinders discovery and access. Although academic business databases from EBSCO, ProQuest, and others include useful company, industry, and country reports, this information can sometimes be difficult to uncover.

At California State University Monterey Bay, library users have access to two popular business databases—EBSCO's *Business Source Premier* (*BSP*) ProQuest's *ABI/INFORM Collection* (*ABI*). Both databases provide access to unique third-party content. To aid discovery, *ABI* and *BSP* provide pre-search limits and post-search filters. For example, using *BSP*'s Advanced Search screen, searchers can use checkboxes to limit to Company Report under Document Type as well as Country Report and Industry Profile under Publication Type to retrieve content such as *MarketLine Company*, *Country*, and *Industry Profiles*.

Pre-search limits and post-search filters appear, at first glance, promising. In practice, however, the quality of results can be mixed. Users often need to add further limits to help filter out unnecessary items. For example, limiting to full text and excluding international coverage.

That said, business librarians can create another search option—direct linking. Instead of having users click on a database, use pre-search limits or post-search filters, then sift through results, searchers, with one click on a direct link, can be taken to a specific type of report. The user can then search just within that one source.

Direct linking provides several benefits. For the researcher, it provides another search option. For the business librarian, it builds greater awareness of third-party content that's often squirreled away within databases. With this knowledge, librarians can more clearly identify collection strengths and weaknesses. Direct linking also promotes ease of discovery while highlighting and promoting specific resources (a benefit closely aligned with understanding the traits of sources and content, a key skill cited in RUSA's *Business Research Competencies*).

At CSUMB library, direct links have been created and added to business courses and business subject LibGuides. Currently, guides directly link to over twenty different full-text sources. Table 1 lists the direct-linked resources we use from *ABI* and *BSP*.

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Table 1: Direct linked resources

Title	Content type	Packaged in…
Barnes U.S. Industry & Market Reports	Industry	ABI/INFORM Collection
Barnes World Industry & Market Reports	Industry	ABI/INFORM Collection
Acquisdata Company SnapShot Reports	Company	ABI/INFORM Collection
Country Economic Forecasts	Country	ABI/INFORM Collection
EIU Country Data	Country	ABI/INFORM Collection
EIU Country Finance & Forecast Reports	Country	ABI/INFORM Collection
EIU ViewsWire	Country	ABI/INFORM Collection
Fair Disclosure Wire	Company	ABI/INFORM Collection
First Research Industry Profiles	Industry	ABI/INFORM Collection
Fitch Solutions Country Industry Reports	Industry	ABI/INFORM Collection
Fitch Solutions Risk Reports	Country	ABI/INFORM Collection
Global Industry Snapshots	Industry	ABI/INFORM Collection
GlobalData Company Profiles	Company	ABI/INFORM Collection
GlobalData Deals and Alliances Profiles	Company	ABI/INFORM Collection
IHS Country Monitor Reports	Country	Business Source Premier
MarketLine Company Profiles	Company	Business Source Premier
MarketLine Country Profiles	Country	Business Source Premier
MarketLine Industry Profiles	Industry	Business Source Premier
OECD Economic Surveys	Country	Business Source Premier
Oxford Economics Country Economic Forecasts	Country	ABI/INFORM Collection
Oxford Economics Country Industry Forecasts	Industry	ABI/INFORM Collection
Plunkett Analytics Industry Reports	Industry	ABI/INFORM Collection
Plunkett Corporate Benchmarking Reports	Company	ABI/INFORM Collection
Political Risk Services Country Reports	Country	Business Source Premier

Direct links often take users to the publication description and search page. For example, clicking on the *First Research Industry Profiles* link on the CSUMB library's Industries subject research guide displays *ABI's First Research Industry Profiles* search page (see figure 1). There, a user can search by company name, industry keyword, or other search terms.
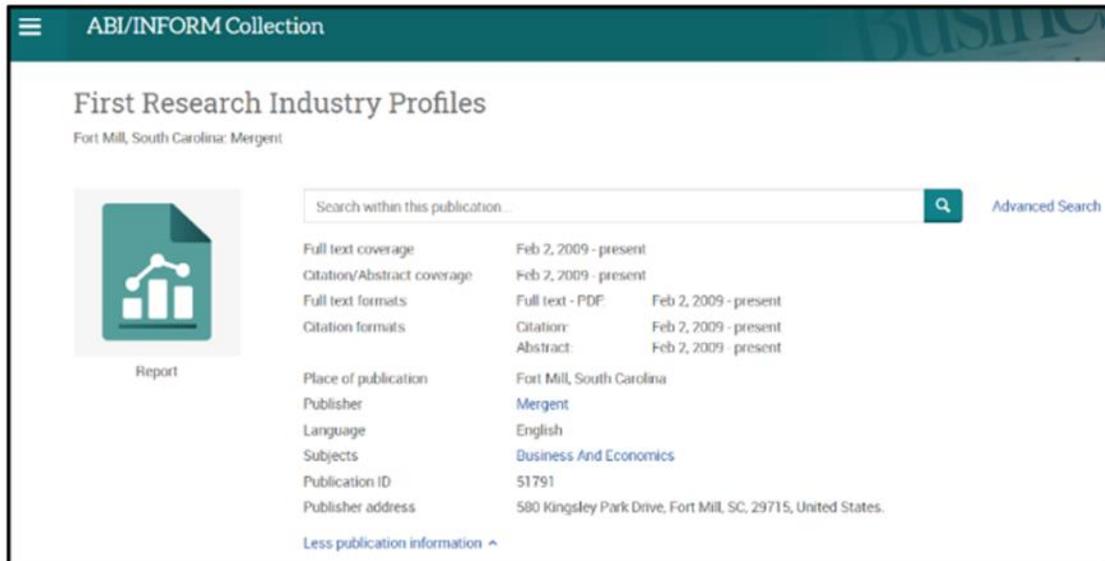

Figure 1. First Research Industry Profiles search page

The process of creating direct links can be easy or difficult, depending on the resource being linked. In the case of *First Research Industry Profiles*, using the Copy URL button on the *First Research Industry Profiles* page provides the direct link (see figure 2).
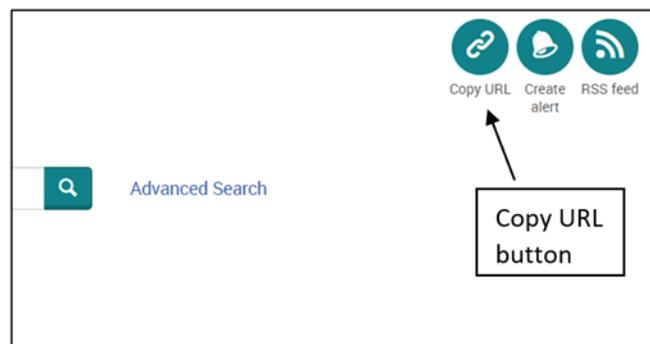

Figure 2. Copy URL button

ABI's Copy URL often works well, but not always. For example, the *ABI* publication search page for *Plunkett's Analytics Industry Reports* (*PAIR)* focuses on single industries (e.g., Rubber Product Manufacturing) making a direct link much less useful. In situations like this, librarians can create a pre-structured search link. For example, the direct link for *PAIR* was created to take users to the results of a Publication Title search on *Plunkett Analytics*. In the search box users can then add a company or industry keyword to help narrow the search within the

Plunkett results. For instance, adding the word "tesla" filters the results from over 3,900 Plunkett reports to eighteen (see figure 3).
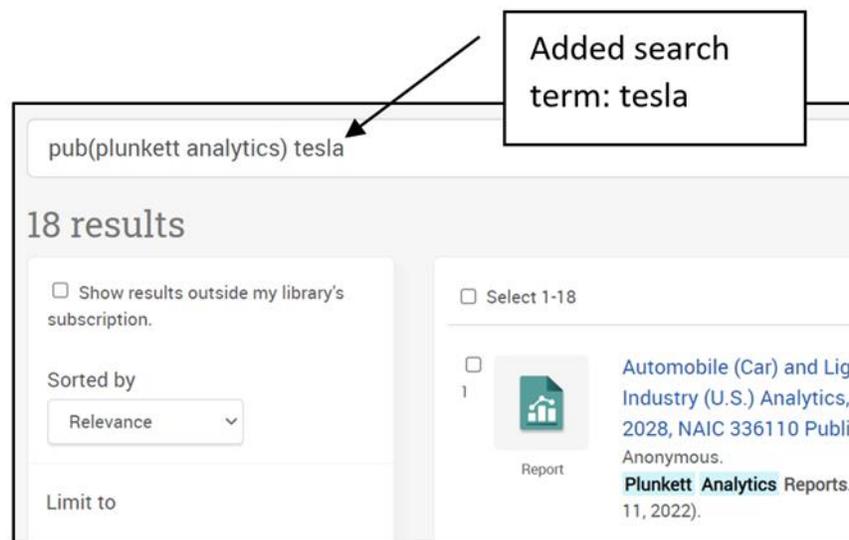

Figure 3. Adding search term Tesla

In *BSP*, users can use the results page Share link with its Permalink option to copy the direct link for a pre-structured search. This technique was used to create direct links for *MarketLine Country* and *MarketLine Industry Profiles*.

Creating a pre-structured search link in *ABI* requires extra steps since initial search links are temporary. To create a more permanent link, developers need to first save the search in their ProQuest MyResearch Account. Then, the new link created in their MyResearch Account, which can be copied, should be durable.

Obviously, it's up to librarians to decide on whether or not to create, include, and promote direct links within library business information guides. Librarians at large   institutions with access to more resources, may not see a need. On the other hand, librarians at small to medium size libraries with limited business resources may find more direct access as well as increased visibility of specialized vendor content helpful for their users (and librarians).

References

Reference and User Services Association. (2019). *Business Research Competencies*. https://tinyurl.com/2ars9j2w