

Google makes books available online

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Google said Thursday it will make public-domain books available on its Web site -- but said it would limit access to any copyrighted material for now.

The Internet search-engine group said that out-of-copyright books from the libraries of the University of Michigan as well as Harvard and Stanford universities and the New York Public Library have been scanned and will be available on Google Print.

"Think of the doors it will open for students; geographical distance will no longer hamper research," Mary Sue Coleman, president of the University of Michigan, said in a news release.

Google said the material being offered now represents "just a small fraction of the information that will eventually be made available as a result of Google Print."

The company did not address how it would respond to issues of copyright if it goes ahead with plans to offer online versions of more current books. Google said in its online blog this week it would resume scanning of in-copyright works.

In the initial version of Google Print, which is integrated into the Google search engine, users can search the full text books Google has scanned and view a "card catalog-like entry with brief excerpts of their search term in context."

"Our goal is to make these public domain books and the knowledge within them accessible to the world," stated Susan Wojcicki, vice president of product management at Google.

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