

Butterworths Guides to Information Sources

Information Sources in

Economics

Second edition

Editor

John Fletcher, BA (Econ), MA, ALA

Butterworths Guides to Information

Information Sources in

Economics

Second edition

Editor

John Fletcher, BA (Econ), MA, ALA
Librarian, Lanchester Library,
Coventry (Lanchester) Polytechnic

Butterworths

London Boston Durban

Singapore Sydney Toronto Wellington

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying and recording, without the written permission of the copyright holder, application for which should be addressed to the Publishers. Such written permission must also be obtained before any part of this publication is stored in a retrieval system of any nature.

This book is sold subject to the Standard Conditions of Sale of Net Books and may not be re-sold in the UK below the net price given by the Publishers in their current price list.

First published as *The Use of Economics Literature* 1971
Second edition as *Information Sources in Economics* 1984

© Butterworth & Co (Publishers) Ltd 1984

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Information sources in economics.—2nd ed.—

(Butterworth guides to information sources)

1. Economics—Bibliography

2. Economics—Information services

I. Fletcher, J., 1931- II. The Use of economics literature
330'.07 HB63

ISBN 0-408-11471-1

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Main entry under title:

Information sources in economics.

(Butterworths guides to information sources)

Rev. ed. of: *The Use of economics literature.*

1971. Includes index.

1. Economics literature--Addresses, essays, lectures.

I. Fletcher, John, 1931- II. Use of economics
literature. III. Series.

HB71.153 1984 016.33 83-25230

ISBN 0-408-11471-1

Series editors' foreword

Daniel Bell has made it clear in his book *The Post-Industrial Society* that we now live in an age in which information has succeeded raw materials and energy as the primary commodity. We have also seen in recent years the growth of a new discipline, information science. This is in spite of the fact that skill in acquiring and using information has always been one of the distinguishing features of the educated person. As Dr Johnson observed, 'Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it.'

But a new problem faces the modern educated person. We now have an excess of information, and even an excess of sources of information. This is often called the 'information explosion', though it might be more accurately called the 'publication explosion'. Yet it is of a deeper nature than either. The totality of knowledge itself, let alone of theories and opinions about knowledge, seems to have increased to an unbelievable extent, so that the pieces one seeks in order to solve any problem appear to be but a relatively few small straws in a very large haystack. That analogy, however, implies that we are indeed seeking but a few straws. In fact, when information arrives on our desks, we often find those few straws are actually far too big and far too numerous for one person to grasp and use easily. In the jargon used in the information world, efficient retrieval of relevant information often results in information overkill.

Even since writing was invented, it has been a common practice

for men to record and store information; not only facts and figures, but also theories and opinions. The rate of recording accelerated after the invention of printing and moveable type, not because that in itself could increase the amount of recording but because, by making it easy to publish multiple copies of a document and sell them at a profit, recording and distributing information became very lucrative and hence attractive to more people. On the other hand, men and women in whose lives the discovery or the handling of information plays a large part usually devise ways of getting what they want from other people rather than from books in their efforts to avoid information overkill. Conferences, briefings, committee meetings are one means of this; personal contacts through the 'invisible college' and members of one's club are another. While such people do read, some of them voraciously, the reading of published literature, including in this category newspapers as well as books and journals and even watching television, may provide little more than 10% of the total information that they use.

Computers have increased the opportunities, not merely by acting as more efficient stores and providers of certain kinds of information than libraries, but also by manipulating the data they contain in order to synthesize new information. To give a simple illustration, a computer which holds data on commodity prices in the various trading capitals of the world, and also data on currency exchange rates, can be programmed to indicate comparative costs in different places in one single currency. Computerized databases, i.e. stores of bibliographic information, are now well established and quite widely available for anyone to use. Also increasing are the number of databanks, i.e. stores of factual information, which are now generally accessible. Anyone who buys a suitable terminal may be able to arrange to draw information directly from these computer systems for their own purposes; the systems are normally linked to the subscriber by means of the telephone network. Equally, an alternative is now being provided by information supply services such as libraries, more and more of which are introducing terminals as part of their regular services.

The number of sources of information on any topic can therefore be very extensive indeed: publications (in the widest sense), people (experts), specialist organizations from research associations to chambers of commerce, and computer stores. The number of channels by which one can have access to these vast collections of information are also very numerous, ranging from professional literature searchers, via computer intermediaries, to

Citizens' Advice Bureaux, information marketing services and information brokers.

The aim of the Butterworths Guides to Information Sources is to bring all these sources and channels together in a single convenient form and to present a picture of the international scene as it exists in each of the disciplines we plan to cover. Consideration is also being given to volumes that will cover major interdisciplinary areas of what are now sometimes called 'mission-oriented' fields of knowledge. The first stage of the whole project will give greater emphasis to publications and their exploitation, partly because they are so numerous, and partly because more detail is needed to guide them adequately. But it may be that in due course the balance will change, and certainly the balance in each volume will be that which is appropriate to its subject at the time.

The editor of each volume is a person of high standing, with substantial experience of the discipline and of the sources of information in it. With a team of authors of whom each one is a specialist in one aspect of the field, the total volume provides an integrated and highly expert account of the current sources, of all types, in its subject.

D. J. Foskett
Michael Hill

Contributors

Priscilla J. Baines

Head of Economic Affairs Section, Research Division, House of Commons Library

R. D. Collison Black

Professor of Economics, and Head of Department of Economics, Queen's University, Belfast

Eric C. Blake

Formerly Chief Government Publications Officer, British Library of Political and Economic Science, London School of Economics and Political Science

Susan Charles

Lecturer, Department of Economics, Loughborough University of Technology

Robert C. Clements

Senior Library Clerk, Statistical Section, Research Division, House of Commons Library

Charles A. Crossley

Deputy Librarian, University of Bradford

J. A. Downey

Assistant Librarian, Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex

John Fletcher

Librarian, Lanchester Library, Coventry (Lanchester) Polytechnic

Allan Foster

Deputy Librarian, Preston Polytechnic

Peter M. Jackson

Professor of Economics, Head of Department, and Director of Public Sector Economics Research Centre, University of Leicester

C. E. V. Leser

Formerly Professor of Econometrics, University of Leeds

Robert M. Lindley

Professor and Director, Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick

Marcus Miller

Professor of Economics, University of Warwick

David Morris

Reader, Department of Economics, Coventry (Lanchester) Polytechnic

Colin H. Offor

Head of Market and Information Services, Investors in Industry plc

A. J. Rayner

Professor of Agricultural Economics, Department of Economics, University of Nottingham

Alan R. Roe

Senior Lecturer and Chairman, Department of Economics, University of Warwick

Michael Shafe

Deputy Librarian, University of Dundee

G. N. von Tunzelman

University Lecturer in Economics and Fellow of St John's College, University of Cambridge

Paul Weller

Senior Lecturer, Department of Economics, University of Warwick

John Williamson

Institute for International Economics, Washington, DC

Geoffrey E. Wood

Reader in Banking and International Finance, The City University, London

Contents

Series editors' foreword	v
Contributors	ix
1 Introduction <i>John Fletcher</i>	1
2 Libraries and making a literature search <i>John Fletcher</i>	5
3 Using the economics library <i>Charles A. Crossley</i>	16
4 Reference and bibliographic tools <i>Michael Shafe</i>	34
5 Periodicals <i>John Fletcher</i>	56
6 Unpublished material <i>John Fletcher</i>	68
7 Databases and databanks <i>Allan Foster</i>	73
8 British official publications <i>Priscilla J. Baines and Robert C. Clements</i>	96
9 United States government publications <i>J. A. Downey</i>	112

10	International organizations' publications <i>Eric C. Blake</i>	131
11	Statistics sources <i>Colin H. Offor</i>	156
12	General economics <i>John Fletcher</i>	177
13	History of economic thought <i>R. D. Collison Black</i>	187
14	Economic history <i>G. N. von Tunzelman</i>	202
15	Economic theory 1: Macroeconomics <i>Marcus Miller</i> 2: Microeconomics <i>Paul Weller</i>	214 228
16	Econometric theory and method <i>C. E. V. Leser</i>	234
17	Industrial economics <i>David Morris</i>	244
18	Economic development, growth, and planning <i>Alan R. Roe</i>	255
19	Labour economics <i>Robert M. Lindley</i>	267
20	Agricultural economics <i>A. J. Rayner</i>	289
21	Monetary economics <i>Geoffrey E. Wood</i>	299
22	Public sector economics <i>Peter M. Jackson</i>	310
23	International economics <i>John Williamson</i>	317
24	Social economics <i>Susan Charles</i>	325
	Index	333

1 Introduction

John Fletcher

The complexity of the literature used by the researcher on economics subjects, combined with the high growth rate of that literature and the resulting problems of libraries trying to handle it, make life difficult for both the researcher and his librarian. One only needs to scan the types of literature cited by economists to appreciate the breadth of their subject interest: theory, statistical and mathematical methods, government documents, statutes, international agreements, and unpublished working papers and theses are now commonly used alongside the traditional monographs, conference papers, and journal articles.

In the 1950s and 1960s there was a dramatic increase in the output of literature in economics, as in most other disciplines. In the 1970s and 1980s there seems, to the present author, to be a slowing down of the growth rate of economics literature in monograph form, possibly as a result of higher book prices and restricted library budgets, though the journal literature seems to continue to expand rapidly. These features, together with the increasing value placed on the 'grey' literature of unpublished or semi-published material, create problems for the economics librarian.

During the last twenty years, however, we have seen the development of the concept of subject specialist librarians in many large academic and government libraries. These are professional librarians, usually with at least a first degree in their subject in

2 Introduction

addition to their librarianship qualifications, who assist researchers to understand the nature and organization of their literature, to explain and to guide them in the use of the bibliographic tools and services available, and generally to find out what has been written on the researchers' topic. In this context, librarianship is unfortunate in attracting few qualified economists to the profession to carry out this necessary and rewarding work. The economics profession is similarly unfortunate in having few qualified economists as librarians to guide them through the labyrinth of literature and data which are their raw material.

The study of economics, like that of most subjects, has become more specialized: the 'general economists' are rare birds nowadays, and even the least specialized are interested in a group of narrow, but related, subjects. At first sight, specialization appears to help the researcher: by narrowing his field of vision, he reduces the quantity of newly published literature which he must scan to keep up to date with developments in his specialist field. There is, for example, less new material on labour-force participation rates than on labour economics.

Unfortunately, specialization also involves a degree of blinkering, and the recent developments in economics make the economist with literary tunnel vision an inefficient researcher. Techniques are being developed in one specialized area which are also valuable to workers in another: the development economist, for example, cannot afford to ignore the new methods and analyses being used in public finance, international trade, industrial economics, monetary policy, or consumer behaviour, to note just a few related subjects.

Interdisciplinary subjects are also growing up, and these, too, must be watched carefully for new developments which may influence the work being done in economics. Industrial law, industrial psychology, economic sociology, and operational research all have repercussions on economics, as do the more traditional subjects of mathematics, especially statistical mathematics, politics, law, sociology, psychology, and education.

The net result is the bewilderment of the researcher faced with an ocean of material and the need to extract from it the few drops of relevant and useful literature. The first edition of this book, entitled *The Use of Economics Literature*, published in 1971, was the first attempt by librarians and economists jointly to view the literature of economics and provide a guide to it. It is aimed at advanced undergraduate and postgraduate students, and especially those embarking on research projects on subjects partially divorced from their previous experience. More experienced

economists, too, will find its contents of value in indicating recent trends and titles in subjects allied to their own specialization. On the library side, many students of librarianship needing an overview of the literature of one of the social sciences have found much of use in the previous edition.

This new edition follows the pattern of the first very closely: first comes a chapter on the British and American libraries which are strong in economics material, and the best way of tackling a literature search on a new research topic. Following this is a chapter on how libraries are organized, with special reference to economics collections. This chapter aims to assist researchers to make the best use of their local library resources.

Next comes a group of eight chapters on the various kinds of material most used by economists, including bibliographical tools, periodicals, unpublished papers and theses, British and United States government publications, official publications of international organizations, and economic statistics from the United Kingdom, the United States, and some supra-national sources. A new addition to this group is the chapter on bibliographic databases and statistical databanks, a new form of economics literature and data source which has developed since the first edition of the book in 1971. The chapter on statistics sources has also been remodelled since the first edition: in 1971 there were few guides to the sources of statistical data, and no adequate ones, so that chapter had to attempt a brief index to sources of published data. Since then, several excellent guides and services have been produced, so now this chapter reviews them, and only picks out a handful of the major periodical statistics sources.

Lastly, the thirteen chapters on different subject areas within economics are written by experienced and practising economists, and are aimed to give a brief guide to the material available in each subject. Some small changes have been made in the subjects covered in this section to reflect a 1980s approach to the overall subject of economics. These chapters are not intended to be comprehensive reviews of their subjects, nor surveys of the literature, but rather to reflect their author's personal view of that literature, and to note the sources of information and bibliographical tools which (s)he has found most useful. No attempt has been made to impose uniformity on these authors, since the literature of the different fields of study within economics varies widely: in some, like labour economics, journals and data sources are more important than books, whilst the reverse may be true of another subject, such as international economics. Uniformity is thus impossible, and in any case, undesirable.

One other change from the first edition was dictated by the size of the finished product: there is no attempt to cover the American and European literature to the same depth as that of the United Kingdom. The size of the literature of economics is now so great and diverse that it would not be possible to do justice to the whole of the output in a reasonably sized volume. The decision was made, therefore, to concentrate on the most important titles, irrespective of country of origin, and not try to be comprehensive. Inevitably there will be readers who will feel we have committed grave sins of omission in leaving out their favourite textbook or journal. To them, the editor presents his apologies and hopes that they will accept his explanation.

What this book attempts to do, then, is to give economists and would-be economists a guide to three things:

- (1) what material there is on the various branches of the subject, what is important and valuable, and what level it best serves;
- (2) what tools are available to assist the researcher to make a more extensive and intensive survey of the literature of his specialized field;
- (3) where the material can be found.

We hope, too, that it will be found useful as a reference tool, as a source of information on bibliographic tools, periodicals, data-banks, economics libraries, and, above all, on economics books.

2

Libraries and making a literature search

John Fletcher

By the time he graduates, the economics student will have used several different types and sizes of library, from the school library or private collection of a favourite schoolmaster, through the local public library, to the large college or university library. Later in his career he may do research and need to use other academic libraries, or he may enter industry or commerce and use the small special library of his firm, or the industrial research organization.

All these libraries with their varying size and subject coverage have one aim in common: the dissemination of information. Slowly the image of the library as a prison for books, with the librarian as warder, is giving way to the concept of the store of information in many different forms, with the librarian as the guide through the complexities of a large warehouse. In Chapter 3 the organization of a library is examined and advice given on how to make best use of the collection. This chapter surveys the different kinds of library, their aims, contents, and clientèles, and looks in more detail at a few of the libraries specializing in economics literature.

In most countries a law of copyright exists which defines the conditions under which published material may be reproduced, and in recent years this has been extended to cover information held in forms other than the printed word. The same law usually decrees that anyone publishing anything (in the United Kingdom the law includes anything from encyclopaedias to broadsheets) must deposit one copy in the national library. These are known as

'deposit libraries' and in the United Kingdom the British Library is the national library, and in the United States it is the Library of Congress. In addition, organizations such as the government publisher, or the United Nations, may designate other libraries as deposit libraries for their own publications. The British Library of Political and Economic Science at the London School of Economics is a depository for United States government publications, Leeds City Libraries for UNESCO documents. In the United States there are many deposit libraries for government and international organizations' publications.

Basically there are four kinds of library, and this chapter will consider each in turn: national, academic, public, and special. There are differences of size, content, availability, and, above all, users.

National libraries

These are the great libraries, the really large collections of material from books, through pamphlets, periodicals, manuscripts, and maps to the new media such as microfilms, photographs, slides, and films, and now sound and video tapes. The British Museum began book collecting when the Sir Hans Sloane Collection was given to the nation in 1753. Four years later, George II gave the Royal Library, and with it came the copyright deposit. The collection really came alive under Anthony Panizzi, Principal Librarian from 1851 to 1866: he reorganized the stock, and enforced the copyright deposit clause.

In 1973 several national libraries and library services were brought together as the **British Library**, but only two need concern us here. The British Library Reference Division took over the collections, and premises, of (among others) the British Museum Department of Printed Books and its State Paper Room. Nowadays the British Library does not attempt to be comprehensive internationally but collects most books in the English language, and a good percentage of foreign-language books on 'humanistic' subjects. In recent years there has been a definite move by the British Library to encourage use of its business material (including economics) in all its libraries. Like most deposit libraries, the British Library Reference Division does not lend its stock. Admission to the Reading Room is restricted, and researchers must apply for permission to use the Library, a formality in genuine cases of need.

The British Library Lending Division is a unique institution.

Developed from the National Lending Library for Science and Technology, a collection of periodicals, the BLLD has added serious monographs, conference proceedings, and report literature, and widened its subject coverage to approach comprehensiveness. As its name suggests, the Division lends its stock through other libraries, and because its service is primarily a postal one, it can be located in a rural area, Boston Spa in Yorkshire.

National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh

National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth

These two large regional collections are also copyright deposit libraries in that they may request a copy of any book published in the United Kingdom. Both are strong in regional archival and printed material, and old established: the Scottish library grew out of the Advocates' Library founded in 1682. Admission to the collections is restricted in a similar way to the British Library. Both libraries are in the 2-4 million volume range, with extensive manuscript and special collections. Regional material and humanistic subjects predominate, and there is a wealth of historical raw material.

Library of Congress

This is possibly the world's largest library, with about eighty million items, of which about twenty million are books. The strongest subjects are law, history, and the social sciences, and there are many special collections.

Academic libraries

This term can be applied to a wide range of libraries, from the large collections of Cambridge University Library and the Bodleian Library at Oxford (both deposit libraries on demand) to the small specialized libraries of colleges of education. Here, however, the main concern is with university libraries. The university libraries of Oxford, Cambridge, and London apart (*see* pp. 9-10). British university libraries fall into three broad groups by size and age. First come the old established provincial universities with between one and three million volumes: Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow, and Edinburgh Universities,