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Access to Moving Image Collections

Assignment 1 # Comparing reference tools

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In this assignment, *The Birth of a Nation* is the first choice that I select to look up in the reference tools. It is a silent movie in black and white about the living of American people in Civil War and Reconstruction directed by David Llewelyn Wark Griffith in 1915. It becomes one of the most famous films and is ranked 44th in the 100 Greatest Movies of the American Film Institute's list.¹ *Ang Lee* is another choice for my assignment. He is a Taiwanese contemporary filmmaker who is winners and nominees of many film awards around the world: the best director winner from Golden Globe Award in 2001 and 2006, the best director winner from Academy Awards in 2006, and the Golden Palm nominee from Cannes Film Festival in 1997 and 2009.

After looking up in both reference tools, I found that the online sources are more accessible than the print. When I applied the online reference tools, I could select the appropriate categories as I wanted to search: title, director, or keyword. While using the print reference tools was quite confused, because there were only brief subjects on the content without detailed. Sometimes I could not find any data in the print reference works, though it is arranged alphabetically, so I solved this problem by using index which got the results as follow:

¹ American Film Institute, *AFI's 100 Years...100 Movies*, 2005,

<http://www.afi.com/100Years/movies.aspx> (October, 2, 2011).

Reference Tools	Results	
	<i>The Birth of a Nation</i>	<i>Ang Lee</i>
<u>Print reference sources</u>		
• Retrospective Index to Film Periodicals 1930-1971	11 lists (p.17)	-
• Film Review Index	64 lists (p.28-29)	-
• The New Film Index: a Bibliography of Magazine Articles in English, 1930-1970	-	-
• The Film Index: a Bibliography	22 lists (p.685, 718, 845)	-
• A Guide to Critical Reviews, part IV: The Screenplay	-	-
• Motion Picture Performers: a Bibliography of Magazine and Periodical Articles, 1960-1969	-	-
<u>Online reference sources</u>		
• FIAF International Index to Film Periodicals – full text	64 lists	288 lists
• Film Index International	77 lists	72 lists
• Film & Television Literature Index with Full Text	212 lists	887 lists

From the table, results of *The Birth of a Nation* were found in three print reference sources: *Retrospective index to film periodicals 1930-1971*, *Film review index*, and *The film index: a bibliography* while no result in print format from searching *Ang Lee*. On the contrary, *Ang Lee* has more results than *The Birth of a Nation* in online reference sources.

In my view, these results are not surprising as *The Birth of a Nation* is released in 1915 which corresponds to the period of time in print sources, while *Ang Lee* were found in online sources very much because his life is in the time of online media. Although *The Birth of*

a Nation is the film in the silent era, its results appear in online reference sources as well, due to the advantages of online media which can store much data and update information all the time. Therefore, if we need to look up the information of something, the era or period is the first thing that we should consider in order to obtain the correct information and spend less time for working.