ADVISOR REVIEWS—STANDARD REVIEW

Torrossa

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Composite Score: ★★★★

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Abstract

With Torrossa, Casalini Libri has launched a full-text platform that is competitive in the international online academic publishing space. The content of Torrossa is unique: through its *Editoria Italiana Online* (EIO) and various publisher-based collections, it offers the most complete online access to Italian scholarly publications in the Humanities and Social Sciences. More recently, the Italian content has been expanded with the launch of the *Edición Española Online* (EEO) and a number of publisher-based Spanish collections. Though select Italian publishers are developing their own online databases, there is currently no alternative on the market and Torrossa's breadth and quality of content is convincing. On the other hand, the current model of providing low cost access (when considering the price per title) to a number of preselected packages does not permit libraries actively acquiring Italian monographic publications to fully integrate the online offering in their collection development policies. Eventually, it is hoped that forms of approval or demand driven acquisitions plans, as well as title by title selection will become possible. On the technical side, Torrossa is flexible, complex, and fast, and provides a rich array of features that correspond to current standards, though there are glitches that detract from the overall positive experience. In particular, one would expect greater authority control and greater flexibility in the navigation of the site and use of the browser back button.

Pricing Options

Pricing is flexible and designed to appeal to the needs of the customer. Pricing for 2013 ranges from as high as €35,575 for the initial purchase of the *Editoria Italiana Online* (*EIO*) Complete collection, with access to 195 e-journals (including several years of back files) and a total of 8,725 e-books, to €3,370 for the EIO History collection, with access to 38 e-journals and a total of 452 e-books. Annual fees for previous subscribers are lower and cover maintenance and new content. They vary from €16,840 for access to new journal issues and 900 new e-books in the EIO Complete collection to €1,730 for new journal issues and 48 new e-books in the EIO History collection. Periodically, new journals are added to the collections, but generally new content is focused on e-books. In addition to EIO, one may subscribe to the *Edición Española Online* (EEO) or acquire a number of subject or publisher-based e-journals and e-books packages on Torrossa, at various pricing levels. New publishers regularly join Torrossa and content is growing, with each new collection coming with its own access modalities (some publishers allowing the downloading of content, some not) and pricing. It is also possible to negotiate custom packages and various collections are offered via consortia; generally, consortial agreements are focused on EIO, though not all. A portion of the new Spanish content is accessible in Open Access.

Product Description

Torrossa is Casalini Libri's full-text platform launched in May of 2011. It replaces Casalini's earlier Digital Division online full-text database with a sleek Web 2.0 interface and advanced features that provide access to roughly 15,000 e-books and 650 e-journals from over 160 mostly Italian and Spanish scholarly publishers in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Torrossa is a rich and complex database providing simple and advanced search interfaces with numerous options for refinements, the ability to browse through the collections and to explore holdings through a word cloud, as well as to download complete lists of the e-books and e-journals contained in the database (Figure 1).

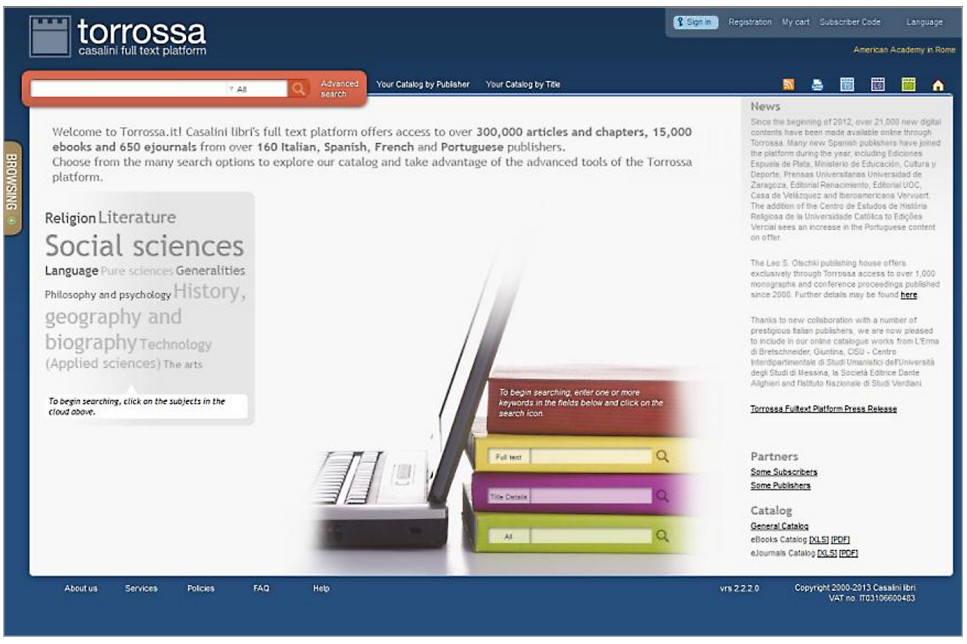
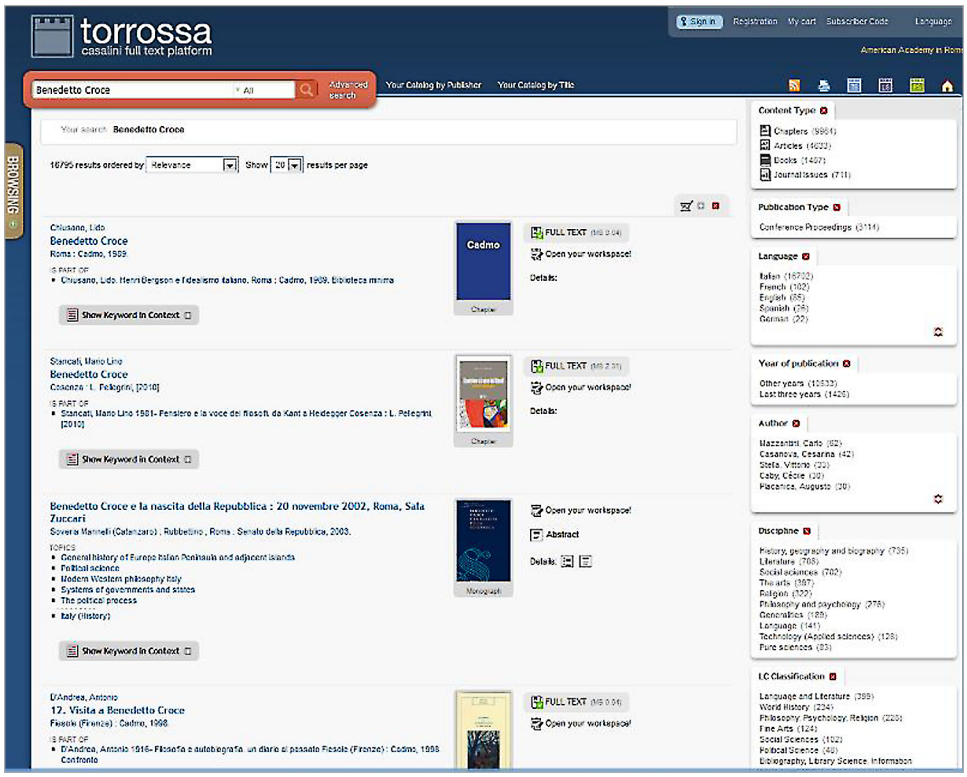


FIGURE 1 Torrossa Home Page

FIGURE 2 Torrossa Search Results



Search results display with brief bibliographical information, images of title pages, links to the full text, and the ability to view key words in context, together with all relevant facets (Figure 2). Clicking on the latter leaves a customary trail of breadcrumbs; results can be sorted in various ways; and items of interest can be commented upon and tagged, added to a personal list or saved in one's cart, as well as exported to RefWorks or EndNote, and e-mailed or printed. One may further subscribe to RSS feeds to receive updates about new content added to the database in various subjects.

In addition to developing Torrossa as a rich full-text platform with all expected Web 2.0 bells and whistles, Casalini has made great strides in developing the content offered through Torrossa. The number of participating publishers is impressive and ranges from some of the most important Italian trade publishers, such as Antenore, Bulzoni, Carocci, L'Erma di Bretschneider, and Olschki, to leading academic and university presses, such as Vita e Pensiero, Firenze University Press, the École Française de Rome, Pisa University Press, as well as numerous other publishers. Recently, the broad and impressive coverage of Italian scholarly publishing has been complemented with mostly Spanish publications by an important and growing number of academic presses and scholarly publishers, such as the CSIC - Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientìficas, Prensas Universitarias Universidad de Zaragoza, Editorial Renacimiento, Editorial UOC, Casa de Velázquez, and Iberoamericana Vervuert. Portuguese content is also growing, though still modest.

The content in Torrossa is exclusively text-based; institutions lease or acquire access to e-book and e-journals collections. The database contains a large number of images and illustrations, but only in as far as they appear within an e-book or e-journal. Audio-visual materials are excluded. All content is presented in PDF with various degrees of access from publisher to publisher. Printing and the copying and pasting of pages or selected text is generally permitted across the board for journal articles, which may also be downloaded in their entirety, but the downloading of content from e-books is generally not permitted. Virtually all content is accessible within Torrossa, though more recent content by the publisher Fabrizio Serra links out to Serra's own electronic publishing platform, Libraweb.

Access is via IP recognition and pricing varies depending upon the collection(s) chosen; consortial pricing is also available. For individuals who would like to purchase content, Casalini developed Torrossa Store at <http://store.torrossa.it/>, where e-books and e-journals can be purchased article by article. Torrossa and Torrossa Store mirror each other, but modes of access are different. For the purpose of this review, only the Torrossa version open to institutional subscriptions (<http://www.torrossa.it>) is considered.

There are a great number of collections available on Torrossa. The foundation for institutional access to Torrossa is provided by the *Editoria Italiana Online* (EIO) or the *Edición Española Online* (EEO), two publisher-based interdisciplinary subject packages that include both e-journals and e-books that are available only by subscription, at various levels of comprehensiveness and pricing. Libraries subscribe to EIO and EEO, but gain ownership of the content and retain post-cancellation access. In addition to EIO and EEO, Torrossa provides access to additional subject- or publisher-based packages, either by subscription, such as the journals of *Franco Angeli Online* or by one-time purchase, such as the Olschki e-book collection. MARC records are provided for all materials, though subscribers to EIO and EEO usually have to wait a year or more before receiving records for the materials they acquired.

The audience for Torrossa is resolutely academic; though faculty and graduate students will probably make the most use of the high quality scholarly content from Italy and Spain, undergraduates will benefit as well. The main collections included in Torrossa are:

Editoria Italiana Online (EIO): Over 90 publishers currently contribute to EIO, which includes about 8,000 e-books and 200 e-journals. Every year hundreds of new e-books are added to the collection (900 in 2012). EIO is offered at various levels of comprehensiveness, including subject-specific collections. The number of options is too complex to list in detail, suffice it to say that one may subscribe to the EIO Full (Complete Collection), the Premier Collection, Core Collection, and Base Collection, as well as to only EIO e-journals or EIO e-books, to the EIO Italian Studies package, or the EIO Language and Literature or the EIO History or the EIO Social Sciences packages, in addition to additional subject packages and custom packages. EIO provides the most comprehensive electronic access to Italian research in the Humanities and Social Sciences. The titles included in EIO are selected by Casalini's Approval Plan bibliographers.

Edición Española Online (EEO) mirrors EIO, focusing on scholarly publications from Spain. EEO currently includes over 1,300 e-books, with 500 additional titles added in 2012. EEO is still a relatively new endeavor, but content is growing and new publishers are joining. As with EIO, EEO may be acquired at several levels of comprehensiveness, through a number of subject and publisher-based packages. With the exception of the journals offered in Open Access by the CSIC - Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientìficas, whose inclusion was announced for 2013, content in EEO is limited to e-books.

The Leo S.Olschki e-book collection of 1,000 titles published between 2000 and 2010, focusing on Classical Studies, Art & Architecture, Musicology and Theatre, Italian Literature, Philosophy, and History.

The *Franco Angeli Riviste Online* collection of 81 scholarly journals in History, Philosophy, Sociology, Urban Studies, Economics, Law, Public Administration, Education, and Psychology. Subscriptions may cover the entire collection, subject-specific collections, or a customized package.

The Fabrizio Serra Editore collection includes online-only access to 116 of his journals. These are available as a whole or as subject-based packages covering Linguistics, Law, Religion, Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Archaeology, and Applied Sciences.

The *Biblioteca Italiana Zanichelli* (BIZ) with over 1,000 canonical works of Italian literature from the thirteenth century to the early twentieth century, as well as other seminal works of History, Travel Reports, and Opera Libretti.

The École Française de Rome e-book and e-journal collection, providing access to its three *Mélanges* series: *Antiquité*, *Italie et Mediterranée*, and *Moyen Âge*, as well as to over 200 e-books.

Il Mulino e-journals, available exclusively to North American institutions and providing online access to 57 of Il Mulino's journals in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Subscriptions may be placed to the complete collection or to three subject-based packages (Humanities, Social Studies, Economics and Law). The collections are e-only and include an average of 14 years of back issues.

Critical Evaluation

It is not an exaggeration to say that Casalini Libri, especially now with Torrossa, has defined Italian scholarly e-publishing. The EIO package on Torrossa is currently designed to provide electronic access to a wide variety of scholarly publications in the Humanities and Social Sciences at low cost, in an effort to promote access to Italian, and increasingly Spanish, scholarship and to provide publishers with a means to distribute their content online without significantly endangering their print sales. This model has been very successful in distributing Italian scholarship abroad (as well as nationally) and Casalini deserves credit for taking considerable risk in investing in its online platform, as well as for garnering the support and participation of such an impressive array of Italian publishers. That being said, the current model for EIO and EEO, in which content is selected by Casalini in conjunction with publishers but leaves libraries without control over the content that they acquire, has its limitations. The main limitation being that neither EIO nor EEO serve as reliable alternatives to purchasing print. Institutions may decide to cancel print subscriptions (or not to subscribe) to journals in favor of access via EIO, but e-books cannot be actively selected and, because MARC records for new titles are only made available a year or more after their inclusion in the collection, duplication with print acquisitions cannot be avoided. Institutions with less robust Italian holdings may be well served by EIO and its several levels of subscription, but the selection decision is entirely out of their hands and it is possible that their package will contain a significant number of titles that are out of scope or that will receive very little use. As long as the selection of individual e-books, approval plans, or some form of PDA are not possible, EIO will remain a complementary collection, at least for collections with extensive Italian acquisitions. It is true that EIO provides a low cost means of acquiring a broad collection of Italian scholarship in the Humanities and Social Sciences and that the model has been successful in expanding the reach of Italian scholarship abroad but libraries can no longer afford the duplication of the same content in print and electronic format, nor the acquisition of materials that may be marginal to their mission or receive limited usage, and the model is showing its limits. As institutions migrate their print acquisitions online, a model that would provide for the full integration of Torrossa within an active collection development policy would be an essential complement to the current offering.

The Torrossa platform and search functionality are impressive, though they could be improved. Torrossa is the most advanced and complete scholarly full-text database of Italian content on the market with all Web 2.0 features one would want and expect, but the platform still requires a bit more refinement in order to be state of the art. There are a few inconsistencies. For example, a simple keyword search by the author on "Benedetto Croce" [without quotes] yields 16,795 results (full text and metadata). That is a large number of hits, but it can effectively be narrowed down through the facets. Strangely, an advanced search in the author field of exactly the same words "Benedetto Croce" [again without quotes] yields no results at all. Instead of a keyword search, the advanced search actually performs an index browse and one must search by the last name followed by the first name in order to retrieve any results. This is confusing. Of the 16,795 hits, 99% are generated through the full-text search and many are not necessarily on target. The relevancy ranking helps to list the most valuable records on top and the facets permit to quickly narrow the search; in addition, the "keywords in context" feature permits to quickly ascertain the most relevant hits. There seems to be a problem with sorting by date of publication, however. The search results for "Benedetto Croce" started with 2012 and ended with 2012, even after sorting by date, though in-between records were sorted correctly. This is symptomatic for the data in the database, namely that it is not always consistently encoded and lacks authority control. For example, Benedetto Croce is listed as both "Croce, Benedetto" and "Croce, Benedeto" in the author index and one may find publications by Olschki listed under "Leo S. Olschki," "Casa Editrice Leo S. Olschki," simply "Olschki," or "L. S. Olschki," as well as "L.S. Olschki." In some records question marks replace diacritics, the choice of languages contains "???fra???," and "Name" is one of the options in the A-Z list of publishers. Such errors occur only sporadically, thus the majority of the searches will be successful (and, fortunately, can be easily fixed) but it is a surprise that they occur at all especially in the indexes. Problematic is also the use of the browser's back button, to which one would automatically resort and which frequently results in a lost search. Depending on the page one is on, there may be a "return to search" option, but there is no clear or ubiquitous return button that is consistently present throughout the database. This can become an annoying problem when navigating to your cart or workspace and wanting to return to your position within the search results (and losing your position and therefore having to start from the beginning). Most users will instinctively hit the return button to get back to their search results and consistently providing a return button on every page or avoiding the problem al-

Torrossa Review Scores Composite Score: ★★★★

The maximum number of stars in each category is 5.

Content: ★★★★ 1/2

The most authoritative and complete online database for Italian scholarly publications in the Humanities and Social Sciences, completed by a growing number of Spanish academic and scholarly presses.

User Interface/Searchability: ★★★ 1/2

The interface provides for rich, complex search queries and offers all important features one may reasonably expect and more, but is marred by a series of unnecessary complications.

Pricing: ★★★★

Based on a price per item, pricing is advantageous, especially if one considers the quality of the content, the flexibility of the search interface, and level of customer service. In addition, packages are customizable and pricing negotiable; consortial agreements are also available.

Contract Options: ★★★★

Contract options are above average, in particular in comparison with European online content platforms, thanks to their flexibility, pricing, and ownership of the content acquired, including provisions for ILL. The score could be further improved if libraries could more actively select content and if more publishers would participate in Portico or a comparable European digital repository.

together by making the browser's return button more reliable would be something to address in an upcoming update. Depending upon the browser and PDF plug-in, one may further experience difficulties in the loading of articles, though these have not been consistent and, when occurring, may be circumvented by using a different browser or viewing the content directly within Acrobat Reader.

That being said, the overall speed and flexibility of searching, viewing, and organizing information is convincing. Searches result in a rich offering of information, including brief bibliographic records with subject descriptors, supplemented by cover pages, tables of contents, abstracts, as well as key words in context and the ability to further drill down by facets. This first layer of options provides for the selection of titles and inclusion in one's shopping cart or a customized list in the personal workspace and records may also be directly exported to RefWorks or EndNote. The same options are available when clicking on the individual records for full bibliographic information. The latter are further enriched by access to the chapter level of monographs as well as a "more like this" feature that permits users to virtually browse titles on related subjects based upon classification. Individual records saved to one's work space may be organized with custom tags and commented upon. Beyond RefWorks and EndNote, records or lists may be exported in Word, Excel, or PDF format, e-mailed, or printed. The search interface is available in English, Italian, French, Spanish, and German—a feature that betrays Casalini's ambitions and makes one wonder whether a Chinese interface is in the making—even though the translation is not complete, as some Italian is required when registering and logging into one's account. Whether by design or not, the database has some interesting features. For example, one can quickly get an idea of the total number of items in the database by simply hitting enter on an empty Advanced Search. The same is true when clicking one or a combination of "search groups" and leaving the search interface empty.

Contract Provisions

All content in the *Editoria Italiana Online* (EIO), *Edición Española Online* (EEO), Olschki, *Biblioteca Italiana Zanichelli*, and Il Mulino packages is acquired; permanent access to the *Franco Angeli Riviste Online* collection may be negotiated. Casalini is offering permanent, post-cancellation access. In addition, the Italian publishers CLUEB, Fabrizio Serra, and Franco Angeli Edizioni have joined Portico; and Casalini Libri, CLUEB, Edizioni Cadmo, Fabrizio Serra are participating in CLOCKSS. Casalini provides standard MARC21 bibliographic records for e-books, including Spanish, French, and Portuguese publications, though these are generally released up to a year or more after the addition of the new materials. Links within Torrossa are permalinks based on the Open URL standard and Casalini Libri collaborates with discovery services and link resolvers. The multipublisher collections, EIO and EEO, generally offer download options for journal articles only, while some of the publisher-based packages offer download options for e-books as well. ILL is permitted for e-journal articles between libraries whose registered offices are located in the territory of the United States of America or Canada, provided that the loan is made with a printed copy of the article sent by post,

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fax or a secure electronic transmission such as Ariel in compliance with the CONTU guidelines. Torrossa is COUNTER compliant.

Authentication

Access is unlimited by IP recognition, with the possibility of distance access by proxy server. Shibboleth authentication is currently under development with implementation planned for late 2013.

Author's References

Torrossa: Casalini Full Text Platform. Accessed March 17, 2013. <http://www.torrossa.it/>

About the Author

Sebastian Hierl is the Drue Heinz Librarian at the American Academy in Rome. Prior to joining the Academy, Hierl served as the Librarian for Western Europe at Harvard University, where he held responsibility for Widener Library's Western European collections. Previously, he was the Librarian for English and Romance Languages and Literatures at the University of Chicago. Hierl's first professional librarian position was at North Carolina State University (NCSU), where he started as one of the initial NCSU Libraries Fellows and assumed responsibility for NCSU Libraries' collections in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Hierl received his M.L.I.S. from the University of Texas at Austin in 1999 and a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of South Carolina in 1997. ■

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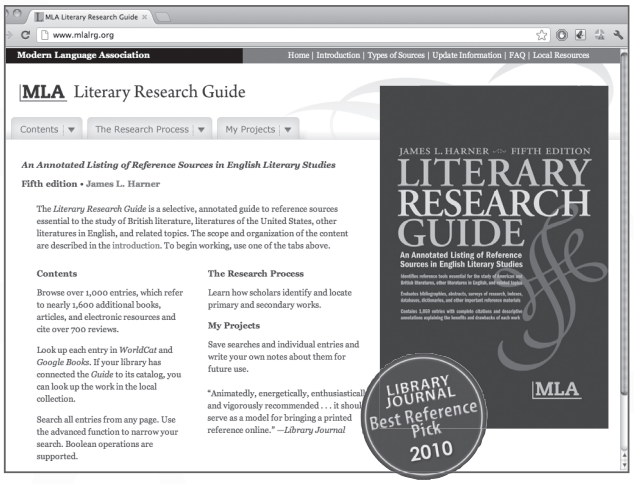

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