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## Science 2.0 Gains Another Search Engine: Q-Sensei From Lalisio



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Another sci-tech search engine has joined others to serve the needs and tastes of scientists. This one comes from a small company whose main service is the Lalisio social network for scientists. While the 2 million-plus article content nowhere near reaches the size and scope of behemoths such as Elsevier's Scirus or Google Scholar, the Q-Sensei search engine (<http://literature.lalisio.com/oai.html>) has a metadata orientation that offers some interesting search capabilities. It can suggest alternative search strategies and allows searchers to narrow and focus their search results in a manner familiar to traditional searchers. At this point, it only searches open access content from ArXiv and PubMed Central, but parallel services also reach IngentaConnect and a series of book citation sources.

The arXiv database focuses on papers in physics, mathematics, nonlinear science, computer science, quantitative biology, and statistics. PubMed Central, from the National Library of Medicine, archives biomedical and life science journals. Under recent regulations, NIH-funded research must emerge—in time—into open access on PubMed Central. The National Institutes of Health are among the largest funders of medical research worldwide. In handling PubMed Central content, Lalisio uses MeSH thesaurus headings.

In addition to suggesting search strategies and terms, Q-Sensei lets users search within the search suggestions. It structures searches within categories, e.g., author, keyword, publisher, language, and year of publication. Users can remove search suggestions as well as adding them to focus search results. The service analyzes search results into different metadata categories, such as author, keyword, or document type, and displays terms in these categories that appear most often.

Q-Sensei is a work in progress. According to Ute Rother, CEO of Q-Sensei and managing director of Lalisio, "This is only the beginning. We will continue to work hard on expanding our offerings of searchable literature databases and our services for scholars worldwide." One missing feature is phrase-making or proximity searching. Rother assured me that this was on their list of things to do. The Q-Sensei site prompts users to suggest improvements and provide feedback. She also confirmed that they were looking for more content to add. In a world where Elsevier's Scirus boasts its reach to more than 55 million articles, 2 million seems quite small. Rother indicated that discussions have begun with OCLC.

In identifying the corporate structure behind the new service, things became a little complicated. Q-Sensei Corp. is a Delaware corporation resulting from the 2007 merger of the German company, Lalisio GmbH (founded in 2001), and the U.S. company, QUASM Corp. Lalisio still operates out of Erfurt, Germany, while Q-Sensei is temporarily headquartered in Melbourne, Fla., though its website ([www.q-sensei.com](http://www.q-sensei.com)) states its location as Baltimore. Rother was in the U.S. when I spoke to her, working on new funding sources, shoring up organization of the Q-Sensei Corp., and looking for new content for the search engine.

At present, the Lalisio social network of scientists seems to be the most active side of the operation ([www.lalisio.com](http://www.lalisio.com)). The service is free upon registration. In fact, the Q-Sensei Corp. website does not link to the Q-Sensei search engine. Within that network, the "Lalisio Literature" feature duplicates Q-Sensei and adds to its content. With the added content, it totals some 6 million records. The book content comes from AbeBooks, Alibris, Amazon, eCampus, and Powell's. Published periodical articles come from IngentaConnect. The Lalisio Knowledge Network contains personal knowledge profiles, resumes, and bibliographies, as well as shared publications. Groups are created around key topics, some available to all Lalisio members, some restricted. Future plans may also include offering Q-Sensei to other companies for partnering or internal use, according to Rother. At present, the book search engine operation has links to online book sale sites.

According to its FAQ, the name "lalisio" is Latin for "little donkey." As the FAQ describes the selection of the name, "The term from the ancient language of scholars stresses our connection with academia. The image of the little donkey appealed to us since our network, similar to an intelligent and reliable donkey, can help you with transporting and delivering knowledge in a convenient and efficient manner." Memories from my high school Latin classes provoked a further investigation. The Romans and other Latin-speakers usually use "asinus" for donkey or "asellus" for a small or young donkey. However—and thanks once again to Google Book Search—Martial devotes one of his epigrams (Book 13) to this description, "While the wild ass is young, and fed by its mother alone, the nursing has, but only for a short time, the name of lalisio." Actually, the term entered Latin via a local North African term, as described by Pliny the Elder. Apparently, this particular suckling stage of life earned a separate nomenclature due to culinary interest in the beast. Think "veal."

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- [Faulkner Information Services](#)
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