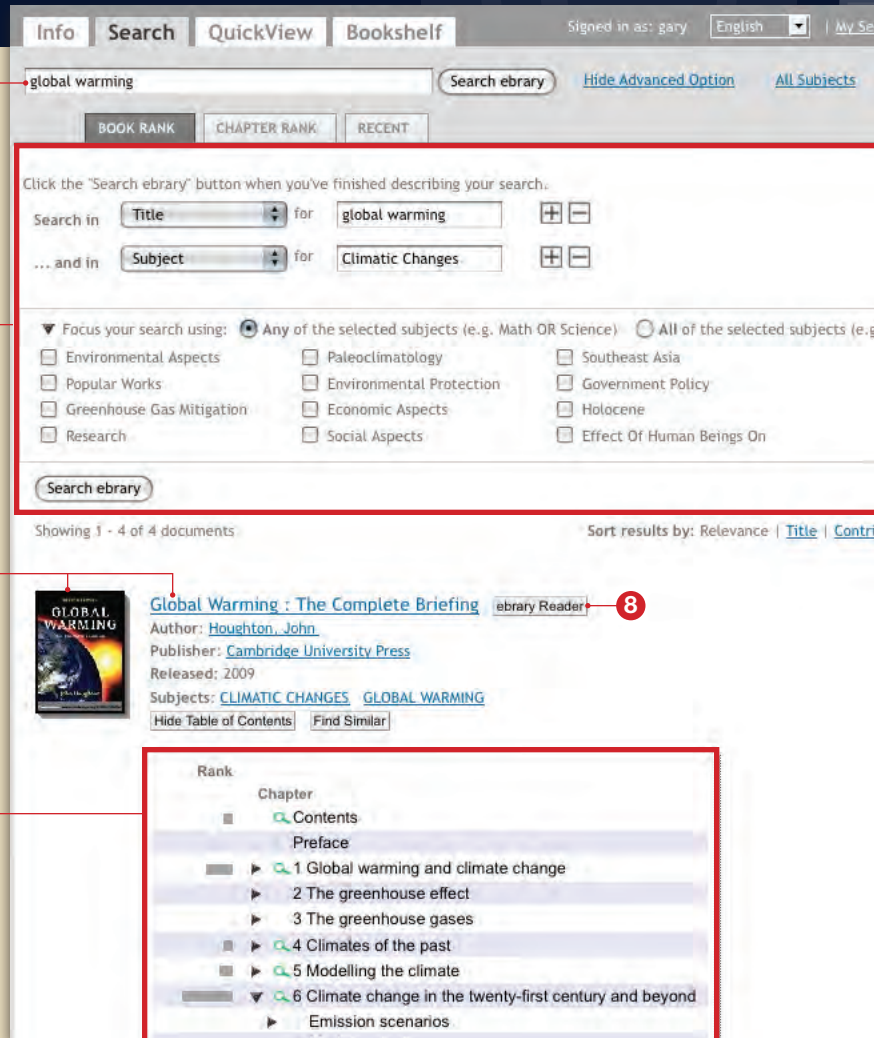


Quick Start Guide

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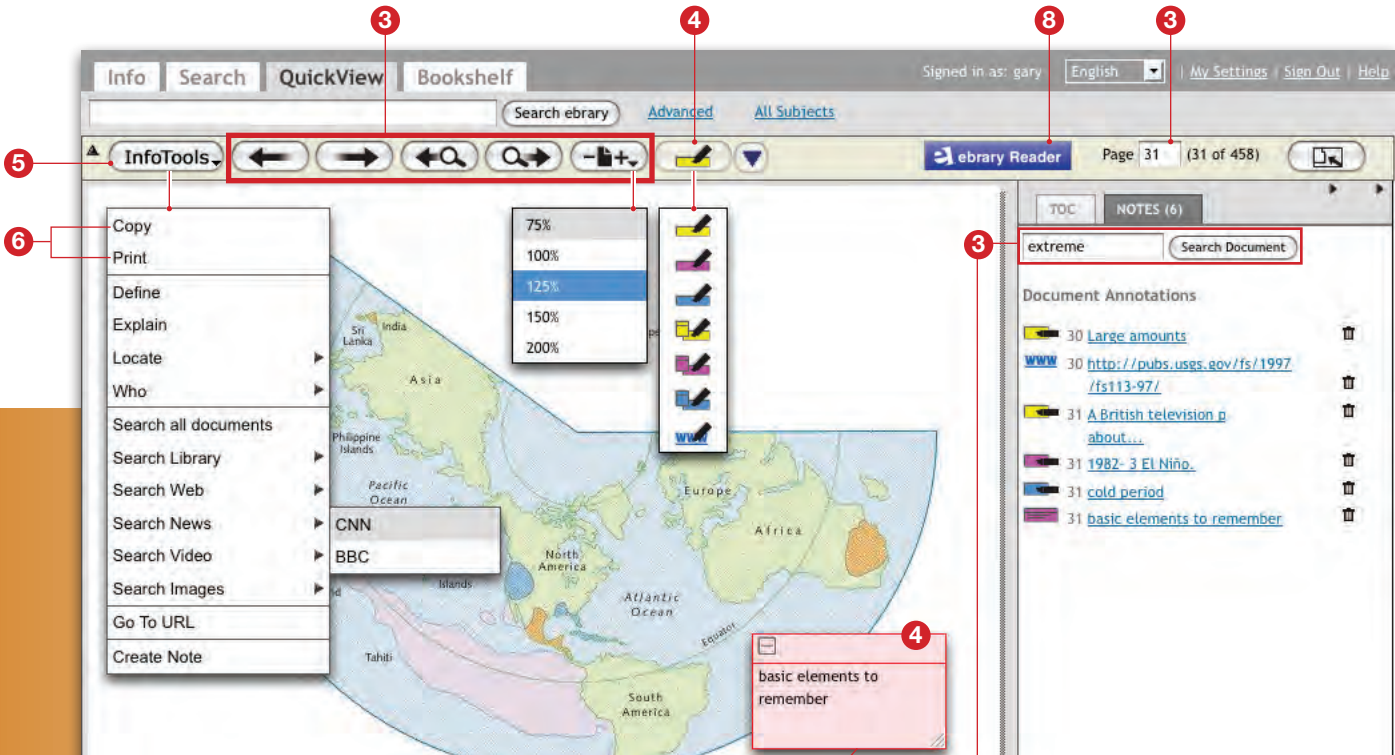
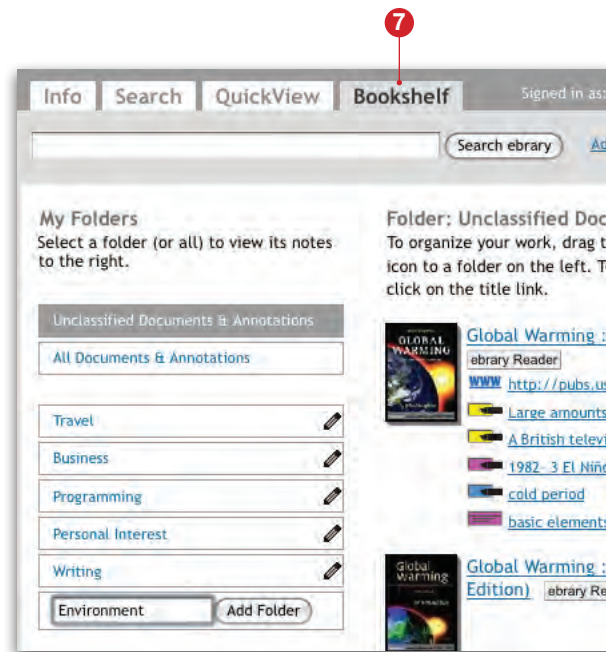


Figure 1.4 Regions where droughts and floods occurred associated with the 1982-3 El Niño.

But the question must be asked: how remarkable are these **extreme** events that I have been listing? Do they point to a changing climate due to human activities? Here a note of caution must be sounded. The range of normal natural climate variation is large. **Climate extremes** are nothing new. Climate records are continually being broken. In fact, a month without a broken record somewhere would itself be something of a record!

Many of us may remember the generally **cold period** over large areas of the world during the 1960s and early 1970s that caused speculation that the world was heading for an ice age. **A British television programme about climate change** called 'The ice age cometh' was prepared in the early 1970s and widely screened - but the cold trend soon came to an end. We must not be misled by our relatively short memories.

One of the largest volcanic eruptions in the twentieth century was **Mount Pinatubo** in the Philippines on 12 June 1991 which ejected millions of tonnes of sulphur dioxide into the stratosphere together with large quantities of dust. This stratospheric dust caused spectacular sunsets around the world for

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