

American government entry points

Weavers web



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Searching for United States government information has just got a whole lot easier with the appearance of two new, extremely comprehensive sites. FirstGov [<http://www.firstgov.gov/>] is a newly-launched one-stop shop to websites within the United States government. It provides a single point of entry to all 20 000 of these sites (which means several million pages of data). Rather than go with a hierarchical set of contents, the site designers have opted to organise material by topic, which is probably easier for most people looking for information. If you need specific information, you can use the site's keyword search engine, or browse the branches (judicial, legislative, executive) of government listed on the page.

The US Government manual [<http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/browse-gm-00.html>] might suit reference librarians better than FirstGov. The 2000–2001 manual covers the offices of the president and vice-president, as well as all United States government branches of government, departments, boards and agencies. It contains nearly 700 pages of information, and is a great starting point for anyone wanting to get a grip on the sheer size and complexity of the United States government. Agencies covered include the CIA, the Federal Reserve System and the Environmental Protection Agency. The manual is divided into small sections which you can view either as plain text or as PDF files. It also provides the texts of the United States *Constitution* and the *Declaration of Independence*.

Doorway to archives

The UNESCO Archives Portal [http://www.unesco.org/webworld/portal_archives/] links to a large number of archival institutions in different countries as well as to resources on records and archives management. The institutions include national, regional and state archives as well as associations in the archives field. There is information on education and training courses for archivists and conference and meeting information as well. New internet resources such as online directories are covered, as are publications, manuals and mailing lists. There are some links to preservation and conservation materials and to primary sources online. You can sign up for an e-mail newsletter too.

Doing the digital thing

The United Kingdom-based Technical Advisory Service for Images (TASI) [<http://www.tasi.ac.uk/>] provides free information

for academics and organisations implementing or about to embark upon a digitisation project. Under Online Resources, TASI provides links to dozens of existing archives of digital images (so you can get tips on how it is done.) The section also gives signposts to other organisations in the field (such as the Arts and Humanities Data Service, and various standards' organisations). Possibly the most useful bit is the section on case studies of digitisation projects. TASI staff visited a number of digital image library projects and interviewed project staff to document current practices. The information gathered will be used to help identify best practice in a range of areas — such as standards, guidelines and procedures. Presumably the studies will also tell you what not to do as well. Projects visited include the Bristol Biomedical Image Archive, the Internet Library of Early Journals, the Sudan Archive Photographs Database, the Celtic Manuscripts Project and the MARC/VISeUM Project. TASI also gives assistance on searching the Internet for existing resources.

Web indexing prize 2000

The Australian Society of Indexers has just opened up entries for the 2000 AusSI Web Indexing Prize. Applications are invited from Australian and New Zealand indexers and webmasters. The index and the material it provides access to must be accessible to the general public via the World Wide Web. Teams of indexers may enter. Entries close on 30 November 2000. The winning entry will win a book voucher for \$100 from the Co-op Bookshop (not to mention the glory of the thing). Winning entries will be announced in the Australian Society of Indexers Newsletter and on indexing mailing lists; winners will also be notified by e-mail. Read the rules and guidelines and get the online entry form at <http://www.aussi.org/>. Send any queries to Jonathan Jermy at webmaster@aussi.org.

Manuscripts and letters in Europe

MALVINE (Manuscripts and Letters via Integrated Networks in Europe) [<http://www.malvine.org/>] has been created to facilitate new and enhanced access to holdings of modern manuscripts and letters, kept and catalogued in European libraries, archives, documentation centres and museums. The idea of MALVINE is to network these institutions via the Web. Users can then search for items as if they were using one unified database. MALVINE is still in the testing stages, so you will need to e-mail the project for a username and password if you want to try

out their search facility and see what is there. Contact hans-joerg.lieder@sbb.spk-berlin.de via e-mail or visit the MALVINE site and use the Help facility.

Online bibliography

Studies in Bibliography [<http://etext.virginia.edu/bsuva/sb/>] is an online journal from the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia. The full text of all volumes, from Volume 1 (1948–1949) onwards, is available at the site. You can browse each volume or use the site's search facility to find articles or authors. The journal publishes scholarly articles on bibliography and textual criticism. This is a very fast-loading, no-frills site.

UNIMARC online

The IFLA Universal Bibliographic Control and International MARC Programme [<http://www.ifla.org/VI/3/p1996-1/guid6.htm>] has published a web-based guideline which shows how the UNIMARC format is to be used when creating records for electronic resources. This is a revision of an earlier guideline and incorporates changes made after comments and requests from users. The full version of the UNIMARC Manual — Bibliographic Format 1994 has also been published at <http://www.ifla.org/VI/3/p1996-1/sec-uni.htm>. It represents the state of the format as at 1 March 2000, and includes Update 3.

Studying librarianship far and wide

Anyone looking for a course in library or information studies should have a look at the Australian Information Studies Schools' website. The AISS site provides information about elective subjects available for post-graduate students at Australian universities. By providing details of subjects available as electives and by emphasising those available by distance education, information studies schools are able to offer a much broader range of subjects to their students. So you can get your information literacy from one place and study your knowledge or records management subjects somewhere else. For information about the costs, modes of delivery available, credit options, contact details and links to individual schools' websites, go to the AISS site at <http://farrer.riv.csu.edu.au/aiss/>.

Not just the defence news

Jane's Information Group has a very nice-looking site at <http://www.janes.com/>. The site is easy to navigate and contains some free full-text material from a range of different publications such as *Jane's Defence*

Weekly and *Intelligence Digest*. The main headings are defence (broken up into land, naval and air forces), transport, security and business, but there are sections for breaking news (article briefs linked through to the full-text of articles) and for regional information as well. The Asia Pacific regional news and some of the story briefs would be of interest to Australian readers. Some of the material is general interest — recent articles covered the Kursk submarine disaster and the Concorde crash. Readers looking for a different or more technical news slant would be happy here. You can sign up for e-mail briefs as well. If you are interested in subscribing to any of the services, visit the Jane's Online site at <http://www.janesonline.com/>.

eCommonwealth

With the demise of the online version of the *Commonwealth Yearbook* (where did it go — and why?), I have been looking around for something new to fill the demand for Commonwealth information. Welcome, eCommonwealth, which bills itself as a virtual meeting place for the Commonwealth community [<http://www.ecommonwealth.net/portal/home/index.html>]. The most useful aspect for librarians will probably be the news and information service. The site claims to monitor thousands of news publications and to present the highlights by region at the site. You can also search within the news section. There are news releases on Commonwealth matters as well. The site includes a number of other services such as country information and travel guides. Should you need more country data than you can get at eCommonwealth, the CIA has just released the 2000 version of their *World Factbook* at <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>.

And lastly — first families

The State Library of Victoria has launched a new project which aims to collect information about the people of Australia, past and present. First Families 2001 [<http://www.firstfamilies2001.net.au/>] is a database and collection of stories submitted by Australians about the earliest person in their families known to have lived in Australia. Those who participate may discover family links unknown to them through the directory. They will also ensure access to their stories for future generations. Anyone is welcome to submit information about their families — entries should be about the earliest generation of each branch of a family. ■

**This column
[with URL links]
can be found at:**



<http://www.alia.org.au/incite>

Contributions and suggestions for this column are always welcome. Please contact Belinda Weaver via e-mail.

Welcome, eCommonwealth, which bills itself as a virtual meeting place for the Commonwealth community. The most useful aspect for librarians will probably be the news and information service...