

Audience:

Small College Library, Political Science Students

For my reference reviews, I had political science students at a small university in mind when I found and reviewed my resources. With a limited budget, depending on how the university is funded, I tried to find a lot of free resources, or low-cost reference materials, that do not have to be updated each year for accuracy. I also looked for resources that were easy to use and that students would find helpful in assisting in their research, especially in pointing them in new directions or locating new research ideas.

Project originally Posted on [LI813 Spring 2007 Class Wiki](#), information last updated there, May 9, 2007.

Bibliography

American Government and Politics:

A Guide to Books for Teachers, Librarians, and Students [Electronic version]

BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Martin, F. S., and R. U. Goehlert. (1997). *American government and politics: a guide to books for teachers, librarians, and students [Electronic version]*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc. Retrieved May 3, 2007, from netLibrary database.

PURPOSE

The book was published as a reference resource to government materials for high school teachers, librarians, and students. According to the authors, "In this volume we have tried to identify books suitable for high school and beginning students studying American government and politics...The books included should be evaluated by the teacher for determining whether the work is suitable for that particular class or student or by the librarian to determine the suitability of the books for the school library" (Preface, vii). It can be used for

secondary school librarians and for teachers, and also at the college level, for secondary social studies majors and professors in this discipline, so students and teachers become familiar with the available resources.

AUTHORITY

One editor, Fenton Martin, is the librarian of the Political Science Research Collection at Indiana University and has published many bibliographical guides to various governmental entities and bodies (Indiana, 2004). The other editor, R. Goehlert has been a librarian and political science professor at Indiana University and has also published numerous political science bibliographical guides (Indiana, 2001). In terms of currency, with all of the changes in government information in the past decade, the work is unfortunately not as current as it should be. It was published 10 years ago, and only includes print materials. However, it still is a helpful resource for social studies and government teachers at the high school level.

SCOPE

As the title shows, this is a bibliographical guide to American government and political resources, for the high school student. It probably could also be used for as a resource for an introductory government course at the college level. Along with short abstracts for a lot of the works, the guide also includes a fiction section, for fiction books dealing with American government and politics that teachers can use in their classrooms. The work does not include classical political science literature or works dealing with statistics, as these are for more advanced government students.

FORMAT

It does facilitate use; it is organized into 20 topics and a fiction section. Within each of these sections, the topic is broken down into subtopics. Within these subtopics, the entries are organized by author. Briefly looking at the materials that are listed and described with short abstracts, the materials included are appropriate for the high school student or a freshman government student.

ARRANGEMENT

The 20 subjects and the fiction section are broken down into sub-topics, and the entries are organized alphabetically by the author's last name. The book also includes a subject index and an author index.

ENTRIES

The entries include the book's author, title, and publication information. The authors have also included a short abstract for the books. The biographies and fiction sections only include the book's author, title, and publication information.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Because the book is offered in electronic format through the netLibrary database, the book can be searched through the netLibrary interface, different parts of the book can be marked for accessing it at a later date, and the table of contents can be viewed while viewing the book's pages.

USE

The book can be used for locating research materials or starting points for government and political papers. While the intended audience is more for high school students than college students, it still would be a good starting point for research for college students in government and political science classes, with its wide coverage of topics.

CRITIQUE

I found this resource to be quite useful and resourceful. Not only is it a good starting point for getting students at the high school level get started on research projects in American government, it also can help the librarian decide what books to buy and help the social studies teacher find new resources or avenues for her lessons (the fiction section is especially useful for this task). The resource is also useful for social studies majors and professors at the college level for learning what resources are available for lesson plans. Finally, it is a good starting point for college government students for their research, as well, at least in a basic introductory class. Finally, because the book is available through netLibrary, the library doesn't have worry about purchasing the

resource, if they or their library consortium is subscribed to the database. If they do not have access to netLibrary, the book can possibly be found used through Amazon or another online used bookseller. It is no longer in print. As most universities today have access to netLibrary, I would highly recommend the librarians know how to quickly access this book in the database for helping government students and social studies education majors with their research.

REFERENCES

- Indiana University. (2004, January 21). Fenton Martin. Retrieved May 3, 2007, from http://www.indiana.edu/~iupolsci/bio_martin.html
- Indiana University. (2001). Robert Goehlert. Retrieved May 3, 2007, from <http://www.indiana.edu/~global/goehlert.htm>
- Information originally posted on [LI813 Spring 2007 Class Wiki](#); information last updated there, May 7, 2007.

Biography

Biographical Directory of the United States Congress

BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Government Printing Office. (2007). *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–Present* [Electronic]. Retrieved from <http://bioguide.congress.gov/biosearch/biosearch.asp>

PURPOSE

This database is the electronic and more updated version of the printed form of *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, last published in 2005 (Congressional Documents, 2006). Its purpose is to provide the most accurate information about current and past members of Congress, in an organized fashion. It has been produced for anyone who wishes to locate brief biographical summaries of anyone who served in Congress from 1774 to the present.

AUTHORITY

It took a little bit of digging to verify the credibility of this database. It is not marked with a date (other than 1774–present) and no authoring body is credited on the main portal or on any of the pages. However, after looking at the Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives' website (Office of the Clerk), I discovered that the database is an office database from the GPO. The work is also current. I verified this by searching the database for a new representative (Nancy Boyda) for the 110th (current) session of Congress.

SCOPE

The limits of the work are that it only includes brief biographies of Representatives and Senators and also references to where any research collections of the particular legislator are located and also a bibliography of published works by the legislator. Anyone who can use a database search tool can utilize this database, so it can be used by any age group.

FORMAT

For college students studying government and political science, which is my target audience, this resource will be very easy for them to use. Its multiple search criteria allow users to search the database in many ways. Users can search by last name, first name, position, state, party, or year/congress number. There are no instruction or help guides for the database but it's basically self-explanatory in its use with the various search boxes.

ARRANGEMENT

The search results are alphabetical by last name. There is no option in the search results to resort the search results by year or state or party or Congress number. These options would give the database even greater strength.

ENTRIES

Each entry includes years of birth and death (if applicable), years of service, party affiliation, spouse, and brief biographical information with important dates. A brief bibliography is included at the end of the entry and on the left side of the page are links to applicable research collections (if any) of the

legislator's papers and an extended bibliography of works by and about the legislator (if any).

SPECIAL FEATURES

The database does not have many special features. It is lacking in more recent web development or linking capabilities, like in wikis. The text runs together and is not broken up when it is retrieved. At the same time, though, it provides quick and free information for those researching the names and lives of those who have served in Congress.

USE

This information can be used for brief biographical reports about those who have served in Congress. It can also provided researchers or students starting points for research by providing names of those who have served according to different search criteria. Finally, the resource can be used to obtain locations of legislators' papers and research papers at various locations. For example, former Sen. Bob Dole's papers can be found at nine different locations.

CRITIQUE

This resource is a wonderful resource for any library to link to. It is completely free and updated as information is added to the database. Instead of spending money and waiting on a new directory to be published with information about the new Congress members, this directory provides access to information about these people without a wait time or without spending any money. It is easy to search and easy to use. While it does lack some features in terms of only organizing search results by last name, it still is a good resource to have access to.

REFERENCES

- Government Printing Office (2006, March 30). Congressional Documents: H. Doc. 108-222, Biographical Directory of the United States Congress 1774-2005. Retrieved May 4, 2007, from <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/serialset/cdocuments/hd108-222/index.html>
- Office of the Clerk. (n.d.) Member Biographical Information. Retrieved May 4, 2007, from http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/mem_bio/index.html

- Information originally posted on [LI813 Spring 2007 Class Wiki](#); information last updated there, May 7, 2007.

Dictionary 1

Dictionary of Government and Politics

BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Collin, P. H. (ed.). (1998). *Dictionary of government and politics*. Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers.

PURPOSE

This dictionary was published as a tool to learn the vocabulary used in government and politics, in both Britain and the United States.

AUTHORITY

The dictionary was published almost 10 years ago, but the terminology is still relevant. Some terms have changed or been added to the political lexicon, but not enough to warrant this dictionary out of date. The author, P. H. Collin, has published several dictionaries in various disciplines.

SCOPE

The audience for this dictionary includes anyone needing to understand political terminology within the United States and Great Britain.

FORMAT

The entries are all about the same length, easy to read, and understand. The entries are just like those one would be familiar with using in a regular dictionary.

ARRANGEMENT

The dictionary is arranged alphabetically, very much like a general dictionary. No index is included with this dictionary, although one is not needed, as the entries are organized alphabetically.

ENTRIES

A pronunciation of the term is included with each definition, as well as the part of speech, and a definition (or two) of the term. 5,000 entries are included within the dictionary.

SPECIAL FEATURES

The only special feature is the supplement that is at the back of the book that provides information about the legislative and political structures of Britain and the United States (Collin, 1998).

USE

This dictionary can be used to locate commonly used terms in the United States and Great Britain, dealing with political behavior, government structure, etc. It helps users better learn the terminology associated with government practices. Anyone who deals with the governments in either country will find this dictionary to be informative.

CRITIQUE

At \$53.95, according to Amazon.com, this dictionary will be helpful at any college library for the American government student or the advanced political science graduate student who needs to understand different government terms. The focus on American and Britain government terminology makes this resource different from other government dictionaries. If the college library has international relations or comparative government classes, students will be able to get even more use out of the dictionary, than just a political dictionary dealing with American politics. The entries are easy to follow and understand and are informative. This dictionary will be a good addition to a college library.

REFERENCES

- Amazon.com. (n.d.). Amazon.com: Dictionary of Government and Politics: Books: P.h. Collin. Retrieved May 5, 2007, from <http://www.amazon.com/Dictionary-Government-Politics-P-h-Collin/dp/1579580726>
- Collin, P. H. (ed.). (1998). Dictionary of government and politics. Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers.

- Information originally posted on [LI813 Spring 2007 Class Wiki](#); information last updated there, May 7, 2007.

Dictionary 2

American Political Dictionary

BIBLIOGRAPHY INFORMATION

Plano, J. and M. Greenberg. (1997). *The American Political Dictionary* (10th ed.). Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

PURPOSE

This material was originally published to serve as a tool to provide students of government the necessary facts and language to understand government, providing a guide to the American political lexicography (Plano, 1997, viii). The book was created for use by professors, students, and media professionals, to better understand all of the political terms that are thrown around in Congress, the White House, the Supreme Court, and other political and governmental entities.

AUTHORITY

This work was published in 1997, so it is fairly current. However, there is an 11th edition that is in print. Any library that is looking to purchase this book will probably want to purchase the 11th edition, instead of the 10th edition, which is reviewed here. The two authors have published 11 editions of this dictionary; both are professors emeritus of political science and have published extensively in the political science discipline, giving this dictionary plenty of authority.

SCOPE

The subject content is obviously limited to American government and politics. The audience is for high school students and above.

FORMAT

The organization of the terms in 14 subject chapters might make initial findings of terms difficult. However, if users know what subject the term fits under, they should be able to locate what they are looking for. The index in the back of the book will also facilitate easier usage of finding terms.

ARRANGEMENT

The dictionary is organized by subject. Each subject has the relevant terms organized alphabetically. An index is available at the back of the book.

ENTRIES

In each of the 14 subject chapters, the chapters are broken into four sections. The first section includes defined terms related to the chapter subject. The definitions are followed by a paragraph that gives the historical and current significance in relation to American government. The definitions section is followed by sections of important agencies, cases, and statutes. Each of these sections is organized alphabetically and includes a description of their significance. Cross-references are provided, where suitable.

SPECIAL FEATURES

One special feature of this dictionary is that it is more than a dictionary. After the term is defined, the historical significance is given of the term. This provides more information to the user, than a normal dictionary would.

USE

This dictionary would be used by American government students to learn the political terminology and also to learn about why those terms are important to the discipline. The extra sections of agencies, cases, and statutes provide further information that is relevant to the American government discipline.

CRITIQUE

The 11th edition can be purchased for \$58.85 from Amazon.com. This might be a little high for some libraries, especially for a dictionary, but with the additional information regarding the historical significance of each term, as well as relevant agencies, statutes, and cases for each subject, makes this dictionary

an important addition to a college library. Not only will the resource define political terms for students, but it also will tell them why each term is important to the political science discipline, as well as point to related cases, statutes, and agencies.

REFERENCES

- Amazon.com. (n.d.). Amazon.com: American Political Dictionary: Books: Jack Plano, Milton Greenberg. Retrieved May 4, 2007, from http://www.amazon.com/American-Political-Dictionary-Jack-Plano/dp/0155068679/ref=pd_bbs_sr_1/104-7416716-3467964?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1178555402&sr=1-1
- Information originally posted on [LI813 Spring 2007 Class Wiki](#); information last updated there, May 7, 2007.

Encyclopedia 1

Elections A to Z

BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Moore, J. L. (2003). *Elections A to Z* (2nd ed.). Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

PURPOSE

The encyclopedia serves as a “supplement that can help in understanding the U.S. electoral system. The book is a treasure trove of useful information about elections and politics, much of it almost impossible to find in any other one-volume encyclopedia” (Moore, 2003, xiv). It is to be much more of a narrative to U.S. elections, rather than providing numbers and percentages of the elections, although the encyclopedia does include some of those (Moore, 2003, xiv). The author points to resources that provide raw data about U.S. elections, if a user is needed statistical election data. In the Preface to the second edition, the author further states that the encyclopedia is “an invaluable tool for understanding how campaigns and elections – the hallmark of any democracy – are conducted in the United States and how voters, candidates, political parties, and other actors participate in that process” (Moore, 2003, xv).

AUTHORITY

The book is still current, although a new edition is coming out in Fall 2007. As the book is published by CQ Press, and is a part of the American Government A to Z series available from CQ Press, this work is authoritative.

SCOPE

The scope of the volume is obviously limited to everything about American elections. However, it also includes political cartoons, American history, political philosophy, and biographies of key politicians as all of these subjects dealt with elections at one time or another. That makes this reference material have a greater audience than just those studying American elections. Students of American history and government will find this encyclopedia to be a helpful resource.

FORMAT

The encyclopedia is easy to read and look at; the font is in a normal size and it is not too bulky to carry. Entries can quickly be skimmed for needed information and a user can refer to related topics in the encyclopedia or turn to other reference materials for more in-depth information.

ARRANGEMENT

The beginning of the book provides a table of contents that includes each entry. A list is provided to tables, boxes, and figures. Then the entries are organized alphabetically. An exhaustive index is also included at the book of the encyclopedia.

ENTRIES

Entries provide summaries of information about the topics dealing with elections, from political parties, to voting, to key events in “historical elections”. According to CQ Press, “Entries range from short definitions of terms like “front-runner” to in-depth essays exploring vital aspects of campaigns and elections, such as the right to vote, turnout trends, and the history, evolution, and current state of House, Senate, presidential, and some state-level elections” (CQ Press, 2007).

SPECIAL FEATURES

Tables giving historical election data and a bibliography section, as well as maps, graphics, and photographs give a uniqueness to this encyclopedia. The entries themselves are not much different than a normal, general encyclopedia. However, with the tables, graphics, and provided bibliography on a very specific subject of American government, the resource becomes a unique reference material for a political science collection.

USE

This encyclopedia can be used for locating anything and everything dealing with elections, without being overwhelmed by statistical election data. Students beginning to learn about elections will find this encyclopedia helpful and informative.

CRITIQUE

According to Amazon.com, the book is available for \$135; the third edition is available in Fall 2007, for \$85, according to [CQPress.com](http://www.cqpress.com). Both of these prices are a little bit on the expensive side for any library's budget, but seeing as the book isn't published each year, and is full of informative information about an important part of American government — elections — many libraries will find purchasing this encyclopedia to be a good use of their money. The encyclopedia is easy to use, organized well, and students of government will find it to be a helpful resource to use.

REFERENCES

- Amazon.com. (n.d.). Amazon.com: Elections A to Z (Elections a to Z): Books: John Leo Moore. Retrieved May 6, 2007, from http://www.amazon.com/Elections-Z-John-Leo-Moore/dp/1568028016/ref=pd_bbs_sr_1/104-7416716-3467964?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1178555461&sr=1-1
- CQ Press. (2007). CQ Press: Books: Elections A to Z, 2nd edition, Book, Books, John L. Moore. Retrieved May 6, 2007, from <http://www.cqpress.com/product/Elections-A-to-Z-2d-edition.html>
- Moore, J. L. (2003). Elections A to Z (2nd ed.). Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

- Information originally posted on [LI813 Spring 2007 Class Wiki](#); information last updated there, May 7, 2007.

Encyclopedia 2

American Conservatism: An Encyclopedia

BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Frohnen, B., J. Beer, and J. O. Nelson (eds.). (2006). *American Conservatism: An Encyclopedia*. Wilmington, Del.: ISI Books.

PURPOSE

According to the editors' introduction, this encyclopedia was created to "contribute to the ongoing effort to understand what it has meant – and still means – to be a conservative in America" (Frohnen, et. al., 2006, x). It offers information about "persons, schools, concepts, organizations, events, publications, and other topics of major importance to the nature and development of the conservative intellectual movement in American since World War II" (Frohnen, et. al., 2006, xiii). Finally, "the intent of this volume is to provide coverage of those matters of importance to each of the major schools of postwar conservative thought and to do so as evenhandedly as possible" (Frohnen, et. al., 2006, xiv).

AUTHORITY

Each entry is signed. A list of contributors appears at the end of the encyclopedia, with a brief biography of each author, providing credentials. The contribution list could also be valuable for students desiring to study conservatism further, as it provides names of professors and writers who may have further resources published on American conservatism.

SCOPE

The entries are topics that have been important to the shaping of the intellectual conservative movement since World War II (Frohnen, et. al., 2006, xiii). The intended audience is for students, journalists, academics, and lay

readers who are interested in the conservative intellectual movement (Frohnen, et. al., 2006, xiii). The scope is mostly limited to topics that are after 1945 and are American in nature.

FORMAT

The work is easily readable in normal type, and is not very heavy in bulk. It is only one volume, and the pages will not easily rip as they are used over time. For students of political philosophy and politics in general, this resource will be a good starting point to learn basic information about leading events, places, and persons involved in the American conservatism intellectual movement since World War II. Furthermore, each entry provides further reading suggestions at the end of the entries, providing further resources for research, as well as a “see also” section for related entries found with this encyclopedia.

ARRANGEMENT

The beginning of the book provides an alphabetical listing of entries. The entries themselves then proceed in alphabetical order. Each letter is broken down into its topics. An extensive index is also available to users to quickly locate a specific topic within the encyclopedia.

ENTRIES

The encyclopedia includes 626 entries (Frohnen, et. al., 2006, xiii). These entries vary from 250 to 2,500 words in length (Frohnen, et. al., 2006, xiii). The entries include biographical data, discussion of events, dates, etc. The entries are typical encyclopedia entries.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Special features include the further reading section, as well as the occasional picture of a person or document or place.

USE

This encyclopedia can be used as a good starting point for research on American government, especially when the topic deals with political philosophy. Not only do the entries provide basic information about the American

conservatism movement, the entries also provide useful information for further reading materials on the topic at hand. College students, graduate students, and professors alike could find this reference resource very useful. For an academic library that includes more than one course in American government, this resource could provide valuable guidance for American government and political science research papers.

CRITIQUE

At Amazon.com, the book is available right now for \$34.65. According to the Booklist review that is available with the book's page on Amazon, "its bargain price should make it affordable for most" (Amazon.com, n.d.). Also, the Booklist review suggests that the book might fill a gap that could exist in many library's collections, with its unique subject material.

Overall, I found the book to be very easy to use and navigate, and the entries were informative and not too political in nature. The book proves to be an important resource for students of American politics, in understanding the American conservatism movement of the past 60 years.

REFERENCES

- Frohnen, B., J. Beer, and J. O. Nelson (eds.). (2006). *American Conservatism: An Encyclopedia*. Wilmington, Del.: ISI Books.
- Amazon.com. (n.d.) *American Conservatism: An Encyclopedia: Books: Bruce Frohnen, Jeremy Beer, Jeffrey O. Nelson*. Retrieved May 5, 2007, from <http://www.amazon.com/American-Conservatism-Encyclopedia-Bruce-Frohnen/dp/1932236430>
- Information originally posted on [LI813 Spring 2007 Class Wiki](#); information last updated there, May 7, 2007.

Geography 1

U.S. Census Bureau Maps and Cartographic Resources

BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

U.S. Census Bureau. (2006, November 29). U.S. Census Bureau Maps and Cartographic Resources. Retrieved May 2 2007, from <http://www.census.gov/geo/www/maps>

PURPOSE

The purpose of this website is to offer links to all of the digital maps that are available for download or building from the Census Bureau, in relation to the decennial Census. The website was designed for any member of the public that is needing to create/locate maps that deal with the U.S. Census.

AUTHORITY

As the website is hosted by the Census Bureau (www.census.gov) and that the data is generated by the Census Bureau from the most recent Census (2000), the information is authoritative and primary. The sole job of the Census Bureau is to develop, collect, and repackage the data from each Census.

SCOPE

The maps are limited to dealing only with maps generated from Census data (population and congressional district boundaries, for example).

FORMAT

The maps that are available for download are linked from some of the sub-pages on this website (particularly from the Map Products link) and are available for download in PDF/GIF format.

ARRANGEMENT

The website and links page is a web of links, and somewhat difficult to navigate, but if one knows the type of information he/she is looking for (like a map dealing with the 108th Congressional District Map for District 1 in Alabama), you would go to the Map Products page, then keep clicking on links that deal with the 108th Congress until you find a breakdown of the congressional district maps by state and click on the District 1 link (PDF or GIF). Again, the links are kind of a convoluted web, but just the same, they are

available for free. There is a [sitemap](#) available that might help in navigation of this resource.

ENTRIES

As was mentioned above, getting to the links that lead to the maps themselves is a complex process of browsing the website. One you get to a link is to a specific map, you have the option of downloading the map in GIF or PDF format (GIF=small file size; small map; PDF=large file size; large map). Some large forms of data are available to download in .ZIP format.

SPECIAL FEATURES

The availability of various maps with different contents that deal with the data gathered from the U.S. Census are some of the special features available with this resource.

USE

With the help of a librarian or teacher or professor who is already familiar with this website, the use of this website resource should not be too difficult. It all depends on what kind of map one needs that deals with Census data. If the map is a simple congressional district map, any user could probably locate the map and understand it. But if the user is needing maps that deal with more complex data (especially historic change maps), the user may need a librarian's guidance to navigate and a professor's guidance to understand the data included in the maps.

CRITIQUE

This is a good resource, except for the design flaws, in that way too much information is nested into several subpages. The resource would be much more easy to navigate and understand if the pages were more on the same level and organized in a different fashion. With that being said, however, the resource is still a good geographical resource to link to, as political science students may need quick access to congressional district breakdowns or other statistical data maps developed from Census data. More importantly, being able to download the maps in PDF or GIF format mean that the resource is completely free.

- Information originally posted on [LI813 Spring 2007 Class Wiki](#); information last updated there, May 7, 2007.

Geography 2

Government Chapter (of the NationalAtlas)

BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

U.S. Department of the Interior. (2006, March 14). Government Chapter (of the National Atlas). Retrieved May 1, 2007, from <http://www.nationalatlas.gov/government.html>

PURPOSE

This website provides access to government/politically-related maps produced by the Department of the Interior of the United States government. It has been published so any citizen of the United States will be able to use it. This particular website links to more politically-related maps, including maps of congressional districts on a national and state level, political affiliations, presidential election results, etc.

AUTHORITY

The US Department of the Interior is the sponsoring agency for the website. The NationalAtlas is a trademark of this agency. The NationalAtlas.gov portal was designed in 1997, when Congress authorized a new national atlas. Instead of printing the atlas, The USGS led 20 federal agencies to create an electronic version of the atlas that is continually updated. This is especially beneficial as census data changes with each Census. For the government section, the atlas includes maps to the 109th congressional districts and political party affiliations.

SCOPE

All maps are available at the national and state levels. But the section also links to other special maps. Printable maps, wall maps, and dynamic maps are all

available. The maps available appeal to all ages, as they are easily readable and understandable.

FORMAT

As the maps are available in various types and formats, they are proper for their intended audience. The printable maps are all available in PDF format and downloadable. There is also a mapmaker for all the available maps, where users can select the criteria that they want for the map. It is very user–interactive.

ARRANGEMENT

There are links off of this webpage to all the maps available that are government–related, as well as links to the rest of the types and subjects of the available maps. There is a [sitemap](#) that is available that indexes the website.

ENTRIES

The government section of the website specifically highlights the printable maps for congressional districts of the 109th Congress, federal lands and Indian reservations, presidential elections 1989–2000, and reference and outline maps of the United States. Other maps linked include National Wildlife Refuge System maps and historical county boundaries, among many of the various maps available. The government webpage of the NationalAtlas also links to the other various subjects and types of maps available through the NationalAtlas.

SPECIAL FEATURES

The mapmaker feature allows users to create their own maps. This can be useful for researchers and for classroom teachers. Students, even at a young age, can practice making their own maps for free using the online mapmaker through NationalAtlas.

USE

The printable maps can be used for printing and for reports, the wall maps can be ordered, and the interactive maps can be used for research and for student

exploration of how maps are made. These maps can also be printed, although not downloaded, as they are not created in PDF format.

CRITIQUE

The website is an brilliant concept and useful for all ages. For the intended audience of this evaluation, students of American government can come to it and find out political party affiliation of various counties and presidential election historical data. The maps are printable in PDF format. As the website is easy to navigate through the subject breakdowns at the top of each page and also through the sitemap, it is a great resource for government classes, especially since the resource is free for most uses.

REFERENCES

- U.S. Department of the Interior. (2006, March 14). Learn About the National Atlas. Retrieved May 2, 2007, from <http://www.nationalatlas.gov/about.html>
- Information originally posted on [LI813 Spring 2007 Class Wiki](#); information last updated there, May 7, 2007.

Government Documents

GPO Access Online Resources: A-Z Resource List

BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Government Printing Office (2007, April 24). GPO Access Online Resources: A-Z Resource List. Retrieved April 26, 2007, from <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/databases.html>

PURPOSE

The purpose of this resource is to index and link to government documents that are available online from various government agencies. It has been produced for anyone who is needing to locate government documents online.

AUTHORITY

The index is produced by the Government Printing Office (GPO), the body responsible for printing all (federal) government documents. It is frequently updated, and was last updated April 24, 2007.

SCOPE

In order for users to access these documents, they will need a computer, as well as a PDF reader application, such as [Adobe Reader](#), for reading many of the documents indexed here.

FORMAT

The resource is formatted as a list, with documents listed being linked to their various locations on the Internet.

ARRANGEMENT

The list is arranged alphabetically.

ENTRIES

The entries themselves are links to the actual government document located on various agency websites.

SPECIAL FEATURES

No special features are available with this resource. It is a straight-forward index and linking resource.

USE

This resource can be used to locate government documents that are available online.

CRITIQUE

The only real criticism I have of this resource is that list is not exhaustive, but when government information is being produced by the millions of pages each day, and thousands of links are created to these documents, one cannot expect a complete online government document index to ever be created.

- Information originally posted on [LI813 Spring 2007 Class Wiki](#); information last updated there, May 7, 2007.

Indexes and Abstracts 1

Catalog of Government Publications

BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Catalog of Government Publications. Retrieved April 24, 2007, from <http://catalog.gpo.gov:80/F>

PURPOSE

Instead of the old print editions that were bulky and constantly out-of-date, the Catalog of Government Publications says that it “is the finding tool for federal publications that includes descriptive records for historical and current publications and provides direct links to those that are available online. Users can search by authoring agency, title, subject, and general key word, or click on “Advanced Search” for more options” (U.S. Government, 2007). It was created to allow users to search a constantly updated catalog of government publications.

AUTHORITY

The catalog is hosted and updated by the Government Printing Office, whose job is to publish and organize all published government materials. The work appears to be up-to-date, as the copyright is 2007.

SCOPE

The database is limited to government publications published by the GPO. College students, unless they were serious researchers, would not be rushing to use this catalog, as it takes some time to learn how the searching process works. Even so, it provides an invaluable resource to all researchers, as the government publishes social science studies, science research reports, environmental reports, etc. The government does not just publish “political” or “legal” information.

FORMAT

The format of the catalog is not as user friendly as some databases may be. It would take some training to get used to the different ways to search the documents available in the database. At the same time, though, by allowing users to define the search with keywords or choosing some of the more advanced search features available, the users are able to locate what they are looking for, based on their own search terms.

ARRANGEMENT

The database is not arranged in anyway. The catalog is accessed through searches. Users can choose to use the basic search, which is available on the main portal of the Catalog's webpage, or click on Advanced Search to access more search options. By choosing the advanced search option, the user can also choose the expert search option, browse the catalog by entering a starting word or two, or look at new titles. Specific collections within the catalog can also be searched. An index or sitemap would be helpful for browsing this database.

ENTRIES

When search terms are entered, records are located, and a record is selected, the information available includes the title of the work, the publisher information (the agencies responsible), the SuDoc number, the item number, a description of the item, the subjects of the item, and a search capability to locate the nearest federal depository that holds the item. The record also provides a link to the website where the document is located, if it is available electronically.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Special features for the catalog include the different levels of searches available to the users.

USE

This catalog/index can be used to locate obscure government documents, quickly find a document and what federal depository it can be found in that

closest to you. It can be used to determine if a needed document is online. It basically can be used just like a normal library catalog, that indexes its library materials.

CRITIQUE

This resource is a great opportunity to locate needed governmental documents and determine where they can be found. The biggest problem with it is that some training in searching for government documents may need to be developed to help students learn to quickly use it. Without that training, students or normal patrons would never use the resource because it is not a catalog/index that one can sit down at and easily find what you are looking for on the first search query.

REFERENCES

- U.S. Government Printing Office. (2007). Catalog of Government Publications. Retrieved April 24, 2007, from <http://catalog.gpo.gov:80/F>
- Information originally posted on [LI813 Spring 2007 Class Wiki](#); information last updated there, May 7, 2007.

Indexes and Abstracts 2

Congressional Universe

(A Lexis-Nexis Database)

BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

LexisNexis. (2007). Congressional Universe. LexisNexis. Available with subscription, from <https://web.lexis-nexis.com/congcomp>

PURPOSE

Congressional Universe, or LexisNexis Congressional, is published as an index to Congressional publications, including legislative histories of bills and laws, members and committees, regulations, Congressional record and rules, and political news and hot topics. Instead of having several print books that are out of date before they are even published and have to be updated with

supplements and new volumes, Congressional Universe is updated daily, providing current resources to users all the time.

AUTHORITY

LexisNexis is one of the leading legal information publishers in the publishing industry. The database is updated daily, as information is added to the database.

SCOPE

In order to use LexisNexis Congressional, one will need some training on searching the Lexis–Nexis databases. The audience probably is limited to upper–level college students and beyond. The database also only deals with information related to congressional data, so only those researching congressional data will find this resource to be useful.

FORMAT

The database is formatted in many ways. It cannot be browsed, unfortunately, only searched. There are many ways it can be searched, from general searches (basic, advanced, and search by number) to more specific search forms that include congressional publications, legislative histories, bills & laws, members & committees, regulations, congressional record & rules, and political news/hot topics. A Help guide can assist users in accessing the database’s information.

ARRANGEMENT

As this is a database, there is no formal arrangement to this resource. It is arranged in a way that search terms bring up the entries of congressional information that are found within the database.

ENTRIES

The entries depend on the information searched. An initial search brings up an index of related documents. Depending on the document, it may be available in full text or may just be a citation to a print document.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Special features include the variety of different searches to find congressional information. As the information has been repackaged from government documents, it is all available from one single website, by searching the database.

USE

This database can be used for locating information about congressional documents in one location, rather than using Thomas for bill history, committee websites for committee history, the congressional record website for that information, etc. This database has repackaged most of the congressional information available into a database that is easily searchable and customized to fit users' needs. However, the only problem with the database is that it does take some orientation to understand how the database works.

CRITIQUE

This resource is a fantastic one-stop congressional research resource. If one is familiar with how other Lexis-Nexis databases work (like the News one), users will be familiar with its structure and searching strategies. If users are not familiar with its structure, they will need some orientation to successfully use the database. Another negative factor of the database is the high cost of a subscription to the database each year. According to the [LexisNexis pricelist](#), Congressional Universe can cost \$2,918 per year for a university with a student body under 1,500 FTE (full-time enrollment) students. It is listed at \$3,497 for a student body with an FTE of 1,500–2,500. These prices are extravagantly high for a small university. The pricelist did have a note that libraries that are part of consortias may have access to significant discounts to subscribe to this database. Without knowing these prices, while the resource is very beneficial for congressional research, a database that is \$3,000–\$4,000 per year is probably too expensive for small universities. Only larger universities with large budgets will be able to afford a subscription, unless consortia prices are much lower.

- Information originally posted on [LI813 Spring 2007 Class Wiki](#); information last updated there, May 7, 2007.

Ready Reference

Almanac of American Politics, 2006

BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Barone, M. and R. E. Cohen. (2005). *Almanac of American Politics, 2006*. Washington, D.C.: National Journal Group.

PURPOSE

This almanac was published as a guide to governors and members of Congress, a description of each state and congressional district, and includes maps, voting records, campaign expenditures, and census data for each district and state. This material is published biannually and is a reference resource for students of government, statistics, public policy, whether they are at the college, graduate, or professorial level.

AUTHORITY

The two authors are not academics; however, both are reporters and can provide an objective summary of political data, giving the book authority, rather than a political bias. The publisher, National Journal, was referred to as “the nation’s most respected, nonpartisan source of information about how Washington’s policy-making machinery really works” (Barone, 2005, 1907) by Newsweek. As the work was published in 2005, it is current for research dealing with the 108th Congress, as well as providing summaries of 2000 Census Data. But the almanac is not chronological. Each separate edition deals with a different session of Congress.

SCOPE

The almanac is obviously limited to American politics. Its design makes it easy to use; however, with the extensive use of data and long biographies and descriptions, the book is probably good for use at a college or university library and possibly a metropolitan public library.

FORMAT

At the very beginning of the almanac, after the contents, the author includes a guide to usage of the almanac and what each section refers to. The guide also tells where the data comes from. It provides an abbreviations list for all of the various acts, groups, and parties that are included and referred to within the almanac. The guide also identifies the key votes of the 108th Congress. Each state summarized is organized in the same way, providing a familiar layout as one uses the almanac more and more.

ARRANGEMENT

The almanac is arranged alphabetically by state and an index is included in the back of the book.

ENTRIES

Within each state “chapter”, the following components can be found: an overview of the state, a map that breaks the state down into counties, as well as the congressional district(s), demographics of the state, how the state voted in the last presidential election, a breakdown of the congressional districts, and biographies of the Governor, Senators, and U.S. Representatives. Election results are included for all three groups. Voting records, group ratings, and key votes are included for the congressmen and women. For each congressional district as a part of each representative’s biography, demographics are provided for the congressional district.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Special features include the photographs available of each Governor, Senator, and U.S. Representative. The almanac also includes statistical breakdowns of each Congressional district and each state, including voting behaviors, providing a quick resource for a librarian needing fast information about past elections.

USE

The almanac can be used for gathering statistical data about a state, maps of a state or congressional district, biographies of elected officials (Governors, Senators, and Representatives), voting behaviors of the legislators, ratings of

the legislators, and background of the state, especially from a political perspective.

CRITIQUE

According to Amazon.com, this almanac is available for \$44.07. The book jacket shows the list price when it was published as \$89.95. Regardless, the repackaging of the data available in this one volume makes the book an invaluable tool for use in a college or university library. Students needing information about states, elected officials, and demographics can turn to this “ready reference” resource and quickly be able to use it without much training or guidance. The only problem with it is that once the library starts buying it each two years, it will probably want to continue to do so, which can add up book buying costs. Even so, the information contained within this volume and how easy to use it is, makes it an important addition to a college library’s reference collection.

REFERENCES

- Barone, M. and R. E. Cohen. (2005). *Almanac of American Politics*, 2006. Washington, D.C.: National Journal Group.
- Information originally posted on [LI813 Spring 2007 Class Wiki](#); information last updated there, May 7, 2007.