

HowStuffWorks. *Access:* <http://www.howstuffworks.com/>.

How are gamma rays turned into electric power via solar cells and power stations? What chemical is used in drycleaning? What are the physics behind a returning boomerang? When fielding these or similar questions, consult Marshall Brain's HowStuffWorks.com. This one site explains nearly everything you can imagine. It specializes in the mechanical, but it also tackles social concepts, cultural events, business jargon, and so on. The site uses simple language in logical, easy-to-follow descriptions. Most explanations are spread over several screens, which involves a lot of clicking, but each segment of an explanation contains links to further information and tangential topics. Though the site is dense, it is difficult to get lost.

The site is fully searchable. A typical search will result in many different approaches to a topic (theory, history, related items/ideas, derivative inventions). Almost all definition screens contain photographs, graphics, or animated diagrams to demonstrate how things work. Definitions are often sprinkled with jokes and anecdotes to make the reading entertaining, but not so many that the authority of the explanation suffers.

The homepage is often revised to remain current and to provide links to the newest or most popular queries. It also features "Top Tens" in the left margin, which lists what people recently have been curious about. If you are a regular visitor, there is a link to the newest articles at the bottom of the main page. There are also pages for discussion forums, gadget of the day, animation of the day, factory tours, and an animated tour of the Web site that highlights the site's features for the newcomer.

The site's drawbacks are not egregious. Due to its vast amount of information and the creator's desire to present something for everyone, the pages are very busy. Each page of a description contains a central text box about the subject at hand. This is surrounded on all sides by menus, advertisements, additional

links, means by which to tell a friend, and so on. The font—also due to crowding a lot of material on each page—is sometimes small and can tire the eyes.

Wonderful pluses are that the site is largely translatable using Babblefish.com. Most of the definitions have stated authors, and the material is up-to-date. The site offers a free newsletter to anyone who asks for it and it sells print books filled with the most often discussed and most popular topics.—Christine Dykgraaf, *University of Arizona, dykgraafc@u.library.arizona.edu*

Financial Markets Center. *Access:* <http://www.fmcenter.org/>.

The Financial Markets Center Web site provides extensive information on the Federal Reserve System and its relationship to the financial markets. Maintained by a nonprofit organization, the site presents a range of useful information from a basic description of the structure and function of the Federal Reserve

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System to meeting schedules and transcripts. The site also includes useful background information and tools to foster understanding of the role of interest rates in the economy.

The site gathers all public information on the Federal Reserve System in one place through its links to public documents, explanatory documents, and relevant public Web sites. It also brings together commentaries, analyses, and predictions forecasting the operations of the Federal Reserve System. Given the less-than-open, day-to-day operations of the Fed, this site supports public understanding of the workings of this important part of government.

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The site is divided very simply into three general areas: "Departments," "Topics," and "What's New(s)." "Departments" includes general overviews, newsletters, research materials, relevant links, and Federal Reserve archives. In the "Topics" area, four subjects (monetary policy, reserve banks, financial markets, and regulatory issues) are covered with links to documents and other Web sites. "What's New(s)" gives a brief overview of the latest news from the Federal Reserve System and links to documents and Web sites discussing the ideas further.

Other features of the site include a keyword search option that did not perform well when I did a simple search on "weekend rate cut," which was covered in the "Topics" section. On the other hand, I did a second search on "margin debt" and received 15 relevant links to articles on the Web site. E-mail notification is another option the user can choose for site updates.

The Financial Markets Center is an attractive, straightforward site that coherently presents and connects an array of specialized information. Anyone interested in federal monetary policy and the mechanics of interest rate operations will find this site helpful, whether it's the average citizen wondering "what the Fed is up to" or the financial professional seeking the latest meeting transcript.

The only drawback to the site is its ineffective search capability, which is important given the large amount of information on the site, regardless of its simple design. Financial Markets Center is a highly recommended source for past and current information on the Federal Reserve System.—*Colleen Lougen, Mount Saint Mary College, lougen@msmc.edu*

DDILL: Document Delivery and Interlibrary Loan Services Guide. Access:

<http://www.ddill.org/>.

It behooves the information professional or knowledge worker to self-manage continuing education opportunities, especially when training resources are freely available on the Web. Do you want to learn more about a service within the profession? Locked into reference, but hanker to know how to catalog or expedite the interlibrary loan (ILL) process? If so, free training abounds. Document Delivery and Interlibrary Loan Services Guide (DDILL) is a paragon of a professional educa-

tion site. It's an oasis of help and how-to's for those new to ILL, and it's a solid resource for experienced professionals too. In sum, it's a no-frills, bare-bones directory of useful content. Aesthetics—thumbs down. Content and utility—thumbs up.

Recently, I've been researching OCLC's ILL Web product. Lacking the philosophical and conceptual background of the ILL process, I decided to read DDILL's Crash Course in ILL. Surely, a *For Dummies* manual could be produced from this material. DDILL offers online help with various software packages and links to free training materials, including the free Web tutorial that OCLC provides.

Among other features, users can view sample ILL forms and policies, explore copyright law, learn about obtaining dissertations, and read the debate about where ILL service should be located—reference, circulation, technical services?

Reference and ILL staff will find DDILL's "Verification Tools and Free Full-Text Sources" incredibly helpful. A shared knowledge of these tools would only serve to improve communication and collaboration between the two staffs. DDILL links to citation databases (e.g., Agricola), OPACs (e.g., Libdex), media directories (e.g., Publist), e-texts (e.g., Online Books Page), and so on. However, I did not see a link to the awesome troubleshooting tool known as JAS (Journal Abbreviations Server).

DDILL is a truly egalitarian site that caters to tyros as well as seasoned professionals. The site offers the user the chance for a more holistic, integrated view of library services and functions. If it's that macro understanding that you lack, this Web site will fill in the holes and empower you. One drawback of the site is that it is not searchable. Drill away!—*C. Brian Smith, Judson College, bsmith@judsoncollege.edu* ■

"Job of a Lifetime" ideas?

If you know of an innovative or unusual academic library position that you'd like to see highlighted in the "Job of a Lifetime" column, e-mail your suggestions to Dianne Mizzy at dianne+@pitt.edu.