Internet Reviews

Sara Amato, editor

Rand: A Nonprofit Institution That Helps Improve Public Policy through Research and Analysis. *Access:* http://www.rand.org.
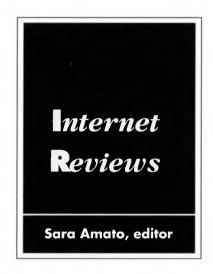
The Rand Corporation emerged after World War II as a nonprofit think tank that focused on providing high-quality, objective research on national security. In the 1960s Rand began addressing problems of domestic policy as well. Its current aim is to help policymakers "strengthen the nation's economy, maintain its security, and improve its quality of life by helping them make choices in education, health care, national defense, and criminal and civil justice. . . ." Another stated goal is to serve the public interest by widely disseminating research findings to the public. This well-designed site is certainly a step in the right direction, offering easy, logical access to electronic documents, reports, books, issue papers, briefs, press releases, and mountains of research which has long been available, though buried, in many university libraries.

The homepage sports a modest but attractive image map of choices, but also provides access to a nonimage based index. The Research Areas selection gives an overview of the organization's research and programs. The broad scope of the disciplines involved in research include the behavioral sciences; economics and statistics; health, education, and welfare; information sciences; international studies; management sciences; and technology and applied sciences.

The subject area bibliographies, available here or through the Publications selection on the homepage, are particularly useful. There are more than 50 categories such as arms control, environment, Latin America, narcotics control, space technology and planning, urban studies, and more. Each bibliography can list a hundred subcategories, each of which yields several citations to reports, including abstracts, related documents, those elusive Rand Publication numbers, and information for purchasing reports.

The Hot Topics selection delivers research briefs which are policy-oriented summaries of individual publications and include useful graphs. Press releases are also available here. In the Publications area, one gets a sense of the full array of documents available, both full text and in citation format, available electronically or in print.

Finally, if you would rather search the database by keyword there are two options: search the whole server for full-text documents or search the abstracts of Rand documents. In either case, you get a sophisticated search engine that yields good searching results.

Rand strives to conduct objective, high-quality research, investigating perspectives not always considered elsewhere. It would be useful for students and scholars as well as the policymakers it is intended to serve. This site is also a model for information retrieval via the Web. For these two reasons alone, this site is worth the visit.—*Barbara Valentine, Linfield College; bvalen@calvin.linfield.edu*

The League of Conservation Voters. *Access:* http://www.lcv.org/.

The League of Conservation Voters (LCV) is the nonpartisan political action arm of the environmental movement in the U.S. Founded in 1970, it brings together representatives from several mainstream environmental groups for the purposes of identifying "green" politicians through the publication *National Environmental Scorecard,* and contributing to the campaigns of those politicians.

The main publications found on LCV's Web site are the *National Environmental Scorecard* and the *Green Guide to the 105th Congress.* The online editions of the *Scorecard* range from 1993 to 1996 and contain an environmental score for each U.S. representative and senator based on voting records. Each member's listing includes his or her score for the current and previous years, votes on important environmental bills, and contact information (including e-mail and Web addresses). Linked to the voting

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records are descriptions of the bills, which are very useful for anyone researching environmental legislation. The descriptions, some of which cover riders attached to other bills, also include histories of sponsorship, opposition, and actions taken. Related to the *Scorecard* is the "Votes" section, which will list the votes taken on important environmental issues in the 105th Congress. An e-mail update service is also available for distributing this information.

The Green Guide profiles all the new members of the 105th Congress. Biographical information, election results, endorsements from environmental organizations, and an environmental profile are provided for each legislator.

Other information includes links to other environmental and political resources, letters sent to Congress by the LCV, and an analysis of the 1996 elections which mainly focuses on a few races where the LCV was heavily involved, describing its contributions to the campaign and including Quicktime movies of sample television advertisements.

The site is well-designed overall with a few unobtrusive graphics to aid navigation. Users without graphics will find the site more difficult to navigate but still usable. Searching the site using the Excite search engine is simple and works fairly well. The LCV site, while obviously useful for educating the voting public, also provides a wealth of information for faculty or students in environmental studies or political science.—*DeAnne Luck, Austin Peay State University; LuckDL@apsu01.apsu.edu*

Internet Mental Health. *Access*: http://www. mentalhealth.com/.
Internet Mental Health was conceived by a Canadian psychiatrist, Dr. Phillip Long, who, after a trip to observe Japan's mental health system, felt the need for a global exchange of information in the field of mental health. The result is this impressive site, which is geared towards not only mental health professionals, but to students, patients, mental health support groups, and members of the general public who wish to learn more about mental health.

From a technical standpoint, this is a well-designed site. Internet Mental Health makes good use of frames, a rarity on the Web. Instead of being an annoying waste of space, the frames on this site add to the ease of navigation, keeping links to all the other areas of the site close at hand. It is also possible to explore this site with graphics turned off, or to access it with a text-based browser such as Lynx.

While this is a very comprehensive site covering most aspects of mental health, the authors wisely note that they don't attempt to cover every aspect in this huge field. They have chosen to deal with the 52 most common mental disorders including: description (American and European), diagnosis, treatment, and research findings. Also discussed are the 67 most common psychiatric drugs including: indications, contraindications, warnings, precautions, adverse effects, overdose, dosage, and research findings. It is important for the user to be aware that the information covering drugs comes from Canadian sources, and the author notes that there can be differences in indications, dosage forms, and warnings for these drugs in other countries. Unfortunately, the sources from which this information is taken are not cited.

While the European disorder descriptions are cited from the *ICD-10 Classification of Mental and Behavioural Disorders*, the American disorder descriptions have no such citations, and the user is left wondering about the source of this information. Most of the descriptions do seem to conform to the *DSM IV*.

Some of the more interesting features to be found here are the online diagnostic tools. While not meant to substitute for professional diagnosis, the site offers simple online questionnaires designed to diagnose alcohol dependence and major depressive disorder. Another similar program is available to download.

Finally, the full text of selected articles (the *Harvard Mental Health Letter* and the *Medical Post* are the two most common sources) and brochures can be found online at Internet Mental Health, making this a very useful resource

for anyone who needs quick and authoritative information in this broad field.—*Paul R. Pival, Nova Southeastern University; paulp@nsu. nova.edu* ∎