The Institute for Global Communications. *Access:* http://www.igc.org.

The Institute for Global Communications: Connecting People Who Are Changing the World is a nongovernmental organization that with several partners has been the primary information and communications service provider at several U.N. world conferences.

It manages four information networks for nonprofit activist organizations: PeaceNet, EcoNet, WomensNet, and Anti-RacismNet. Each of these networks offers headlines of breaking news in the field as well as "action alerts" for people who want to be involved. The site contains chat rooms, event calendars, and advocacy tips of interest primarily to the site's activist audience, but there are some features that will be useful to library patrons.

One of these features is the site's subject directory of member Web sites related to activism and advocacy, many of which are not listed in similar directories, such as Yahoo and About.com. These members range from organizations to individuals. The IGC site offers an excellent search engine of its members' publicly accessible Web pages and of its own online documents. Notable functions are the ability to check spelling of search terms, to browse keyword lists, and to select related terms. A third feature of the site that librarians will want to note is the job/volunteer opportunities section, of use to students looking for a job or internship in activist fields.

The site is updated regularly; the site administrators evaluate activists' news submissions and select new stories at least weekly. This award-winning site will be of use to undergraduate students researching social issues, as long as they are aware of the site's bias.— *Heidi Senior, University of Portland, senior@up.edu*

The World Wide Web Acronym and Abbreviation Server. *Access:* http://www.ucc.ie/info/net/acronyms/index.html.

Acronyms have proliferated in our increasingly complex society, especially in technical fields, such as computer science and medicine. Reference tools are essential for decoding these acronyms. The most comprehensive source is *Gale's Acronyms, Initialisms, and Abbreviations Dictionary,* which lists more than 400,000 acronyms. It's hard to imagine an academic reference collection without a copy of this excellent print source. Most academic libraries also own acronym dictionaries for specific subject areas, such as computer science, engineering, medicine, military, and other technical fields. In addition to these print sources, numerous acronym Web sites now exist, most of which are specialized lists for topics ranging from accountancy to veterinary medicine.

This Web site was probably the first acronym site to appear on the Internet. The WWW Acronym and Abbreviation Server was started in the mid-1980s as an e-mail server, and in 1992 it went on the Web. The current author/producer is the original founder of the site, Peter Flynn of University College in Cork, Ireland.

At this writing, the site includes 17,838 acronyms from all subject areas. The site defines an acronym as "any string of characters formed from the initial letters (or occasionally from other letters) of several words, regardless of whether the result is pronounceable or not."

The database can be searched by acronym or by word. Browsing is available; if you are not sure of the exact acronym, you can type in one or more letters or words to look through a list of all acronyms containing those letters or words. Acronyms are included from business, computer sci-

ence, education, government, military, sports, and many other subjects. A few facetious acronyms are included in the database (such as BANANA: Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anyone), but the great majority are mainstream acronyms for organizations, journals, technical terms, etc. Most of the entries are American or British acronyms. You may submit acronyms for inclusion in the Web site, but unfortunately the site is not being updated regularly.

Responding to an e-mail query from this reviewer, the producer noted that the site is an "unofficial, volunteer effort" and has not been updated recently. However, he does plan to continue the site and is working on improvements, such as categorization and possibly a new interface.

This relatively small Web site cannot compare to a comprehensive source, such as Gale's acronyms dictionary. But if you want to do a quick lookup and you're away from the reference desk, the site could be handy. The only similar site on the Web is the commercial Acronym Finder (www.acronymfinder.com), which lists 129,000 acronyms.—*Susan E. Clark, Seattle, WA, seclark1@uswest.net*

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. *Access:* http://www.oscars.org.

This site provides access to a wealth of information about the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS), including the Academy Awards, directly from the organization itself.

Oscars.org is the start page and contains contact information and links to its two major pages: the main AMPAS site (http://www3.oscars.org/index2.html) and the Official Academy Awards Site (www.oscar.com). A last update indication is not readily apparent on any of the pages. Some information, such as history and recent nominees, is repeated in both sites.

Visitors can navigate the main AMPAS site by using the links near the top of the page: Academy Awards (features interesting "inside" information about rules, pro-

moting guidelines, and a reminder list of eligible releases), Academy Events Calendar, Contents (site map), Search (the site), and Oscar.com. There is also a link to a page featuring official Academy publications, such as books and posters.

There are also three pull-down menus near the bottom of the page: Events & Services, Education & Preservation, and Information. These helpful menus contain quick links to specific pages within the site, such as the Margaret Herrick Library and its special collections. Unfortunately, the library's holdings are not searchable.

The AMPAS site currently contains two databases, and a third is coming soon. The Academy Awards Database contains information about nominees and winners from 1927 to the present and is searchable by keyword, date, or category with the useful option to display winners only.

However, there is a lack of help documentation, such as the proper syntax for a name search. For example, searching "Jane Fonda" brings up Fonda, musician Jon Bon Jovi, and other entries. Searching "Fonda Jane" brings up Fonda, the film Fantasia, and other entries. Searching by category or date is much more straightforward.

One should not count on being able to access the database at all times. An error message stating, "The Academy Awards Nominees and Winners database is temporarily unavailable due to heavy Internet traffic" appeared several times during the writing of this review.

The Scientific & Technical Awards Database contains information about these awards from 1930 to the present and is searchable by year, award class, award category, or keyword. Again, there is no help documentation.

The Oscar.com site is produced by ABC.com in partnership with AMPAS and focuses on the televised awards show and the glitz, glamour, and fun associated with it.

Highlights include behind-the-scenes coverage, fashion commentary, and trivia. Oscars.org has some flaws but is still useful for film students, film historians, film fans, and members of the film industry.—*Samantha J. Gust, Niagara University, gust@niagara.edu* ∎

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