

The Library of Congress Country Studies. Access: <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html>.

Anyone looking for information on the society and culture of a country will find this quality site a good place to start. It is an online version of the invaluable *Country Studies/Area Handbook* series sponsored by the Department of the Army and prepared by the Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress. Although not all of the *Handbook* series countries are available online, this site does contain profiles for 85 countries with the implicit promise of more.



Do not expect to find the latest economic data or political events about countries here. Most of the information was updated in 1994 or before. This site does provide an in-depth look at the geography, politics, history, social welfare, and economy of each country. But the real strength of the *Handbook* series lies in its concentration on the social and cultural aspects of countries, information that is often very difficult to find through other means. In fact, the authors devote particular attention to “the people who make up the society, their origins, dominant beliefs and values, their common interests and the issues on which they are divided, the nature and extent of their involvement with national institutions, and their attitudes toward each other and toward their social system and political order.”

This site, which has vastly improved in the past year, is uncluttered and simple to use. One may browse the table of contents for a specific country that links to sections of modest (and printable) length. Each section contains header and/or footer links for easy navigation throughout the document. In addition, the documents contain maps, pictures, and handy links to a glossary, which defines such things as acronyms, monetary conversions, and political terms. And at this site, there is never a doubt about authority and currency: each

section is signed and dated. The search engine provided allows one to search across all or selective countries or even within a country document using a specific keyword or phrase. The resulting search display makes it easy to judge relevance at a glance.

The main drawback of this site is that not all the books in the print series have made it to this online version. Some notables missing are Germany, Argentina, Costa Rica, and Mexico. In addition, the series itself ignores many, perhaps more familiar, Western countries such as France, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. But many of the countries found here, such as Seychelles and Bhutan, do tend to be less well represented elsewhere, and for that reason alone this site is worthwhile. Students investigating culture for communication, business, and other classes will find this an invaluable, quick spot to visit on the Web.—
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Douglass: Archives of American Public Address. Access: <http://douglass.speech.nwu.edu/index.html>.

Named after the abolitionist and great American orator Frederick Douglass, this is an electronic archive of American speeches and related documents intended to serve both general scholarship and courses in American rhetorical history at Northwestern University. Douglass now includes the texts of nearly 100 speeches ranging from John Winthrop’s “On Liberty” (1645) to Hillary Rodham Clinton’s “Words to Break the Silence and Then to Act” (1995). The layout of the site, the site search utility, and the indexing of the speeches by speaker, title, chronology, and “controversy or movement” suggest, however, that Douglass is meant to grow. Indeed, the structure of Douglass could easily accommodate hundreds, if not thousands, of speeches, which would make it a major resource in its field.

But Douglass is more than an archive; it is also designed to incorporate user contribu-

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tions and serve the needs of ongoing scholarship. According to Douglass editor Dan Oetting, "one of the gaps in the teaching-research-publishing sequence of speech professionals is the short, informal research note." Douglass attempts to fill this gap by soliciting research notes, as well as more extensive guides. The notes are now displayed on associated Web pages, each covering a different period of American history, beginning with "Colonial and Revolutionary America" and concluding with "After Vietnam." Links to these pages of "User Notes" appear next to the speeches themselves and are intended to facilitate the study of the texts through reference to the research notes, guides, and other pertinent documents on the Web. Unfortunately, the site includes very few research notes and no guides to date. One hopes that as Douglass grows, the value of the notes will become apparent and they will flow in. Links to audio files containing recordings of the original speeches would also be a welcome addition. Douglass as an interactive, multimedia educational enterprise could become an example of the Web at its best. It is no surprise, therefore, that Douglass has already been the recipient of more than 30 awards.

One final note: With its links to academic speech associations, professional news, and a wide spectrum of online resources, Douglass is also well suited to serve as an online desktop reference for both students and professionals in the field of communication.—*W. Thomas Nichol, College of St. Benedict & St. John's University; tnichol@csbsju.edu*

The Avalon Project. Access: <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/valon.htm>

The Avalon Project was undertaken in 1996 by William Fray and Lisa Spar at Yale Law School. The objective is to provide access to digital records pertinent to the fields of history, economics, law, politics, diplomacy, and government.

The collection of over 150 documents is divided into five categories: pre-18th-Century Documents, 18th Century, 19th Century, 20th Century, and Major Collections. Examples of pre-18th Century documents include the Athenian Constitution, Laws of William the Conqueror, and the Constitution of Clarendon. Documents of the 18th Century range from Papers of James Madison to the Proclamation of Neutrality in 1793. The 19th- and 20th-Cen-

tury Documents are extensive categories, with the 19th Century beginning to focus on trade issues and the 20th Century focusing on World War II and the creation of the United Nations. In addition, subheadings within time periods are provided, for example, Middle East Documents in the 20th Century category. An interesting fea-



ture is the range of documents, with some instantly recognizable and others more esoteric.

The Major Collections category contains sets of related documents, such as United States Statutes Concerning Native Americans, Franco-American Diplomacy, and Papers of the Confederate States of America. A budding collection of presidential papers will be useful when fully updated. A "What's New" site details works-in-progress, such as Texas Annexation Documents and papers of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East. Each document can also be accessed via the time period in which it was published.

Access is provided alphabetically within each time period, as well as via a title and author index to all documents. The site is easily navigated via a title bar, with tables of contents organized in attractive, straightforward tables. Anchors within long texts aid navigation. A search mechanism would be helpful as the site expands in scope. The Project digitizes printed texts, as well as converts the electronic resources of other institutions into HTML. Selected documents contain a glossary with the entries accessible via hypertext links, as well as cross-references between texts. Documents are included based on potential interest to the academic community, historical significance, and relevance to documents already part of the Project.

The Avalon Project is an example of how the Web can be used to augment the print collections of the library. Documents span a wide range of years, including an impressive array of early material. Undergraduate history and political science students wanting easily accessible primary source material will find this site particularly beneficial.—*Britt Fagerheim, University of Washington; bfgager@u.washington.edu* ■