

Twentieth-century authors

Biographic and bibliographic information is
just a click away

by Michelle Mach and Cynthia D. Shirkey

For students and other researchers interested in 20th-century authors, information on the Internet often enriches (but doesn't replace) the basics found in traditional resources like *Contemporary Authors*. While Internet sources may also cover an author's background, education, publications and awards, they often go one step farther to offer unique items that are updated in a timely manner. Frequently, living and popular authors may have their own Web pages with photos and narratives. Other Internet-only finds include author photographs, sound recordings of authors' readings, announcements about upcoming author appearances, and previews of new works.

This column contains selected Web sites that cover English-language authors who are currently prominent or who flourished sometime in the 20th century.¹ It will focus primarily on biographical and bibliographic information, with some information on literary criticism. While some primary texts from the early 20th century are available online, they were considered outside the scope of this column.

Most of the sites included are housed at academic institutions and are maintained by individual professors. In addition to these sources, Web sites of large booksellers often contain valuable information about contemporary authors, especially in the form of brief

biographies, interviews, and book reviews. Newspapers and book publishers also sometimes preview opening chapters of recently published works.

Starting points: meta sites and directories

- **About.com Guides.** An impressive Web directory, About.com has guides on fiction, authors, English Literature, poetry, fantasy/scifi, romance fiction, and an extensive list of audio recordings by authors reading their own works. Each guide is presented by an identified author and is subdivided into various topics, such as authors, mail lists, anthologies, interviews, movements, chat rooms, book reviews, bulletin boards, and e-zines. *Access:* <http://home.about.com/arts/books/>.

- **Contemporary Literature.** Hosted by the English Department at Northwestern University in Illinois, this bibliography of Web sites is devoted to American and British authors, including some official authors' pages. *Access:* <http://www2.mmlc.nwu.edu/english/weblinks/contemporary.html>.

- **Nebraska Writers & Beyond.** This site, which is published by the Nebraska Center for Writers at Creighton University, is quite extensive, although it does not include genre writers. It has a useful list of bibliographies

About the authors

Michelle Mach is a reference librarian and Web specialist at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, e-mail: mmach@manta.library.colostate.edu; Cynthia D. Shirkey is the English and American Literature reference bibliographer at Dartmouth University, e-mail: cynthia.d.shirkey@dartmouth.edu

and directories of writers online, including directories of writers from other states and links of interest to students of genre, gender, and cultural studies. *Access:* <http://mockingbird.creighton.edu/nw/writers.htm>.

• **Voice of the Shuttle.** Since 1994 VoS has provided broad and deep coverage of literature resources: authors, works, projects, course syllabi, criticism and critics, journals, mail lists and newsgroups, and conferences and calls for papers. Twentieth-century information can be found in the modern, contemporary, literature by genre, and theory sections. The site is maintained by Professor Alan Liu at the University of California at Santa Barbara. *Access:* <http://vos.ucsb.edu/shuttle/english.html>.

Overviews of 20th-century America

• **American Cultural History: The Twentieth Century.** This Web site, created by Kingswood College Library in Texas, has quick facts about the decade, links to art and architecture, books and literature, fashion and fads, education, historic events and technology, music, persons and personalities, and theater and film. The books & literature section includes "Books that Define the Time" (*Sister Carrie*) and "Books Covering the Period" (*Annals of History*). *Access:* <http://www.nhmccd.edu/contracts/lrc/kc/decades.html>.

• **An Outline of American Literature.** This book-like Web site was originally written seven years ago by Kathryn Van Spanckeren and published by the U.S. Information Agency. It is an overview of the entire span of American literature, and includes four chapters about 20th-century literature: "The Rise of Realism: 1860–1914," "Modernism and Experimentation: 1914–1945," "American Poetry Since 1945: Realism and Experimentation," and "American Prose Since 1945: Realism and Experimentation." Each section skims its designated period of American literature and also includes some information about popular genre writers of the time. *Access:* <http://www.usia.gov/products/pubs/oal/oaltoc.htm>.

• **PAL: Perspectives in American Literature.** Created by Paul P. Reuben of California State University, Stanislaus, PAL is arranged like

a textbook and contains chapters on "Early Twentieth Century to 1945," "Late Twentieth Century: 1945 to Present," "American Drama," and "Harlem Renaissance." Each chapter contains an introductory essay, selected bibliographies, and information on authors. *Access:* <http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/table.html>.

Lists of 20th-century works

• **The 150 Best English Language Novels of the 20th Century.** Consolidates four lists: Harvard Bookstore's Top 100 Recommended Titles, Koen Book Distributor's Top 100 Books of the Past Century, *Library Journals*'s 150 20th Century Most Influential Fiction, and the much publicized Modern Library's 100 Best Novels list. It is maintained by Friendswood (Texas) Public Library. *Access:* http://www.friendswood.lib.tx.us/lib_business/frpubtop150.htm.

• **Bestseller Lists 1900–1995.** This Web site by Cader Books contains a record of *Publisher's Weekly's* top ten best novels for nearly the entire century. *Access:* <http://www.caderbooks.com/bestintro.html>.

• **Feminista 100 Great 20th Century Works of Fiction by Women.** This list was created in response to the Modern Library's list to remedy the small number of women novelists included. *Access:* <http://www.feminista.com/v2n3/100.html>.

• **Literary Prizes, Awards, etc.** Created by the Canterbury Public Library in New Zealand, this page has information on more than 40 international adult and children's literature prizes. *Access:* <http://www.ccc.govt.nz/Library/LiteraryPrizes/>.

• **Nobel Prizes.** This site has varying amounts of information on winners of the various Nobel Prizes, including literature, and each Nobel Laureate's entry has a photo and a brief biography or autobiography. Some entries also include links to other resources, articles by Nobel committee members, acceptance speeches, excerpts from work, and color graphics of the awards. *Access:* <http://www.nobel.se/prize/progtable.html>.

Area studies and genres

• **Contemporary Postcolonial & Postimperial Literature in English.** Started as a project for one of George P. Landow's classes at Brown University, this site has sec-



tions on the literature of Africa, Australia, Canada, Caribbean, Indian Subcontinent, New Zealand, Singapore, and the United Kingdom. It also has separate sections on postcolonial theory and authors, which contains biographies, style guides, and bibliographies. *Access:* <http://landow.stg.brown.edu/post/misc/postov.html>.

• **Electronic Poetry Center (EPC).**

Housed at the University of Buffalo and authored by the Department of English, the Faculty of Arts & Letters and the University Library System at SUNY, EPC is a fabulous poetry resource. EPC has links to electronic poetry magazines, authors' pages, a list of poetry presses, an excellent poetry Web guide, visual poetry files, and lists of past and upcoming poetry conferences. It also contains RealAudio files of the Case Award-winning LINEbreak radio program consisting of interviews and readings by novelists and screenwriters. *Access:* <http://epc.buffalo.edu/>.

• **Internet Public Library (IPL): Native American Authors.** This resource allows users to view biographies, reviews, and authors' Web pages. In addition, IPL's site has information on tribal Web sites and contains bibliographies. *Access:* <http://www.ipl.org/ref/native/>.

• **Post WWII American Literature and Culture Database: Genres.** This University of California, Berkeley, English Department's site includes sections on bibliographies, post modernism, science fiction, punk and hardcore, generation X, feminism, queer, multiculturalism, and popular culture. *Access:* <http://english.berkeley.edu/postwar/genres.html>.

• **OzLit—Authors List.** Although commercially oriented, Mareya and Peter Schmidt's OzLit is a valuable resource for those interested in Australian literature. Biographies and bibliographies are accessible through its authors list page. *Access:* <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~ozlit/writlist.html>.

• **Voices from the Gaps: Women Writers of Color.** Organized by name, birthplace, racial/ethnic background, and significant dates, each entry includes a brief biography, bibliography of selected works, related works, plus photos of the writer and of the one book cover. The site is produced by the University of Minnesota's Department of English and Pro-

gram in American Studies. *Access:* <http://voices.cla.umn.edu/>.

Theory/criticism

• **Internet Public Library (IPL)—Online Literary Criticism.** Containing more than 2,400 critical and biographical Web sites about authors and their works, this site can be browsed by author, title, nationality, and literary period. Claiming that "Good literary criticism can be one of the hardest kinds of information to find on the Internet," IPL has created an "authoritative and critical" Web guide. Also links to a Literary Criticism Pathfinder, which guides students searching for literary criticism on the Internet. *Access:* <http://www.ipl.org/ref/litcrit/>.

• **Voice of the Shuttle: Theory.** Part of Alan Liu's VoS, this section covers general



theory resources (early to mid 20th century and contemporary) including subsec-

tions such as Deconstruction and Feminist Theory. It also has links to journals, zines, mail lists, newsgroups, course syllabi, conferences, and calls for papers. *Access:* <http://vos.ucsb.edu/shuttle/theory.html>.

Journals and zines

Much original writing on the Web can only be found in nonacademic electronic magazines, frequently called zines. While we are not including any individual zines, we have included a resource that provides access to and short annotations about them.

• **Beatrice.** An electronic magazine focusing on fiction and nonfiction authors, Beatrice has interviews going back to 1996 with such writers as Bharati Mukherjee, George Plimpton, and Linda Barnes. *Access:* <http://www.beatrice.com/contents/>.

• **Blue Moon Review.** This was the "first electronic quarterly online to focus exclusively on literary work" and contains interviews, fiction, poetry and creative nonfiction, along with a small press preview section. Mark Trainer is the editor in chief. *Access:* <http://www.thebluemoon.com/>.

• **Hungry Mind Review.** The online version of this magazine began in 1995 and publishes reviews for fiction, children's literature, nonfiction, and essays. *Access:* <http://www.bookwire.com/hmr/>.

• **LitLine.** Created by Greg Maier, LitLine links to literary journals, many zines, small presses, and literary organizations. It is searchable, and may be useful for less well-known contemporary authors. *Access:* <http://www.litline.org/>.

• **Salon Magazine.** Self-described as the "best reader party on the Internet," Salon has interviews going back to 1995, which include conversations with authors such as Salman Rushdie, Andrea Barrett, and Dorothy Allison. *Access:* http://www.salon.com/archives/1999/books_int.html.

Beyond the books

For those who want to contact, meet, or see their favorite authors.

• **Authors on the Highway.** Search for author readings, signings, and appearances by event location (bookstore, city, state) or work (title, author, publisher) on this site created by *Publisher's Weekly*. *Access:* <http://www.publishersweekly.com/highway/>.

• **Author Pseudonyms.** An especially useful site for gathering information on genre authors. *Access:* <http://www.BookBrowser.com/Pseudonyms/>.

• **Book TV.** Watch videos of nonfiction authors talking about their works, primarily in the areas of biography, business, history, and children's literature on this site. Recent authors have included Esmeralda Santiago, Doris Kearns Goodwin, and P. J. O'Rourke on this site produced by C-SPAN. *Access:* <http://www.booktv.org/booknotes/>.

• **Directory of American Poets & Writers.** This searchable directory of contact information for more than 4,000 American poets and fiction writers is published by the Poets & Writers organization. *Access:* <http://www.pw.org/directry.htm>.

Mail lists, newsgroups, and virtual communities

Mail lists

Jack Lynch at Rutgers University maintains an extensive list of literature-related e-mail lists nicely categorized by subject or area focus, including one directory of 20th-century lists.

Lists focus either on a broad area of literature or on a single author. The Rutgers University list was formerly maintained at the University of Pennsylvania English Department's gopher site. *Access:* <http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Lit/Lists/> A sample of available mailing lists:

• **AFAMLIT-L** on African American literature. *Subscribe:* listserv@listserv.uic.edu.

• **AMLIT-L** on American literature. *Subscribe:* listproc@lists.missouri.edu.

• **CANLIT-L** on Canadian literature. *Subscribe:* listserv@infoserv.nlc-bnc.ca.

• **LITERARY** on books and authors, especially 19th- and 20th-century American and English literature. *Subscribe:* literary@list.cren.net.

• **POSTCOLONIAL** on postcolonial literature, film, and theory. *Subscribe:* majordomo@lists.villiagevirginia.edu.

• **SF-LIT** on science fiction and fantasy. *Subscribe:* listserv@loc.gov.

• **VWOOLF** on author Virginia Woolf. *Subscribe:* listproc@lists.acs.ohio-state.edu.

Newsgroups

In addition to the two general newsgroups listed below, many newsgroups focus on individual authors. There are 65 newsgroups for individual authors, mainly contemporary genre authors, listed on *Deja* (*Access:* <http://www.deja.com/>).

• **bit.listserv.literary**

• **rec.arts.books**

Virtual communities

• **PostmodernMOO.** A virtual interactive space designed to promote the exploration of postmodern theory and practice. *Access:* <telnet://baymoo.sfsu.edu:8888>.

• **English Server.** Sponsored by the English Department at Carnegie Mellon University, this site combines a giant electronic magazine feel with bulletin boards, chat rooms, and mail lists to form an enjoyable place for anyone interested in the humanities. With more than 26,600 works online (some self-published and some board edited), you never know what you might find. *Access:* <http://english-www.hss.cmu.edu/>.

Note

1. For information on foreign language writers, see Rob Withers, "Foreign language, literature, and culture," *C&RL News* 60 (May 1999): 361-364, 410. ■

Hunting for

BOOKS

that are used or out-of-print? You've

FOUND

the right Web site.

Tracking down books for a course on children's literature? Want to build collections in physics? Or sports medicine? Or presidential history? Need to replace a wide variety of titles no longer in print? Find it all at Alibris. We're committed to being the most reliable, full-service source for libraries seeking used and out-of-print books.

- *Single source for hundreds of dealers*
- *Purchase orders accepted*
- *Millions of titles*
- *FREE search service*
- *Consolidated shipping*
- *All books guaranteed*
- *Order online at <http://library.alibris.com>*

Find the books you thought you couldn't.

ALIBRIS

www.alibris.com