

# African American culture

## Some sites you should bookmark

by Elna L. Saxton and Jo McClamroch

This piece began with a focus on education-related and other scholarly sites. Since African American Studies (or Black Studies or Afro-American Studies) has been an established academic discipline at dozens of institutions since the late 1960s, we were confident we would quickly be overrun with quality sites. It soon became apparent that there are many quality sites, and that to focus only on academic sites was too narrow for this article. Our resource list, therefore, expanded beyond academia into a total of five categories: Getting started, Educational sites/research centers, Organizations/associations, Afrocentric sites, and E-journals/news services.

We do deliberately highlight more African American than Africana sites. At the same time, we do not suggest that we could capture the essence of or exhaust the number of potentially valuable sites for any culture's links, be it African American, Asian American, Native American, or any ethnic group. At the risk of sounding hyperbolic, the Internet is a mother lode of information for cultural information.

Librarians know that the quality of information on the Internet is problematic. We used several criteria: scope of coverage (depth and breadth), relevancy of links, logic of organization, comparision to similar sites, and aesthetic appeal with limited commercial overtones. We evaluated at least ten and up to thirty sites in each of our categories

before deciding on our final recommendations. We would emphasize that no cultural group should be seen in monolithic terms and we have attempted to include sites that represent views along the political and ideological spectra. We also tried to avoid an emphasis on any particular geographic region or historical period.

Compiling this list of Internet resources has been both a fascinating and rewarding undertaking. We were pleased to discover the wealth of resources, especially access to full-text documents. Libraries that serve large numbers of ethnic and minority groups are encouraged to develop their own linked bookmarks with subject relevance to their local communities.

### Getting started

- **African American Web Connection (AAWC).** An excellent starting point. The site is crisp, clean, very logically arranged, and features links to many art and art-related sites. The product of a "Web hobbyist and Certified Computer Professional," the AAWC is "dedicated to providing a Web gateway to Afrocentric resources suitable for the entire family." It succeeds quite admirably. *Access:* <http://www.aawc.com/>.

- **Afro-American Studies on the Web.** Created and maintained at the University of Wisconsin, this is a visually aesthetic site with

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high-caliber, scholarly links in seven categories including electronic texts/historical texts. A link to the W.E.B. DuBois Virtual University is also provided. *Access:* <http://afroam.aas.wisc.edu/places.htm>.

- **University of California, Santa Barbara.** This is a very manageable site with access to a range of data-types. The site has 16 broad categories and is especially strong in news media, historical texts, and documents. *Access:* <http://www.library.ucsb.edu/subj/black.html>.

- **Soul Search: The Search Engine for the World's People of Color.** This is a search engine for accessing information contained in the African American Web Ring. One of many "Web rings" forming on the Internet, this one has collected over 1,000 sites related to African American culture including art, dance, history, and personal pages. Soul Search—*Access:* <http://www.soulsearch.net/>. African American Web Ring—*Access:* <http://www.webring.org/cgi-bin/webring?ring=afroa&list>.

### **Educational sites/research centers**

- **Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.** This renowned and widely linked site supports the Schomburg Center, "a national research library devoted to collecting, preserving and providing access to resources documenting the experiences of peoples of African descent throughout the world." The site continues to grow, recently adding The Digital Schomburg and Online Exhibitions. *Access:* <http://www.nypl.org/research/sc/>.

- **American Memory: Historical Collections for the National Digital Library.**



Developed by the Library of Congress for the study of black history and culture, this site includes African-American Mosaic, African-American Odyssey, and African-American Perspectives. American Memory is a searchable collection with documents, photographs, maps, sound, and film clips. *Access:* <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/>.

- **The Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Center for Nonviolent Social Change.** This is the official MLK historical site. Pro-

vides links to the King Papers Project (at Stanford), a 2,700-item bibliography, photographs, and much more. *Access:* <http://www.thekingcenter.com/>.

- **Museum of Afro-American History, Boston.** This visually attractive site provides links to 12 other museums of African American collections. Virtual tours, resource lists, museum hours, and other practical information are given. An example of what you can find here is Heroes in the Ships: African Americans in the Whaling Industry from the Kendall Whaling Museum in Sharon, Massachusetts, or The National Civil Rights Museum Web site. *Access:* <http://www.afroammuseum.org/links.htm>.

- **Exploring Amistad: Race & the Boundaries of Freedom in Antebellum Maritime America.** Developed by Mystic Seaport: The Museum of America and the Sea, this site has collected 500 primary documents, an Internet resources "bookmark" page, and even furnishes the opportunity for interactive discussion and comments. This impressive site, funded primarily by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Connecticut Humanities Council, offers full-text access to court records, popular media, government papers, maps, and images. A "Discovery Section" offers links to a broad overview, to specific people and places, and to a historical timeline. *Access:* <http://amistad.mysticseaport.org/>.

- **The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.** With an anticipated grand opening in 2003, this museum will be a "national education and distributive museum center located on the central riverfront in Cincinnati." In the meantime, this site provides sketches of historical figures in the abolition movement, an overview of the historic context, and a comprehensive collection of annotated links to other related Web sites. *Access:* <http://undergroundrailroad.com/>.

- **Our Shared History: Celebrating African American History and Culture.** The National Park Service (NPS) features links and online tours to provide information on African American heritage. Visitors can tour the historic South, learn about the Underground Railroad, and visit other NPS sites dedicated

to preserving African American heritage. *Access:* <http://www.cr.nps.gov/aahistory/>.

- **Historically Black Colleges and Universities.** This is the most complete list we located, with links to the homepages of 71 colleges and universities. The Minority On-Line Information Service (MOLIS), whose ultimate goal is "to represent all minority institutions," maintains this link. The other feature MOLIS provides is links to scholarship and fellowship information for all "recognized minorities." *Access:* <http://web.fie.com/molis/>.

- **Indiana University, Bloomington.** Under the auspices of the Department of Afro-American Studies, self described as "one of the most vital Black studies academic units in the country," the Black Film Center/Archive is a frequently hotlinked site to their extensive holdings. A limited number of related links to sites at Indiana University are also provided. *Access:* <http://www.indiana.edu/~bfca/>. A related site of interest is the Archives of African American Music & Culture. *Access:* <http://www.indiana.edu/~aaamc/>.

## Organizations and associations

- **African American Organizations.** This collection of links to organizations is aggregated by the African American Web Connection. It includes many fraternal and social organizations as well as political and social advocacy groups. *Access:* <http://www.aawc.com/aao.html>.

- **NAACP.** The homepage of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People includes timely information about the organization, text of speeches by the current president Kweisi Mfume, and a calendar of upcoming events. A page of NAACP Links connects to a range of minority interest and advocacy groups, such as the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute, and the Native American Rights Fund among many others. *Access:* <http://www.naacp.org>.

- **The National Urban League (NUL).** Founded in 1910, the NUL is the "premier so-

achievement of social and economic equality." A very user-friendly site with a link to a changing selection of other Internet resources and programs" across the country. *Access:* <http://www.nul.org>.

- **The Nation of Islam (NOI).** This site provides extensive coverage of speeches and writings by Minister Louis Farrakhan. There is also historical information about the founding of the NOI and links to domestic and international Islamic centers. An online version of their weekly newspaper, *The Final Call*, is also provided. *Access:* <http://www.noi.org>.

## Afrocentric sites

- **Virtually Afrocentric.** This site is one of three featured by The African World Community Network. The Virtually Afrocentric Repository contains dozens of links arranged in 16 broad categories, including business, organizations, and education. An attractive site with lots of potential. *Access:* <http://www.tawcnet.com/~awe/va.htm>.

- **University of Pennsylvania: African Studies Center.** Frequently linked and regularly updated, this is a good basic site for all libraries. It has an extensive collection of links on Africa with specific subtopics by country; current and well organized. *Access:* [http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African\\_Studies/AS.html](http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/AS.html).

- **African National Congress (ANC).** The ANC and Nelson Mandela certainly have near universal name recognition, so this is another site all libraries should bookmark. It is very thorough, with an attractive and user-friendly layout. Of great utility is the access to the full-text of numerous ANC publications. *Access:* <http://www.anc.org.za>.

## E-journals/news services

- **Africa News Online: Gateway to a Continent.** This is another Africa-based site that all libraries should bookmark. It includes numerous links for current news and events in Africa. The link to news of the United States and Africa highlights up-to-the-minute news



cial service and civil rights organization in America . . . to assist African Americans in the

stories from throughout Africa. *Access:* <http://www.africanews.org>.

• **African-American**

**Male Research** began publishing in 1996. Articles, abstracts of research, book reviews, and announcements are published three times per year. The July/August 1998 issue had a substantial

number of research, news, and policy briefs on socio-economic topics. Also provided are collections of Web-based resources that are well organized and cover a broad spectrum of African American research interests. *Access:* <http://www.tomco.net/~afriamale/>.

• **African Studies Quarterly: The Online Journal of African Studies.** Published by the Center for African Studies at the University of Florida, this refereed journal is available in electronic format only. The emphasis is on currency/timeliness to reap the full benefit from the electronic medium, and includes articles, op/ed pages, and book reviews. A recent issue was dedicated to "Human Rights and Governance in Africa." *Access:* <http://web.africa.ufl.edu/asq/>.

• **The Black Collegian Online.** This is the electronic version of the 27-year old, national magazine that focuses on career opportunities for young African Americans. While its target audience is college-age students, there is a broader scope, including commentary by leading African American writers. Very nicely organized with an attractive layout; includes full-text. *Access:* <http://www.black-collegian.com/>.

• **The Black World Today.** Maintained by "a collective of journalists, writers, artists, communicators, racial justice advocates, and entrepreneurs" in concert with the National Council of Churches, this site was launched in July 1996 in response to the epidemic of Black church burnings across the United States. Its main purpose is "to chronicle the daily social, political, cultural and economic realities of Black communities and countries . . . [and] to advocate the universal principles of civility, justice, fairness, and respect." *Access:* <http://www.tbwt.com/>.

• **Callaloo.** Published by the Johns Hopkins University Press since 1976, in print and in electronic format since 1995, this is a core journal in African American and African arts and letters. The electronic version is avail-



able by institutional subscription only. *Access:* <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/callaloo/>.

• **Jouvert: A Journal of Postcolonial Studies.** Published by the College of the Humanities and Social Sciences at North Carolina State University, this is an attractive and decidedly multicultural scholarly publication published only in electronic format. Vol. 2, no. 1 was dedicated to "postcolonial masculinities" and included eight articles ranging from seven to fourteen pages. Links to other academic electronic journals are also provided. *Access:* <http://152.1.96.5/jouvert/>.

• **The North Star: A Journal of African-American Religious History.** Supported by a grant from and based at Barnard College, The North Star is an exclusively Web-based publication. The editors are affiliated with the Afro-American Religious History Group of the American Academy of Religion. The mission of The North Star is to provide information on events, new publications, and other resources, as well as to serve as a peer-reviewed journal. *Access:* <http://cedar.barnard.columbia.edu/~north/>.

• **Western Journal of Black Studies Online Journal.** In print since 1977, this interdisciplinary journal now offers an electronic version with scholarly articles, selected by blind peer review, which report original investigations and contribute new knowledge to African American Studies. Available only by subscription to individuals, the modest price provides access to current issues and a two-year backfile. *Access:* <http://www.wsu.edu/~wjbs/online.htm>. ■

### Expanded version online


Expanded versions of articles in the *C&RL News* "Internet Resources" column may be found on the Web at <http://www.ala.org/acrl/c&rlnews2.html>.



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