

**Forvo.** Access: <http://www.forvo.com>.

Forvo.com, an online pronunciation guide, has the ambitious goal of providing pronunciation help for “all the words that exist in the world.” It has been publicly available since 2008, and, at the time of this review, it has offered 1.1 million pronunciations for 1.04 million words, in 279 languages. Pronunciations are posted by the site’s 147,000 members, each of whom is identified in search results by username, sex, and location, and forvo.com has an information page listing the words that have been added most recently, as well as overall statistics.

When using the site’s search box, the user must type the word as it appears in Forvo. This makes it difficult to know whether a word should be entered in the native alphabet or in the Roman alphabet, or whether the romanization should be included for languages using non-Roman characters. For example, most Chinese words aside from a few dates are written using characters rather than the romanized Hanyu Pinyin system, but many Tibetan and Hindi words are romanized. This lack of standardization makes certain words difficult to locate.

Discovery of words can also occur through browsing. For example, the Languages button takes a visitor to a page of languages sorted by popularity, i.e., by number of pronunciations. A prominent link offers the list in order alphabetically, but the resulting list is ordered by International Standards Organization (ISO) language code rather than by language so that Mapudungan with the code “arn” appears between Arabic (ar) and Assamese (as). At the bottom of the Popularity list the visitor will find a link to a complete list of languages sorted by language name, with the ISO code

---

Joni R. Roberts is associate university librarian for public services and collection development at Willamette University, e-mail: [jroberts@willamette.edu](mailto:jroberts@willamette.edu), and Carol A. Drost is associate university librarian for technical services at Willamette University, e-mail: [cdrost@willamette.edu](mailto:cdrost@willamette.edu)

and native name nearby; it would be helpful to see this link more noticeably displayed. Within the list of words for each language, one can limit the search by category, such as parts of speech. Users should be aware that terms could be listed both in English and in whatever language they are interested in.

The site will be most useful as a destination for native speakers needing a pronunciation, or for language learners reading their target language’s original alphabet or characters, especially online where they can copy and paste the unknown word into the site’s search box.—*Heidi Senior, University of Portland, senior@up.edu*

**Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty.** Access: <http://www.rferl.org/>.

Sixty years ago Radio Free Europe air-dropped balloons across Eastern Europe to get around Soviet censors. Now Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) (formerly Radio Liberation, which covered the former Soviet Union) reaches 21 countries via radio, television, podcasts, and the Web.

RFE/RL, a private nonprofit corporation, receives congressional funding through the Broadcasting Board of Governors, a bipartisan group including, at the time of review, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and former President George W. Bush’s press secretary Dana Perino. Its mission is “to promote democratic values and institutions by reporting the news in countries where a free press is banned by the government or not fully established.”

With more than 400 full time journalists in 20 local bureaus, the focus is on local and regional news to inform those living in restrictive countries. The focus of the Web site is twofold, to educate the American public about foreign issues and the importance of RFE/RL and to provide broadcasts in one of 28 languages over streaming audio. There are a variety of ways RFE/RL presents its reports and

opinion pieces on topics about or affecting the countries under the RFE/RL umbrella. Current news is also provided in video or article form compiled by contributors or from various unattributed news agencies, as are the feature pieces. “The Blender” is the podcast that highlights the best of the week’s broadcasting. The multimedia section houses video pieces that are dubbed or subtitled in English. The streaming audio has not been translated into English. Reporters and presenters are listed with brief biographies, education, credentials, languages spoken, and are mostly from RFE/RL countries.

RFE/RL’s archives are in the Hoover Institute at Stanford University, in Poland, Hungary, and in the Czech Republic. The Web site provides an interesting section on the history of RFE/RL, including images and other pertinent resources. Unfortunately, very little of the archival material is available online. The commentary archive goes back to 2009, the features archive to 2000.

The site is easy to navigate, with a persistent menu at the top of the page and an additional menu at the left that changes with the section viewed. The layout is simple and clean. RFE/RL would be a useful resource for students of political science, international studies, or those studying current foreign policy.—*Kimberly Bartosz, University of Wisconsin-Parkside, bartosz@uwp.edu*

**ScienceBlogs.** *Access:* <http://www.scienceblogs.com>.

ScienceBlogs, a product of Seed Media, consists of more than 120 individual blogs covering topics in the sciences and the intersection of science with politics and culture. ScienceBlogs bloggers have been screened and selected by Seed Media. The by-invitation-only nature of ScienceBlogs provides an editorial layer between the reader and the content that standard, user-generated blogs and blog networks do not provide. This editorial filter may be appealing to librarians and instructors of

undergraduates, as it provides a stepping-stone between unfiltered blogs found on the Internet and specialized scholarly publications.

ScienceBlogs blogs are classified into ten divisions: “Life Science,” “Physical Science,” “Environment,” “Humanities,” “Education,” “Politics,” “Medicine,” “Brain & Behavior,” “Technology,” and “Information Science.” Readers have access to the blog content through other facets, such as blogs posted in the past 24 hours, the “Most Active” blogs, “Editor’s Picks” (blog entries selected by Seed Media’s editors), and “Readers’ Picks” (which appear to be selected through social networking links.) Each of the blogs may also be accessed through their individual Web pages, RSS feeds, and social media connectors. Readers may use these filters to discover new items of interest or focus tightly on discipline-specific resources.

In July 2010, the ScienceBlogs community became embroiled in a controversy. Many bloggers felt that the addition of a nutrition blog, sponsored by PepsiCo and authored by PepsiCo employees, to be a breach of trust, inappropriately mixing content with advertising. ScienceBlogs and Seed Media responded by closing the blog in question while maintaining an editorial position that affirms the central role of industry voices in their community.

Some ScienceBlogs bloggers left Seed Media at this point and have landed at other science blogging networks such as Sciencetopia.

ScienceBlogs is a leading example of interactive Web communities acting as a bridge between unmediated Web content and the highly structured architectures of scholarly publication. Scholars and researchers will appreciate its timely content and digests of new science. Undergraduates will appreciate an accessible entry point to the complex world of scholarly communication.—*Nicholas Schiller, Washington State University-Vancouver, schiller@vancouver.wsu.edu* 