

Biodiversity Heritage Library. Access: <http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/>.

The Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) project is a collaborative effort of academic, natural history, and botanical libraries and now spans six continents, offering a trove of public domain monographs and journals dating back to the 15th century.

Initial coverage has expanded since 2009 to include server nodes and access to collections in Europe, China, Brazil, Australia, and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. The current combined collections contain more than 50,000 titles, 107,000 volumes, and 39 million pages in more than 60 languages, and represent the most comprehensive digital collections covering biodiversity in the world. The collections provide information on more than 1 million scientifically identified species, and BHL serves as the functional digital component of the online *Encyclopedia of Life*. The 21 digital collections include 330 of the surviving books from Charles Darwin's library, along with the scientist's annotations; a selection of books authored by or about Carl Linnaeus; materials from the Ernst Mayr Library of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University; Smithsonian Institution collections; and rare books from the collections of the Missouri Botanical Gardens dating to the 17th century.

Numerous features and functions highlight the value of the site. The "Years" tab allows users to browse collections by century and by discrete time periods within centuries. The earliest period available, Pre-1700: 1450-1699, for example, includes more than 250 rare publications. The "Map" feature marks collections across the planet and provides pop-up menus that link to all titles available from targeted geographic regions. BHL uses

uBio's TaxonFinder taxonomic recognition algorithm to search the text of items digitized in BHL and display scientific names. Users can also download PDF files of entire books or single pages of text.

No session is complete without visiting the stunning array of images available via the site's Flickr photostream. A number of library API tools are available along with a variety of data export types, including catalog records, page level data, and scientific name data, and the data is provided for reuse via a Creative Commons license.

BHL provides an amazing treasure of invaluable historical materials covering biological diversity from many resources formerly unavailable to most students and faculty engaged in life sciences research. As many of these items have very limited distribution, BHL will serve a central role in expanding the role of scientific exploration in the developing world, as well as in leading U.S. and European institutions.—*John Creech, Central Washington University, John.Creech@cwu.edu*

Duke University Libraries Digital Collections. Access: <http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/>.

Duke's Digital Collections Web site contains an impressive selection of digitized materials from the university's extensive Special Collections. Culling material from nearly 50 individual collections, the digital collections contain more than 90,000 photographs, advertisements, books, broadsides, posters, and diaries.

Duke's digital offerings are particularly strong in the area of "Advertising & Consumer Culture." With more than 41,000 digitized items, the collection contains photos of billboards, murals, and signs, as well as ads from various print publications, posters, and other formats. A convenient set of tabs lets the user select from the following categories: company, product, date, publication, format, subject, medium, headline, and audience.

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Examining the advertising collections illustrates both the depth of content and the ease of access that can be found when using any of these digital collections. Suppose that a researcher was interested in comparing cigarette advertisements over time and media. By selecting the product tab, then selecting “cigarettes” from the list, the researcher could then limit by date, company, medium, and subject. It’s also fascinating to just scroll through the hundreds of billboards in the collection, all culled from Duke’s Resource of Outdoor Advertising Descriptions (sporting the catchy acronym ROAD) collection. Duke’s digital collections are an excellent resource for studying the history of advertising.

A second major collection strength is “Documentary Photography,” which includes more than 10,000 photographs by William Gedney, Sidney Gamble, and other photographers. Photographs document the early Soviet Union under Lenin, the American South between 1890 and 1922, early 20th century China and Japan, Fidel Castro’s Cuba in the early 1960s, and other topics. Extensive metadata and limiting features make this collection easy to use and access.

In addition to advertising and photography, Duke’s digital collections also include materials on African American history, women’s history, scanned items from Duke’s papyrus collection, a collection of 1,800 American broadside song sheets, documents from the U.S. Women’s Liberation Movement, several transcribed and scanned diaries of women during the American Civil War, assorted documents from the Confederate States of America, and a number of collections related to Duke University and Durham, North Carolina.

Duke has done a fine job of digitizing material, making it accessible and searchable, and presenting it all through an easy-to-navigate Web interface. Students and researchers from many different disciplines will find this site useful.—*Gene Hyde, Radford University, wehyde@radford.edu*

PolitiFact. Access: <http://www.politifact.com>.

PolitiFact is a popular site where voters

can find information behind what the political candidates—from the presidential candidates on down—state as part of their campaign promises and platforms. Maintained by *The Tampa Bay Times*, and winner of the Pulitzer Prize, Politifact seeks to determine fact from fiction with its now-famous Truth-o-Meter, featured prominently on its Web page for easy viewing. While the coverage of promises kept (or not kept), statements made (true or false) by the Democratic and Republican candidates is both balanced and comprehensive, the Benjamin Disraeli phrase “lies, damned lies, and statistics” comes to mind when reviewing this Web site. Some in the media have claimed that PolitiFact’s fact checking for its Truth-o-Meter may be slanted or suspect, but this is the nature of statistics and statements, in that they can be twisted easily to suit either political party’s ends. The Truth-o-Meter is a clever way to deliver information, but, as with any information, a voter should always read a variety of different Web sites. Other reputable Web sites, such as Rasmussen Reports and Real Clear Politics, can add more definitive and balanced coverage of the campaign, as well as a second or third opinion on polls and factual political statements by either party.

What makes PolitiFact a useful political Web site is its comprehensive coverage of the presidential campaign, particularly its articles on political activity nationwide and in battleground states, as well as its coverage not only of the presidential candidates, but also such organizations as the union AFSCME, AARP, and a legion of political candidates and organizations beyond the presidential candidates.

PolitiFact, in summary, does have extensive political coverage and useful political information available in one site, but during any political campaign, a voter may find it useful and helpful to search as many politically related Web sites and news sources and not rely entirely on one Web site to stay fully informed to make decisions. Knowledge is power, and the more knowledge about any political campaign, the better for the voter and for the country.—*Larry Cooperman, University of Central Florida Libraries, Laurence.cooperman@ucf.edu* 