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The social and economic impact of hosting the Olympic Games

A guide to online resources

While there is little doubt that the Olympic Games is the premier sporting venue for amateur athletes from around the world, they, like other mega-scale sporting events, are also significant to the hosting city and country.

During the 2012 Summer Olympics in London, for example, 4 billion people watched the spectacular opening ceremonies on television; more than 10,000 athletes from over 200 countries participated; 20 million people visited the city; and approximately \$14 billion were generated.

The upcoming Sochi Winter Olympics in 2014 are expected to draw 6,000 athletes and 1.2 million spectators to the city. More importantly, in addition to the large amount of money and pressure from the global attention, hosting the Olympic Games has ripple effects through all the layers of the city's and country's social and economic culture.

The objective of this article is to show the broad range of Internet resources addressing the impact and significance of the games on the Olympic host city. It is by no means an exhaustive list. Due to the temporal nature of the event itself, and the various restrictions and policies of the hosting country, the purpose, range, currency, and value of each of the listed sites must be carefully considered.

Furthermore, because the ripple effects of the Olympics are continuous and unpredictable, Internet resources on this topic can be very difficult to find. Thankfully, monographic and journal literature fill the gap.

Major Olympic organizations

- **International Olympic Committee (IOC).** IOC is the authoritative, non-governmental organization that leads the Olympic Games, Olympic Movement, and Olympism. Founded in 1894 by Pierre de Coubertin and currently based in Lausanne, Switzerland, the committee governs and operates the Olympics in accordance with the Olympic Charter. The official website contains a wealth of information about IOC and the Olympic Movement, including facts, statistics, and reports of the past Olympic Games; IOC interim and final reports; lists and profiles of IOC Commissions, National Olympic Committees, and Organizing Committees for upcoming Olympic Games; related documents and sources; and updated news. "Bidding for the Games" section provides information about host city elections; bidding cities candidature files that include estimated revenues and expenditures; and comprehensive final reports of the elections. Note that individual bidding cities such as Tokyo for 2020 Games (<http://tokyo2020.jp/en/>) often produce their own websites, as well. Access: <http://www.olympic.org>.

- **National Olympic Committees (NOCs).** There are currently 204 NOCs that represent the nations participating in the Olympic Games and promote the Olympic Movement in their respective countries. Infor-

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mation available through each NOC website vary depending on the committee's focus and interest. For example, the Russian Olympic Committee devotes enormous space of its site (<http://www.roc.ru/>) for the upcoming Sochi Winter Games, its preparation and infrastructure development, while the Japanese Olympic Committee (<http://www.joc.or.jp/english/>) provides details of its ongoing project for supporting the nation's earthquake reconstruction. *Access:* <http://www.olympic.org/national-olympic-committees>.

- **Organizing Committees for the Olympic Games (OCOGs).** OCOGs are responsible for preparing and producing upcoming Olympic Games. There are currently three OCOG websites available: Sochi 2014 (www.sochi2014.com), Rio 2016 (<http://www.rio2016.com/>), and PyeongChang 2018 (www.pyeongchang2018.org/). As OCOG sites become inaccessible shortly after the Olympic Games are held, try the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine (<http://archive.org/web/>) to search for web pages of defunct OCOGs. *Access:* <http://www.olympic.org/ioc-governance-organising-committees>.

General background of the hosting countries

In addition to the usual sources for country profiles and statistical data, such as *CIA World Factbook* and *IMF World Economic Outlook*, the following websites are helpful for researchers to burrow deeper into country-specific information.

- **Northwestern University Library.** The "List of Foreign Governments LibGuide" offers a directory of official government websites, including national ministries, parliaments, selected government agencies, and central banks. *Access:* <http://libguides.northwestern.edu/ForeignGovernmentList>.

- **UNdata.** Operated by the United Nations Statistics Division, the "Country Data Services" section of this database provides quick access to official statistic portals of the United Nations member countries. *Access:* <http://data.un.org>.

- **World Bank.** The World Bank offers open access to a comprehensive set of data about economic and social development in countries. The dataset is searchable by country, topic, or indicator and is easy to download. *Access:* <http://www.worldbank.org/>.

Olympic studies and analysis

- **Australian Centre for Olympic Studies (ACOS), University of Technology Sydney.** Established in 2005 by a member of the Australian Olympic Committee, ACOS is one of the leading programs in Olympic studies in Australia. The centre's Online Olympic Games Bibliography contains approximately 1,800 entries of major research publications. *Access:* <http://www.business.uts.edu.au/olympic/>.

- **International Society of Olympic Historians (ISOH).** ISOH is a research organization that promotes and studies the history of the Olympic Movement and the Olympic Games. Bibliography and full-text articles from the *Journal of Olympic History*, ISOH's periodical, are available through the website. *Access:* <http://www.isoh.org>.

- **London-Rio Olympic Cities: Analyzing the Social Legacies of Mega-Events.** Created by Gavin Poynter, professor of Social Sciences at the University of East London (UEL), and inspired by a partnership between UEL, the Architectural and Urban Technology Research Nucleus of the University of São Paulo and Gama Filho University, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, this website shares selected working papers, articles, and essays on social impacts and legacies of mega events. *Access:* <http://megaeventcities.wordpress.com/>.

- **Olympic Studies Centre.** Located in the Olympic Museum in Lausanne, the Olympic Studies Centre is IOC's official research institute that promotes academic and historical research on the Olympic Movement. It provides online access to selected research publications and documents, reference services, research grants, and conference opportunities. *Access:* <http://www.olympic.org/olympic-studies-centre>.

- **Russian International Olympic University (RIOU).** RIOU is the world's first

university established in conjunction with IOC and a national Olympic committee. Based in Sochi, the host city of the 2014 Winter Olympic Games, RIOU's programs are dedicated to sport business education with focus on local leadership development and career training for previous Olympic athletes. *Access:* <http://olympicuniversity.ru/web/en>.

- **University of East London (UEL).** UEL is one of the academic institutes that were funded by the U.K. government to conduct research on the impact of the Olympic Movement during the 2012 London Olympics. Its substantial research publications and comprehensive reports of the Olympic impact evaluation are available under the "Research" section. *Access:* <http://www.uel.ac.uk/2012/>.

General background of the games

- **International Olympic Truce Centre.**

The International Olympic Truce Centre, along with the International Olympic Truce Foundation, was established in 2000 to encourage nations to observe the Olympic truce and to cease hostilities during the Olympic games. *Access:* <http://www.olympictruce.org>.

- **Olympic Athletes' Hub.** As the 2012 London Games is often called the first "social media Olympics," IOC offered the official platform for the Olympians' social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, encouraging their fans and news reporters to get updated via the Hub. While people generally welcomed this new communication venue, social media also brought some concern and controversy to the Olympic history. *Access:* <http://hub.olympic.org>.

- **Olympic Games Museum.** A virtual museum of the Olympic Summer Games that contains official final reports of the Olympic Games from 1896, various statistical data, facts, and memorabilia of the Olympics. *Access:* <http://olympic-museum.de/>.

- **Olympic Museum.** IOC's official museum located in Lausanne, Switzerland, is the world largest depository of the Olympic-related documentation and memorabilia. Although the building is currently closed for renovations, the virtual exhibitions and the

list of the extensive collections are available through the website. *Access:* <http://www.olympic.org/museum>.

- **YouTube Channel of the Olympics.**

This is the official Olympic YouTube channel managed by IOC that offers video clips of the host city candidate's presentations for elections, IOC executive meetings, conferences, remarks and interviews of the IOC executives, and related news. *Access:* <http://www.youtube.com/user/olympic>.

Public opinions and criticisms

While there are many websites that include criticisms of hosting the Olympic Games, few are dedicated exclusively to the topic.

- **Around the Rings.** Founded in 1992 by Ed Hula, the website editor and former broadcast producer, Around the Rings has been considered as one of the most influential news sources on business and politics of the Olympic Games and other international sport events. Subscription is required for the premium content. *Access:* <http://www.aroundtherings.com/>.

- **Corporate Watch.** Corporate Watch is an independent, not-for-profit research group that raises awareness of social and environmental impact of corporations and corporate power. There are a number of articles criticizing extensive commercialism in the recent Olympic Movement. *Access:* <http://www.corporatewatch.org/>.

- **Games Monitor: Debunking Olympics Myths.** The Game Monitor is an open discussion forum that offers information about the 2012 London Olympic development process to raise awareness of the issues. *Access:* <http://www.gamesmonitor.org.uk/>.

- **London Legacy Development Corporation.** The London Legacy Development Corporation is a not-for-profit, public sector that continues the work for the "long-term planning, development, management and maintenance of the Olympic Park and its facilities after the London 2012 Games" in accordance with the East London regeneration legacy promises of

the 2012 Olympic bid. *Access:* <http://www.londonlegacy.co.uk/>.

- **NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute.** Operated by NHK, Japan's national broadcasting corporation, the Broadcasting Culture Research Institute conducts comprehensive public opinion surveys to address the issues and controversies in the Japanese society. *Access:* <http://www.nhk.or.jp/bunken/english/index.html>.

- **WEBRONZA.** The site is a liberal, discussion forum on current controversies such as hosting the Olympics from a section of the *Asabi Shimbun Newspaper*, the world's top circulated newspaper based in Japan. This is the only open forum that provides rich criticisms on the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, and it is available in the Japanese language only. *Access:* <http://webronza.asahi.com/>.

Databases

Some of the best resources on social and economic impact of the Olympic Games are in the journal literature.

- **EconLit.** EconLit is the American Economic Association's electronic bibliography that indexes high-quality articles, working papers, dissertations, and book reviews from the *Journal of Economic Literature* and other reliable sources. *Access:* <http://www.aeaweb.org/econlit/>.

- **Open Access Theses and Dissertation (OATD.org).** OATD.org aims to be the best possible resource for finding open access graduate theses and dissertations published around the world. Information about the theses comes from more than 800 colleges, universities, and research institutions. *Access:* <http://oatd.org/>.

- **SPORTDiscus.** SPORTDiscus is one of the leading bibliographic databases on sports, physical fitness, and sports medicine. It includes more than 750,000 records with journal and monograph coverage going back to 1800; more than 20,000 dissertations and theses; books and book chapters; and conference proceedings. *Access:* <http://www.ebscohost.com/academic/sportdiscus-with-full-text>. *rn*

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