



GOVERNMENT INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET

THIRD EDITION

GREG R. NOTESS

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Third Edition, 2000

Greg R. Notess

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Preface

In this new edition of *Government Information on the Internet*, all entries have been verified for location, title, and subject. In addition, it has been greatly expanded with several new sections. U.S. local governments, both city and county, have been added to the State Government chapter, which is now State and Local Government. These entries include only the city or county name and the URL, organized under the appropriate state. The localities are included in the master index.

The Congress chapter has also been expanded by adding Web site URLs and email addresses for the current members of Congress. The member listings include a chamber designation, the member's name, party affiliation, URL, email address, and (for Representatives) the district number.

In the Education chapter, a new subchapter has been added. This new addition focuses on government Web sites designed and targeted at children. Many of these also have sections for educators and/or parents. Another new subsection has been added to the Military chapter which focuses on government Web sites for families of members of the military.

With the changeable nature of the Internet, new resources appear at a regular pace while older sites may cease to be updated or even cease to exist. There have been many other changes since the second edition to reflect these changes. Many sites that have become defunct since the time of the second edition have been deleted. Sites that changed locations have been updated to reflect their current URL. Over 220 new federal sites have been added.

The directory now contains more than

- 1,300 U.S. federal government Internet resources
- 250 sites from international governmental organizations and governmental country sites (other than the United States)
- 150 sites related to state government sites in the United States
- 2,500 U.S. city and county government URLs
- 533 Web sites and/or email addresses for members of the U.S. Congress
- 1,300 individual government publications

With all of these additions, *Government Information on the Internet* now provides access to government information resources on the Internet at all levels of government and from all over the globe.

As always, my special thanks again go to the many government employees and contractors who have built so many wonderful and information-rich sites to include in this directory. The quantity and quality of information available continues to amaze and impress. Also, thanks to all of those at Bernan Press who have supported, encouraged, and helped make this new edition a reality. And a special note of appreciation to my family for their patience and support.

Introduction

The United States federal government is one of the largest publishers in the world. From consumer pamphlets, laws, regulations, and travelers' alerts to detailed technical reports, large data sets, and statistics of every kind, the government produces a wealth of information. And now a significant portion of that government information is available on the Internet. Not only the U.S. government, but state, local, and international government information is available as well.

Government information can be a major source for authoritative and reliable information on a wide variety of topics. When searching the Internet in general becomes frustrating due to concerns about the reliability of information, try searching for government sites. The government sites listed in this directory give access to government information on health, demographics, social services, agricultural commodities, government procurement, legislation, data sets, online exhibitions, lesson plans, technical specifications, and much, much more.

With a special focus on sites offering government documents and other publications online, *Government Information on the Internet* can be your guide to the realm of Internet resources from governments at all levels. The rest of this introduction describes a bit of the history of the online dissemination of government information, a short section on how to find specific government publications on agency Web sites, a description of the scope of this directory, an explanation of URLs, and an overview of the organization of the directory.

The Government on the Internet

The federal government has long strived to provide government information to the public. The Federal Depository Library Program, with libraries in every state, was established as a way for the public to access government documents. However, as the Paperwork Reduction Act and other recent federal legislative and regulatory efforts have demonstrated, Congress has expressed a growing concern over the bulk of print publications and the expense of producing them. As a solution, the Government Printing Office (GPO) and the Superintendent of Documents have explored many options for transforming government publications into electronically disseminated documents.

While the concern over the excess of paper publications has been on the rise, computer and networking technologies have evolved to a point that electronic dissemination is faster, more convenient, and can reach a large audience. The GPO began distributing floppy disks and CD-ROMs in the 1980s. However, both kinds of disks share the same production problem that print sources face. Multiple copies of each publication still need to be created for distribution to depository libraries, government agencies, and interested private citizens.

Electronic bulletin boards (BBS) present an alternate dissemination model. Data can be produced just once in electronic format and then uploaded to the BBS. Users can then use a computer and modem to dial into the BBS to retrieve the data. Since the 1980s government BBS have been established for this purpose. Unfortunately, most BBS interfaces are not easy to use and retrieving the data can be quite complex for users not familiar with BBS software. For users who live outside of the Washington, D.C. area, access to most federal BBS is a long distance phone call. In addition, users need to know if and when a specific government agency has a BBS, what kind of data is available from it, and how to connect to it.

The evolution of the Internet provided a new and efficient publication mechanism. The Internet essentially solves the access problem. The meteoric rise in popularity of the Internet within both the commercial and consumer sectors make the Internet an even more attractive medium for the dissemination of government information. There is no long distance charge (beyond any associated with the Internet connection itself). Additionally, the popularity of the World Wide Web (hereafter referred to simply as the Web) provides a common and easily understood interface to information resources.

The Internet and the Web have proven to be an effective means of publishing, sharing, and disseminating a wide variety of information products. The Web has become the significant player in the online universe. For the U.S. federal government, the Internet and the Web are a very attractive medium for the publication and dissemination of government information. Since U.S. federal government information is free of copyright restrictions, the Internet is a way to save money on

publishing as well as a means of reaching the general public. The government has become one of the major content providers on the Web.

Now government agencies spend millions of dollars a year maintaining and updating their Web sites and increasing the number and scope of their online publications. Currently there are well over five million distinct pages in the .gov domain and more than one million publicly accessible pages in the .mil domain. The U.S. federal government is running thousands of Web servers and that is not even counting those from state and local governments, international governmental organizations, and the governments of other countries.

The abundance of *Government Information on the Internet* brings with it the need for a print directory. A source that categorizes government information available on the Web. But why bother with a directory like *Government Information on the Internet* when the Internet changes so quickly? URLs die and are reborn, and yesterday's government resources end up lost in a server crash. An online directory of these resources would be ideal, since an online directory can be updated daily. Unfortunately, any directory compiled by human effort suffers the same problem of upkeep. One thing I discovered in researching this work is that all of the online directories are incomplete and contain errors. This print directory is also vulnerable to those problems—but it has some unique advantages.

This is a snapshot in time of the history of government resources on the Internet. While many of these sites have changed significantly in a year's time, others have remained almost the same for several years. This directory will help show the development of government resources on the Internet by documenting what is available as of early 2000. In addition, a resource such as this can prove invaluable in tracking a certain site or a specific document. Even if the site is no longer at a specified URL, knowing that resources were once available means that they likely still exist on the Internet and just require a bit of work to find them. The directory has special features for librarians and savvy library users. These include an emphasis on publications available at sites and the inclusion of Superintendent of Documents (SuDoc) numbers for many publications and resources. It also provides a way to search offline, before booting a computer, when away from an Internet-connected computer, or even while waiting for an online search engine or Web page to load.

Finding Government Publications

One of the primary resources that governments make available on the Web are online versions of their publications. Because such publications are often in Adobe PDF or some other formatted file type, the text within the documents can not be found by using a general search engine or even a government-specific search engine. Most can not even be searched by using the site search capabilities available on many Web sites.

So the question becomes how best to track down what publications are available and where on an agency's site to look. With more than 1,300 publications listed in this directory, the Publication Indexes by SuDoc and Title are a great starting point, but there are thousands of publications available beyond those listed here. For U.S. documents, be sure to try entry #1658, the GPO's Pathway Services Browse Electronic Titles site as well as #1661 Uncle Sam Migrating Government Publications. The Monthly Catalog, entry #1656, may help find others. But any of these sources may also lead to a dead end if the agency moves or removes the document.

In those cases, try these techniques to track down documents on the originating agency's Web site. After finding the root home page for a government organization, look in particular for sections labeled Publications, Documents, or Reports. While even these sections, when available, may not include all online publications available on the site, they are usually the best place to start looking. Press releases and other news related publications are often under separate News, Releases, or other similar headings.

For U.S. federal sites, also look for an Electronic Reading Room section. With the dictates of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), government sites often have an Electronic Reading Room or FOIA section. Some sites simply include information about how to make a FOIA request in that section. Others include lists of all their online publications, print publications, and the FOIA instructions all in that one section.

When all of these approaches fail, try searching for the title words of the publication using the agency's site search capabilities. That may find a page that is not elsewhere linked or obviously connected to the main site. Also try some of the largest of the general search engines—Fast, AltaVista, and Northern Light. They can find pages that the agency site search may not.

If it is a document that may have been available in the past and has for some reason been de-linked or removed altogether try using a search engine such as Google that keeps cached copies of older pages. For U.S. government and military sites, SearchGov.com (entry #2) and SearchMil.com (entry #1672) both have cached copies as well. These can sometimes bring up pages that provide clues as to where the fugitive online documents have gone.

Scope

The intent of *Government Information on the Internet* is to enable users to access a significant portion of the U.S., state, local, and international governments' new online world by providing subject and agency access to more than 4,500 specific and unique governmental Internet resources. These include publicly-accessible Internet sites sponsored by any part of the U.S. government as well as non-governmental or unofficial sites containing data that originated from the government.

The primary emphasis of this book is the U.S. federal government including departments, agencies, and commissions from all three branches of the federal government. There are two chapters that go beyond U.S. federal government resources. The chapter on state and local government resources lists the primary sites for the three branches of U.S. state governments as well as the URLs for many city and country governments. These are arranged by state. The international chapter includes selected sites from major intergovernmental organizations and the addresses for the primary government and parliamentary sites for other countries.

Government Information on the Internet is not limited to resources that are hosted on government-owned computers and thus have the .gov top level domain. It includes resources where the information content originated from the government even if it is hosted on a non-governmental site. For example, significant sources of government-produced data like patents are available from the IBM Intellectual Property Network. That resource is included (entry #85), even though it is obviously hosted on a commercial company's Web site. Some government agencies also use different top level domains, like the Smithsonian (entry #1093) at si.edu and the U.S. Forest Service (entry #963) at fs.fed.us.

What distinguishes a single Internet resource? A book or a CD-ROM are easy to identify as single unique published items. On the Internet, identifying the boundaries of a unique resource is much more complex. Sometimes, a governmental agency may provide the same information through multiple access options. For example, data can be accessible from a Web page, a Gopher server, and through a FedWorld Bulletin Board. Yet in each case, the documents may be the same. In other instances, multiple organizations may post the same publication or data in different network locations and sometimes even in different formats.

Another difficulty in indexing Internet resources is differentiating between one resource and many. A book is generally complete in one volume, although there are the more complex cases of monographic series, multi-volume works, and books with separately authored chapters. A Web site can contain a much more diverse collection of materials. One Web page can contain links to external sites, an electronic journal, press releases, multi-megabyte data sets, photographic images, and a virtual video tour of a location. Each item may be located on the same server or on different servers within the same agency or even on servers from other agencies. Those sites with a hierarchical structure are more easily defined as a single site at the top level page, but they often have featured pages or sections of the site that could be considered as separate resources in their own right.

I have tried to address this problem with two different approaches. In the first case, where multiple sites include the exact or very similar information, one record is used, and the alternative access points are included. If the information content is significantly different, separate records are used. The second approach deals with identifying a site rather than individual documents. While it is an amorphous task to try to define limits to a site in the wide open realm of hypertext, there is often a sense of order, especially on government sites, that help designate collections of pages as a single site. At the most basic level, the group of Web pages from and about a specific agency is considered a distinct site, especially when it has a unique host name.

With millions of Web pages in the .gov domain alone, there is no practical way to catalog every single page. And then there are ftp archives, telnet sites, email lists, newsgroups, and still a few Gopher servers. So instead, *Government Information on the Internet* concentrates on identifying distinct resources and sites. From these descriptions of Web sites and other resources, the government information seeker should be able to find most of the separate Web pages included on such sites.

Understanding Uniform Resource Locators

One problem that was evident in the early days of tracking information resources on the Internet was the citation difficulty. How could one person cite or even describe the exact access method for getting to a specific resource? With the advent of the Web, the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) offers a solution to uniquely identifying specific resources and providing sufficient information in a citation so that another Internet user can find it. A URL designates the Internet protocol to be used for access, the address of the host computer, the path name or login name to be used, and the file name of a specific document.

The standard example of a URL for a Web site is now quite common, thanks to advertising from the commercial sector. In its simplest form the `http://www.agency.gov/`, syntax refers to a hypertext transport protocol (http) connection to the computer at the address `www.agency.gov`. A more complex URL might be `http://www.agency.gov/office/pub.html`, which gives the directory path of office and a specific file name of `pub.html`.

Http is the common Web protocol, but other Internet protocols can be designated with URLs as well. Gopher, ftp, and telnet resources all start with their names as the protocol name. Gopher and ftp URLs can be handled quite well by most Web browsers, including the popular Netscape Navigator and Microsoft Internet Explorer. Telnet and tn3270 connections are more complex. To use URLs starting with either `telnet://` or `tn3270://` a user needs to have appropriate telnet and tn3270 software loaded and the Web browser must be configured to find them.

Email and news URLs can usually be handled well by the popular Web browsers. Many of the `mailto:` URLs point to email discussion groups. The subscription process for these varies and usually requires more information than is contained in a URL. For these, the URL is followed by instructions for what message or messages to insert into the body or subject of the email message.

While URLs are the best way of identifying a specific Internet resource, they change all too frequently. The alternate URLs provided should help in finding at least one functioning site. In most cases, a well-run government Web site will leave a forwarding address behind at the old URL.

Organization and How to Use the Directory

Government Information on the Internet is organized by topics. Each of the chapters covers a particular broad topic. Within most of the chapters, the entries are further subdivided into subcategories. Each chapter also begins with a brief introduction and some Featured Sites. The Featured Sites are typically some of the best starting points for finding information in that broad subject area. In some cases it is the combination of several Featured Sites that provides broad coverage to the subject.

Following the Featured Sites, the remainder of each chapter usually has further subject-oriented subdivisions. The first subdivision is always the General section which includes resources related to the broad topic as well as more specific resources that do not fall under the other subdivisions. The scope of each of the other subsections is outlined at the beginning of the chapter.

Each record in the directory begins with an entry number. Note that the index refers to entry numbers rather than page numbers to help better target to which record the index term points. In addition to the entry number, each record includes a title, URL, alternate URL, sponsors, description, subjects, and publications, as appropriate to the resource. Records for members of Congress include their party affiliation, email address, and district for Representatives. For further information on each field within the records, see the following detailed descriptions.

Entry Number: Each record starts with an entry number. These run sequentially from the first finding aid records in the introduction to the last records in the final chapter. The entry numbers are used in all of the indexes to refer back to specific records.

Title: Directly following the entry number is a title for the resource. Determining the title of an Internet source is not as easy as finding the title of a book. For Web sites, the title could be the title designated on the top page by the HTML `<title>` tags, the first major header designated by the HTML `<H1>` tag, and/or the title included in an initial top banner graphic. Many times the top banner graphic has a different title than that in the HTML `<title>` tags. While the HTML `<title>` designation is the preferred choice for Web resources, it is often not used by Web masters or is poorly used.

For the purposes of this directory, the listed title generally is based on the HTML title element, as long as it is at least somewhat descriptive. In some cases the title is manufactured from the `<H1>` element or descriptive text within the initial top banner graphic, when that represents more clearly how the site is commonly referenced. To avoid redundancy, phrases such as "Welcome to the..."

"The Official Site..." and "home page" have been left off of most titles, unless it is clearly required for the clarity of the rest of the title words. In more and more instances, the title is simply the agency name. Email lists usually have one distinct name, and that name will be used as their title.

Titles of Internet resources, especially Web sites, often change and thus do not always uniquely identify a site. So titles are just one way to refer to a resource and are not always the most precise way. The URL is the best way to uniquely identify a resource, although that can change as well.

Primary URL: Uniform Resource Locators are used to denote the primary location of resources and the principal entryway to a site's contents. URLs can be written in many ways and still refer to the same site. Not all permutations are included, but only the most prominent and stable ones. The shortest possible version of a URL is used to make it easier to enter into a Web browser's location box.

Alternate URL: Many of the resources have multiple Internet access points, mirror sites, or related non-Web Internet resources. Additional URLs for these Web sites, Gopher servers, anonymous ftp sites, email lists, and telnet sites are listed in the record. Sometimes they are slightly different versions of the main Web site. Given the changeable nature of the Web, some of the primary URLs may stop working. In that case, try an alternate URL if one is available. Some older and defunct URLs are included here if they have been well-known or frequently cited. This way users can track the new URL down with the old by using the URL index.

Sponsors: The organizations which host the site or produce the information on a site are listed in this field. This generally consists of a federal government agency, but commercial, educational, and non-profit organizations will be listed here as well when they host or sponsor a specific resource. Most of the government agencies listed are United States federal agencies, so "United States" is left off the front of the sponsoring agency name unless it is something like the United States Attorney which does not make much sense without the "United States" in its name.

The complete organizational hierarchy is not shown for the federal government agencies. Rather than "United States. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census" just the lowest distinct hierarchical name is used: "Bureau of the Census." In some cases, divisions with a non-distinctive or possibly duplicative name are listed within a hierarchy. For example, the Census' Foreign Trade Division is listed as "Bureau of the Census. Foreign Trade Division" since there could be other Foreign Trade Divisions within other agencies.

A uniform entry is used for sponsoring governmental agencies in the State Governments and International chapters. The name of the state or country is followed by a descriptive term for the governmental body. For example, "Georgia. Legislature" and "Mozambique. Government" represent the state legislative body in Georgia and the executive branch of government in Mozambique.

Description: The resource description describes the organization, principal features, menu items, and significant links. For many agencies, a brief description of the agency's mission is included to help predict the kind of resources available on the site. The Description may mention significant publications available on the site in electronic form or which sections of the site include online documents. Sites offering similar information resources are compared with each other. The utility of the site, its ease of use, and the potential audience may be evaluated as well.

Subjects: In general, the subject headings listed here describe the primary focus of the resource and particularly useful subsections of the site. The subject headings can relate to both the subject of the agency as well as of the major sections of available information. Some of the subjects are given subheadings to more accurately represent the topic. The subject headings are all included in the master index along with cross references. For broad subjects, see also the appropriate chapter.

Publications: This field lists publications that are available in an online, full-text format from the Internet site. The publications listed include important titles, series, and serials. It does not include every monograph and pamphlet available. The Superintendent of Documents (SuDoc) number at the beginning of most of the titles is the number used in the Federal Depository Library Program to identify and often to shelve print publications from the Government Printing Office. The SuDoc numbers are useful as an easy method for finding online counterparts of print publications in a Federal Depository Library collection as well as for tracking down older print counterparts of online publications. Assuming growth in the number of issues available online, the root SuDoc number is used rather than the full SuDocs for each individual item. Selected publications without SuDoc numbers are also included in this field. The Publications Index provides access to the entries containing listed publications by both publication title and SuDoc number.

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