



Eye on the Web

LINKS TO THE RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET

International Governmental Organizations: Part 2 Specialized Agencies of the United Nations

The previous installment of Eye on the Web introduced readers to some of the Web resources produced by the main organs of the United Nations (UN). The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is one of these organs. It is responsible for “promoting higher standards of living, full employment, and economic and social progress; identifying solutions to international economic, social and health problems; facilitating international cultural and educational co-operation; and encouraging universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

ECOSOC is tasked, in part, with co-ordinating the activities of specialized agencies. There are currently 14 specialized agencies, normally defined as autonomous intergovernmental organizations that carry out work relating to a specific field (e.g., labour, health, agriculture). The agencies work with and rely on support from members of the UN. As librarians, we must recognize the effect that agency autonomy has on their publishing and dissemination patterns e.g., don't expect to find all of their output included within general UN Web pages and reference tools.

In this column, I will introduce readers to the Web resources made available by the most active specialized agencies. I will not attempt to discuss Web resources for all agencies, although they will be

listed. Nor will I describe online access (intellectual or otherwise) to related governance documents (e.g., the documents of the International Labour Office of the International Labour Organization). If there is interest, however, I would be more than happy to tackle these labyrinthic resources in future issues. Feel free to drop me a note at awakaruk@yorku.ca if you have any suggestions or specific requests for this column.

Select Specialized Agencies

International Labour Organization (ILO), established in 1919

<http://www.ilo.org/>
The ILO Web site provides access to a myriad of public resources related to the promotion of social justice and human and labour rights. Topics range from child labour and globalization to asbestos in the workplace. Follow the “Resources” link from the main page to access ILO conventions, recommendations, publications (mostly for purchase) and numerous statistical and bibliographic databases. Labordoc, one of the ILO's best known bibliographic databases, provides access to more than 350,000 bibliographic records, including the ILO's library catalogue.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), established in 1945

<http://www.fao.org/>
The FAO Web site provides intuitive access to practically everything the average library user could want

to know about food and agriculture production, development and scarcity. Follow the “Statistical Databases” link from the main page to access one of its 13 online databases, covering topics that range from food supply to forest cover and fires. The “Virtual Library” link, also from the main page, provides users with access to the FAO's library and sales catalogues in addition to the David Lubin Memorial Library Web site. Do not miss the “more...” link under “Publications,” as it provides access to an extremely useful subject directory of FAO information available via its Web site; major headings range from “Animal Production and Health” to “Rural and Social Development.”

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), established in 1945

<http://www.unesco.org>
Technical glitches and dead links have become relatively rare as the recently revamped UNESCO Web site attempts to provide channeled access through its major themes, linked from the homepage and title bars: education, natural sciences, social sciences, culture and communication and information. The “Documentary Resources” link on the right side of the main page provides access to more than 100 UNESCO databases, ranging from bibliographic and full-text document repositories to photo and videobanks. If you require specific statistical information, however, you will be better served by following the “Statistics” link on the right



side of the page, under the heading “On-Line Services.” A direct link on the resulting page to “Database Access” and “Statistical Tables” seems to be the path of least resistance after being jumped to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics Web space. The former utilizes a server-side application of Beyond 20/20 to produce dynamic statistical reports (a.k.a. tables) while the latter allows you to export tables in Excel format. As expected, topics focus on education, culture (including libraries) and communication. Watch this site for promised additions, including statistical profiles by country.

World Health Organization (WHO), established in 1948

<http://www.who.int>

The WHO Web site displays the required practicality often associated with health care providers. Relatively uncluttered and easy to navigate, the main page provides quick access to headline issues and makes good use of five portals located at the top left of the screen: Countries, Health Topics, Publications, Research Tools, WHO Sites. While the alphabetized “WHO Sites” sitemap leaves something to be desired, the “Countries” and “Health Topics” sections provide easy access to information produced by the organization. The former is arranged alphabetically and the latter includes linked equivalency relationships (e.g., AIDS see HIV Infections). As expected, “Publications” refers to sales products. The “Research Tools” link provides access to statistical databases and tables and WHOLIS, a library database that acts as a both a catalogue

and an index to the organization’s publications, articles and technical documents; available full-text links are included in the database records.

Bretton Woods Institutions

The World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) were created in 1944 at a meeting of 43 countries in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire. Its original and collective aim was to help rebuild the postwar economy and promote international economic co-operation.

World Bank Group, established in 1946

<http://www.worldbank.org/>

This group of five institutions share a mandate of reducing poverty and facilitating economic growth in developing countries: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (aka IBRD or World Bank), International Development Association (IDA), International Financial Corporation (IFC), Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). The “Countries and Regions” link on the left side of the collective homepage provides information about the group’s activities organized by country and/or region, including major publications and announcements. Statistical resources are also linked from the main page, including free access to “Quick Reference Tables” providing regional indicators (e.g., CO2 emissions, GNI, military expenditures, etc.) and state level statistics under “Data by country” and “Data

by Topic,” including indicators on globalization, poverty, trade and information technology. Note that complete versions of the group’s flagship products, such as the World Development Indicators, are only accessible via fee-based subscription. The same access model is found when looking for publications, with the “Publications” tab leading the user to sales products and the “Documents and Reports” tab providing access to a searchable database of more than 14,000 papers and reports produced by the Group; all of which appear to be freely available full-text online.

International Monetary Fund (IMF), established in 1946

<http://www.imf.org/>

Established to promote international monetary co-operation, the IMF is currently involved in surveillance as well as financial and technical assistance activities. Because these tasks often require IMF staff members to work both with senior members of national governments and within the member countries themselves, the resulting documentation and publications prove to be a rich source of country level information. Follow the “Publications” link from the main page to search for research papers, reports and statistical publications, most of which are available free and full-text online. Alternatively, use the browse by subject feature on the “Publications” page to access publications relevant to a specific country. Note that both country names and the term “statistics” are used as subject headings.



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All Specialized Agencies of the United Nations (ordered as listed at <http://www.un.org>)

International Labour Organization (ILO), established in 1919
<http://www.ilo.org/>

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), established in 1945
<http://www.fao.org/>

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), established in 1945
<http://www.unesco.org>

World Health Organization (WHO), established in 1948
<http://www.who.int>

World Bank Group, established in 1946
<http://www.worldbank.org/>

International Monetary Fund (IMF), established in 1946
<http://www.imf.org/>

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), established in 1947
<http://www.icao.int/>

Universal Postal Union (UPU), established in 1874
<http://www.upu.int>

International Telecommunication Union (ITU): established in 1865
<http://www.itu.int>

World Meteorological Organization (WMO): established in 1950
<http://www.wmo.ch>

International Maritime Organization (IMO): established in 1958
<http://www.imo.org>

World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO): established in 1970
<http://www.wipo.int/>

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD): established in 1977
<http://www.ifad.org/>

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO): established in 1966
<http://www.unido.org/>

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