

EnviroLink. Access: <http://www.envirolink.org/>.

EnviroLink claims to be the largest and most frequently consulted online environmental resource. Perhaps one reason for this popularity is its weekly review of sites called "What Soars, What Snores," in which sites are rated based on content, philosophy, and potential impact on environmental issues. In addition, EnviroLink has received recognition and

awards for its Web site from Internet and environmental organizations alike. As a not-for-profit corporation, this grassroots online community's mission is to foster worldwide environmental activism and to provide Internet services for nonprofits and green businesses.

Patrons can navigate EnviroLink using a text or graphics browser. A local search engine allows searches by words or phrases for all pages. This site contains numerous resources, including: EnviroNews; Actions You Can Take (boycotts and other activism); the Green Marketplace (companies, products, and job listings); EnviroArts; and Live Environmental Data (which currently lists very limited statistics on population, rainforests, and earthquakes). Political science and environmental studies majors will find the following projects supported by EnviroLink most interesting: EcoLex (U.S. environmental laws and policies), and the Endangered Species Act On-Line clearinghouse.

Of particular use to academic library patrons is the collection of resources at the EnviroLink Library. One can browse through the alphabetic listing of library links or choose to search the subject headings—earth, air, fire, water, flora and fauna. Examples of resources available from the library include a collection of K–12 environmental curriculum guides, and hyperlinks to government data, environmentally friendly how-to publications, and magazine articles from activist organizations.

Librarians assisting undergraduate researchers in the many disciplines that intersect with environmental issues will find the legal data, publications, and databases at this site easy to use. EnviroLink should be at the top of anyone's bookmark list for accessing environmental Web

Internet Reviews

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resources.—*Paula Duffy, Montana State University-Billings; lib_duffy@vino.emcmt.edu*

Merck Home Page. Access: <http://www.merck.com>.

The Merck Corporation is definitely setting a high standard in the area of providing useful and reliable information to health care providers for corporate homepages. This is not to imply that the site is always

unbiased. However, the provision of the full text of the *Merck Manual* free of charge to Internet users is a significant contribution to the health care community and, in a more limited way, to health care consumers. The *Merck Manual* has long been a major print reference work for health care providers, offering textbook-style discussions of a wide range of medical disorders and common clinical procedures, and describing standard therapies, laboratory tests, and pharmacology. The online version is the highlight of the site's publications section and includes the full text and index of the print publication, including illustrations.

My only disappointments were the large number of pages that had to be traversed to use the resource effectively and the failure to take advantage of any of the enhancements hypertext could support such as cross referencing or the provision of supplemental information. Also, at least when I was accessing the site, the search function was not working properly and could not be evaluated. Like the print publication, this resource is not designed for the general health care consumer, and the language of the manual is quite technical.

In addition to information about the company's publications for health professionals, the site includes a developing section on disease information for the general public. The information currently available here is quite limited and seems focused on conditions for which standard therapy frequently includes treatment with the company's products. Although these products are not mentioned by name, the bias

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is quite clear. So far, information on a few diseases preventable by vaccination is available along with some information on cholesterol.

Another highlight of the site, the research section, describes the company's international fellows program, discusses the general interests of many of the organization's researchers, and details the company's extensive program providing seminar speakers. The site also includes a smaller product information section that, at the moment, is largely populated by recent press releases rather than detailed information on the huge range of products that Merck manufactures. Some information for investors is also prominently available from the homepage. Although clearly still in development, this corporate site reflects a refreshing sense of community responsibility and already provides a wealth of valuable health information.—*Karla L. Habn, College of Library and Information Services, University of Maryland; khabn@Glue.umd.edu*

The Center for Democracy and Technology Home Page. Access: <http://www.cdt.org/>.

Like the Electronic Frontier Foundation and the Electronic Privacy Information Center, the Center for Democracy and Technology (CDT) is a watchdog organization that tracks governmental actions that threaten to infringe on citizens' rights as applied to electronic access to information. The CDT is a nonprofit public interest organization based in Washington, D.C. Its mission is "to develop and advocate public policies that advance constitutional civil liberties and democratic values in new computer and communications technologies."

With privacy a key concern of the CDT, the tracking and coding of information transmitted on the Internet get upfront attention with links atop the page to a privacy demonstration and a conference on encryption. The CDT privacy demonstration is an eye-opening experience that shatters any illusions one has about anonymity on the Internet. The demo displays information that was extracted during the current visit to the demonstration page. Also included are explanations of client-side persistent information ("Cookies"), the types of information collected, and why surfers should care. A link to the "Anonymizer," which enables Internet travelers to visit sites without leaving a trail of personal data, is provided at the

end of the page. The encryption debate is highlighted with a link to the "SAFE (Security and Freedom through Encryption) Forum." Featured within the Cryptography Policy Issues Page, the SAFE Forum was the 1996 conference of members of Congress, prominent computer industry leaders, and privacy advocates who met to discuss the need to reform U.S. encryption policy. Transcripts of the forum are available in textual and audio formats.

The "Headlines" section focuses on currently developing issues. The headlined items provide comprehensive and timely coverage of executive, legislative, and judicial actions. Current issues, ranging of late from the Communications Decency Act to health information access to proposed antiterrorism legislation, receive headlines that are added to other sections of the homepage, as appropriate.

Serving as the core of the site are the "Issues Pages," each of which covers a public policy debate involving electronic information and civil liberties. Some of the issues covered are counter-terrorism and the encryption debate, censorship on the Internet, the debate over control of voice transmission, and privacy. Texts of Senate testimony, judicial decisions, press releases, statements by the president, and editorials from the *Washington Post* and *New York Times* are among the material provided. The latest developments appear first, followed by previous headlines, followed by background material. This presentation of the information allows the viewer to reach new material quickly and to go only as deeply into the material as needed. Novices may take objection to the jargon-laden titles of the "Issues Pages" and all visitors may get lost in the duplication of topics within pages.

The "Publications Page" rounds out the site by gathering in one place the CDT's position papers and "Policy Posts" that appear throughout the various "Issues Pages." These publications clearly lay out the facts surrounding the policy debates.

Students and faculty investigating public policy questions that involve electronic information access, privacy, and civil liberties will be very well served by the CDT's pages. Librarians will find information on many issues including a gold mine on the legal battle surrounding the Communications Decency Act, in which ALA has figured so prominently.—*Inga H. Barnello, Le Moyne College, BARNELLO@MAPLE.LEMOYNE.EDU* ■

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