

Biographical Dictionary. Access: <http://www.s9.com/biography>

This Web site contains brief information on about 24,000 people in all fields, from ancient times to the present. (For comparison, the printed *Merriam-Webster's New Biographical Dictionary* contains about 30,000 entries and does not include living



people.) The entries on this site include name, dates, and a short description of each person's claim to fame. Data is compiled by Eric Tentarelli, the site owner, from hundreds of published news and biographical sources.

The best feature of this site is that it can be searched not just by name but by keyword to find awards, dates, discoveries and inventions, literary works, movies, nationalities, nicknames, professions, pseudonyms, theatrical roles, and other terms. The other major advantage of this site is its advanced search capabilities.

Since there are pitfalls in searching for proper names in any database, it is always important to follow the protocol of the database you are using. The help screens and search examples on this Web site are excellent. Also helpful is a "Spelling Wizard," which finds the closest match to a name entered with an approximate spelling. It is possible to stump the Wizard with very poor spelling, but usually it finds the name that you need. As with names, searching for dates can be tricky in any database. This site offers a useful wildcard feature to facilitate searching for decades or centuries in addition to exact dates of birth and death. The advanced search feature allows boolean searching, phrase searching, and truncation.

Dates can be combined with keywords, for example, "US & Nobel" will bring up a list of American winners of Nobel prizes; "painter & 18 & French" will find 19th-century French painters. There is a quirk in the advanced searching: if you use "and" instead

of the ampersand, you will get some results, but not complete results.

Another disadvantage is that the site will not display more than 20 results, although you can work around this by repeating your topic search and making your way through the alphabet.

The site includes a handy annotated list of links to biography-related Web sites for astronauts, Nobel prize winners, obituaries, political figures, Pulitzer Prize winners, scientists, and more; there is also a list of ideas for using Biographical Dictionary in the classroom, as well as a multiple-choice biography quiz, which gives immediate feedback on your answers, right or wrong. Advertising on the site includes links to Barnes and Noble on each biographical entry page. It should be noted that searching on this site can be slow, sometimes bringing up the message, "excessive load on server . . . try again later."

With good reason, this is a popular database and probably gets a lot of use by students of all ages.—*Susan E. Clark, University of the Pacific; sclark@uop.edu*

Biography. Access: <http://www.biography.com>.

Produced by the A&E Television Network, this Web site claims new and expanded coverage of more than 20,000 people in all fields. The data on the site is primarily from the Cambridge Encyclopedia Database and the *Cambridge Dictionary of American Biography*.

Biography has a flashier design than the Biographical Dictionary, but has much less sophisticated searching. There are plenty of shopping opportunities for books and videos. As in the Biographical Dictionary, ubiquitous links are provided to Barnes and Noble. The advantage of Biography is that the entries are more detailed than those in Biographical Dictionary.

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Searching is by name only; the database is not searchable by other characteristics as is the Biographical Dictionary. One very helpful feature, which is not available on the other site, is an alphabetical listing of all of the names in the database. The ability to browse the complete list of entries is valuable.

Entries are longer than those in the Biographical Dictionary, ranging up to about 200 words. Many entries contain links to relevant Web sites. One problem with this database is that there are numerous duplicate entries; for example, there are two separate entries for Arthur Ashe, one of which does not indicate his death in 1993. There are many other duplicates.

Other features of this site are: an extensive list of links to biography-related discussion groups on topics such as athletes, books and authors, cops and criminals, movies and television, politicians, and more; a collection of one-minute online videos of various celebrities; a multiple choice biography quiz; and a biography anagram game (no fair using the Internet anagram unscrambler to solve this!).

Each of these free biography databases has advantages and disadvantages. Neither site has as much detail as an encyclopedia, but both are well worth bookmarking for ready reference.—*Susan E. Clark, University of the Pacific; sclark@uop.edu*

Institute for Puerto Rican Policy's IPRNet.

Access: <http://www.iprnet.org/IPR/>.

There are a growing number of Web sites that present various aspects of the U.S. Latino experience, but few authoritative sites that focus on issues pertaining to Puerto Ricans, particularly those living in the United States. IPRNet, the Web site of New York City's Institute of Puerto Rican Policy, is the happy exception to that trend.

The Institute of Puerto Rican Policy was established in 1982 as a nonprofit and non-partisan policy center, whose research and publications have long tracked Puerto Rican and Latino demographics, voting behavior,

poverty, political representation, health status, and other social issues. In developing IPRNet, the Institute has effectively expanded its outreach by moving many of its services, newsletters, research publications, resources, and statistical datanotes to the Internet.

IPRNet makes available full-text feature articles from the newsletter "Critica" (whose editorial advisory board includes well-known scholars, such as Gabriel Haslip-Viera, Juan Flores, and Kal Wagenheim), samples of statistical data documenting Puerto Rican demographics and opinions, and downloadable files of data and questionnaires from surveys, such as the Latino National Political Survey. IPRNet also includes cultural information, bibliographies, links elsewhere, a fun quiz on Puerto Rican history, and instructions on how to subscribe to its e-mail discussion list—IPR Forum.

IPRNet does not focus exclusively on Puerto Ricans living in the United States. There is also a massive directory of Puerto Rican associations in the United States and Puerto Rico, and a Puerto Rico Datasite that has compiled socio-economic data on 78



Puerto Rican regions regarding population, language use, home ownership, literacy, and unemployment rates. Elsewhere, Puerto Rico is ranked on selected indicators (such as high school graduation rate, households receiving public assistance, and ability to speak English) and compared with the strongest and weakest of the United States.

Puerto Ricans comprise the second largest group of Latinos living in the United States. This Web site will be valuable for academic libraries and researchers interested in political science and policy studies, as well as the areas of Latino studies and broader ethnic studies; public libraries serving Puerto Rican and Latino populations will also be interested in bookmarking this site.—*Susan A. Vega Garcia, Iowa State University; savega@iastate.edu* ■