

Earth Portal. Access: <http://www.earthportal.org/>.

Earth Portal describes itself as a “timely, objective, and science-based” portal for environmental information. The three branches of Earth Portal set out to build a global collection of scholarly information regarding the Earth and its environment, to foster civil dialogue surrounding issues of human interaction with our environment, and to distribute news regarding current developments and expert-driven conversations about environmental issues. “Encyclopedia of Earth” is a free digital reference work containing key information about the Earth and its environment; an international body of scholars develops the encyclopedia’s content.

“Earth Forum” is a moderated conversation space that allows the public to converse with selected experts on issues of environmental science. “Earth News” distributes current information about the environmental sciences aggregated from selected media outlets, the editors of the “Encyclopedia of Earth,” and authors of the week. Earth Portal provides authoritative (or at least well-sourced), non-partisan, and science-based information on the environment.

“Encyclopedia of Earth” is the most visible part of Earth Portal. It is an electronic reference work containing more than 3,500 articles written or evaluated by more than 1,000 scholars from 60 nations around the world. Explicitly created to fill the need for authoritative and sourced environmental science information, the encyclopedia competes with unsourced and crowd-sourced information sources, such as can be found in Wikipedia or through a Google search. “Encyclopedia of Earth” provides a searchable and browsable collection of

environmental information vetted by a panel of scholars. The editors and entry authors are listed along with biographical information.

“Earth Forum” provides a two-way conversation between seekers of information and the recognized experts in the field. Conversations in the forum are moderated, which helps create a more civil conversational space than may be found in more open Internet forums. Searchers wishing to post a question or participate in the conversation are required to create a free account. The conversations themselves are searchable by keyword, subject heading, and by the expert participating.

“Earth News” pushes content to subscribers and readers by disseminating selected news and current events information. Content is selected from aggregated news sources, new content added to the “Encyclopedia of Earth,” and by guest authors who choose stories and content on a weekly basis.

The content of Earth Portal makes it a valuable information source. Through its clear and transparent policies for submission, evaluation, objectivity, and civil discourse, this resource builds a bridge between the chaotic mass of information available on the free Internet and the restricted, expensive, and often opaque world of peer-reviewed publications. Users of this resource will find authoritative and scholarly conversations and information. Not only that, they will easily find the policies and processes by which the content is selected and evaluated, which will lead to increased information literacy in reflective users of this resource.— *Nicholas Schiller, Washington State University-Vancouver; schiller@vancouver.usu.edu*

Human Security Gateway. Access: <http://www.humansecuritygateway.com/>.

The Human Security Gateway is maintained jointly by Simon Fraser University’s School of International Studies and The Human Security Research Group. It provides access to more than 24,000 reports, news articles, journal articles, and fact sheets that all relate to hu-

Joni R. Roberts is associate university librarian for public services and collection development at Willamette University, e-mail: jroberts@willamette.edu, and Carol A. Drost is associate university librarian for technical services at Willamette University, e-mail: cdrost@willamette.edu

man security. The guiding mission of this site is “to make human security-related research more accessible to the policy and research communities, the media, educators and the interested public.”



The main page of this site consists of a “Latest Updates” section as well as sections that are labeled “News,” “Reports,” “Academic Articles,” and “Fact Sheets/Data Sources.” All of these sections contain recent additions to the site and are kept very current. In addition, visitors can search the site by a custom search box or a Google search box. In sample searches both options garnered similar results; however, the custom search box displays the results by source type, title, source, and date.

Aside from a surprisingly good search feature, this site also does an excellent job categorizing content by topics, regions, or resources. For example, clicking on the topic “Armed Conflict” automatically creates a custom search for this topic and also gives the user the option of further refining results via the advanced search interface.

Arguably the strongest features of this site are its RSS feed options, available in English or French. Additional RSS options are found under the “Customized Updates” and “Site Map” links, which are located in the top tool bar. The former allows the creation of custom feeds or e-mail notifications, while the latter offers choices from numerous predefined categories.

Overall the site provides access to a variety of excellent documents, most in full-text. Academic articles are well referenced, while reports, news articles, and the like may only identify the author. This site is recommended for students and faculty from community college to graduate level. In particular, students and faculty focusing on global studies, peace studies, or political science will especially find this site useful.—*Brad S. Matthies, Butler University, bmatthie@butler.edu*

Institute for the Biocultural Study of Religion. Access: <http://www.ibcsr.org>.

The Institute for the Biocultural Study of Religion (IBCSR) was founded by Patrick McNamara and Wesley Wildman of Boston University to conduct research into the biological and cultural functions of religion. Its mission includes research, training, and outreach regarding the interaction of science and religion in the public sphere. Current IBCSR projects include Templeton Lectures in Religious and Psychological Well-Being; a doctoral program in Science, Philosophy, and Religion; the Human Relation Area Files Project (an electronic database); and a weekly journal club.

IBCSR’s Web site “explores the nexus of culture, mind and religion.” For example, at the time of this review, the homepage featured a story entitled “Christian Attitudes Toward Evolution: Dismissive, Indifferent, and Accepting,” which surveyed the differing attitudes towards evolution held by Roman Catholics, mainline Protestants, Evangelical Protestants, and other Christian groups. Another story, “Religious Views on Evolution More Diverse than Usually Thought” explained briefly the opinions about evolution in Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam.

The homepage also provides links to a variety of material. “News Feeds” indexes items of interest regarding science and religion from the *New York Times*, National Public Radio, the Pew Forum, and Beliefnet.com (previously reviewed in this column). Other links, for example “Research News,” “Research in Focus,” and “Newsflash Items” contain articles written by IBCSR members and feature stories about topics such as religion, gender, and age and intelligent design. “Bibliographies” also appears to contain extensive material from IBCSR’s researchers. There are also a couple of nonfunctioning links, such as “Research Databases” and “Archives.” In addition, the site lacks an interactive search screen.

The IBCSR site serves as a forum for graduate students and post-doctoral students at Boston University to circulate position papers. It provides targeted news and information for students in the fields of bioethics and the study of religion and science.—*Wendell G. Johnson, Northern Illinois University, wjohnso1@niu.edu* 