

**Applied Research Center.** Access: <http://arc.org>.

The Applied Research Center (ARC) is a “racial justice think tank” devoted to media and activism. The ultimate goal of ARC is to raise awareness of social injustices dealing with race and to direct readers to solutions. Since its founding in 1981, ARC has used strategic research and policy analysis to expose systemic and structural racial inequalities in the United States. ARC’s content and reports consist of underreported stories or issues that have been misinterpreted by the mainstream media. The center’s mission is to “change the way society talks about and understands racial inequity.”

The site is divided into multiple areas such as “Media,” “Research,” “Activism,” “Training/Events,” and “Toolbox.” ARC is most recently known for being the publishers of Colorlines.com, a daily site that offers analysis on news events and a wide range of social issues. Additionally, ARC hosts Webinars around the release of its research reports and co-hosts a Facing Race conference.

The core of the ARC site is the more than 220 extensive and free reports that focus on societal issues through the lens of race. Reports are organized by currency or by broad topic. Popular general topics include “Education & Youth,” “Immigration,” “Poverty & Welfare Policy,” and more. Of particular interest are two recent reports—one featuring millennials’ attitudes about race and another report focusing on racism and food inequality.

Reports are comparable to the very familiar Pew Internet & American Life Project information. However, ARC’s content

contains both qualitative and quantitative research, and relies on original research and focus groups.

ARC would be extremely valuable to any anthropology, criminal justice, or sociology researcher exploring the impact of race on society. Undergraduates studying journalism and media studies would be interested in ARC’s multimedia reports and exploration of media bias.

There are some issues with currency of reports and other information on the site; some of the content is more dated and almost historical in nature. However, depending on your research focus, this historical information on racism in the United States could be an asset.—*Molly Susan Mathias, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, mathiasm@uwm.edu*

**Resources for the Future** Access: <http://www.rff.org>.

Resources for the Future (RFF) is a Washington, D.C.-based research organization that focuses on environmental and natural resource policy. Their team of more than 40 research staff, with advanced degrees ranging from economics to engineering, produces an impressive portfolio of research publications. Through its Web site, the organization provides different levels of access to these publications.

Visitors to the site may choose to begin their research with a basic or advanced search. Alternatively, they may browse through five focus areas: “Energy and Climate,” “Health and Environment,” “The Natural World,” “Regulating Risks,” or “Transportation and Urban Land.” Each area is given its own page with links to RFF reports, projects, and research staff.

Another menu option, “Research Topics,” offers a longer list of additional topics each with its own page linking to reports and research staff. There is no clearly stated difference between “Focus Areas” and “Re-

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search Topics” making browsing for research materials somewhat confusing.

The “Publications” page provides access to RFF’s full list of publications through a title search, with menus for filtering by topic, publication type, and author. Discussion papers and issue briefs are available in PDF for download. Book chapters and journal article citations are listed as well as books published by RFF Press, an imprint of Earthscan and Routledge. Books have a link for purchase, but, as of this writing, the links to Earthscan’s bookstore are not working.

RFF’s quarterly magazine *Resources* is featured prominently on most pages. The magazine, with a backfile dating from 1996, is freely available through the site. RFF also publishes *Directory of Experts for Policymakers and the Media*, available in flash reader format.

In addition to their extensive catalog of research publications, RFF keeps its Web site audience up-to-date on news and events relating to environmental issues and natural resources via Facebook, Twitter, press releases, and the Common Resources blog. The homepage design gives prominent placement to current news via Twitter feed and blog headlines.

Students of environmental, energy and natural resources policy will find RFF’s site a good research tool, as well as a resource for staying abreast of recent developments.—*Ann Flower, Monterey Institute of International Studies, aflower@miis.edu*

### **Statistical Assessment Service (STATS).**

Access: <http://www.stats.org>.

STATS, founded in 1994 and affiliated with George Mason University since 2004, describes itself as a nonprofit and nonpartisan “resource on the use and abuse of science and statistics in the media.”

One of its main goals is to “correct scientific misinformation in the media and in public policy.” Although journalists are its primary audience, STATS is also a relevant resource for students and teachers of information literacy and numeracy.

In many ways, STATS is to science and statistics as Snopes is to Internet rumors and Politifact is to politics. They each exist to debunk, scrutinize, and deconstruct questionable claims. Given the vastly different cultures, values, and emphases between scientific researchers and journalists, STATS serves as a helpful bridge between these two worlds.

Although it claims to be unbiased, STATS history of being largely funded by politically conservative charitable foundations has brought some criticism. Specifically, some have accused STATS of attacking liberal causes and environmentalists in its discussions of topics, such as climate change and the chemical Bisphenol A (BPA). In many ways, these claims have the potential to enhance the usefulness of this site as a tool to teach information literacy and the issues of bias and objectivity.

The STATS site is fairly easy to navigate and is fully searchable. It includes a blog and a very handy and easy to understand overview of statistical concepts, such as percentages, margin of error, and causation versus correlation. Beyond these tools, the core of the site lies in its materials tab.

The resources in the “In Depth Analysis” and “Articles” sections analyze and critique media coverage of topics, such as immunizations, phthalates, and the effect of soda taxes on obesity. The “STATS in the Media” section is a vast list of links to articles written by STATS staff for various magazines and Web sites.

One feature that is lacking is a list of subjects covered by STATS. All of the materials sections are arranged chronologically. Even though the site can be searched, different search terms tend to lead to different results. For instance, searches for *TV* and for *television* bring up different lists of articles.

Overall, despite the bit of controversy surrounding its funding and some limitations from a lack of indexing, STATS is a solid site for teaching the evaluation of resources, critical thinking, and statistical claims in the media.—*Brian T. Sullivan, Alfred University, sullivan@alfred.edu* 