

Ballotpedia. Access: <http://ballotpedia.org/>.

Ballotpedia was formed by the Citizens in Charge Foundation in 2007, and sponsored by the Sam Adams Alliance in 2008, and has been under the direction of the Lucy Burns Institute, which runs a similar Web site called Judgepedia, since 2009. Ballotpedia describes itself as a “nonpartisan collaborative encyclopedia designed to connect people to politics.” Most of the information and analysis included appears to be impartial, but as with any source, users should be cautious consumers with regard to both site content as well as that of externally linked resources.

The site is enormous in scope and may overwhelm those who are unfamiliar with governmental structure at the federal and state levels. Librarians might want to make sure users have a well-defined information need and search strategy before turning them loose.

In addition to standard search functions, there are several ways to identify and access content, most notably, the U.S. map that appears on the site’s homepage. Clicking on any particular state will direct users to a state-level portal that breaks information down into easy to use tabbed subcategories.

Users interested in the big picture can access content via one of six portals on the homepage: “Elections,” “Congress,” “State Executives,” “State Legislatures,” “Ballot Measures,” and “School Boards.” Finally, there is a site index as well as a list of ballot measures by topical area (Issues) on the left-hand navigation menu.

Ballotpedia uses the Mediawiki platform, and its content is made available under a GNU Free Documentation License (1.2). Wikipedia veterans will be familiar with its

layout and functionality. Registration is not required to make edits, but it is strongly encouraged and is a prerequisite for creating new articles.

To characterize Ballotpedia, “an interactive almanac of U.S. politics,” as a wiki that compiles information on state ballot measures is to overlook the wealth of content it collects on elections, politicians, and issues across all levels of government. It would make an excellent addition to any resource collection related to government information, political science, or public policy.—*Steven Hoover, Syracuse University Libraries, sjhoover@syr.edu*

Museum of the Moving Image. Access: <http://www.movingimage.us/>.

Recently celebrating its 25th anniversary, the Museum of the Moving Image is located in the Astoria neighborhood of Queens in New York City. According to its Web site, it is “the country’s only museum dedicated to the art, history, technique, and technology of the moving image in all its forms.” This site provides online access to the collections, services, and programs of the museum.

The navigations buttons located just under the title graphics, invite the user to explore the various features of the Web site. “Visit” offers information about hours, rates, and policies; directions to the museum; tours and group visits; and information about the surrounding community of Astoria.

“Films +” provides schedules of showings, series, or special programs, currently including a retrospective of director Howard Hawks. “Exhibitions” lists special and ongoing exhibits. A current exhibit, “From Mr. Chips to Scarface: Walter White’s Transformation in Breaking Bad,” focuses on the main character’s moral decline and features costumes (e.g., the now iconic yellow hazmat suits), props, and video clips.

The “Education” section offers programs aimed at school groups and teachers. It also

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includes two online resources, an online exhibit titled “The Living Room Candidate: Presidential Campaign Commercials, 1952–2008,” and the “Moving Image Resource.” The latter includes a research guide to Web-based film and media-related resources, “Articles,” and a “Dialogues” section offering discussions with creative figures from film, television, and digital media.

“Collection” provides an overview of the physical artifacts in the museum relating to the art, history, and technology of film, television, and digital media. From early on, this has also included video games. Historically, the collection ranges from optical toys from the late 1800s to the most current innovations in digital film.

“Families” offers opportunities for family-related activities, including programs, memberships, and movie-themed birthday parties. “Support” supplies information about memberships, sponsorships, and donation opportunities and “About” provides history, background, and organization of the museum. A sidebar on the left that follows from page to page provides a search box, calendar of events, and links to special Web projects.

This site serves mainly as an introduction and guide to the physical museum. The online options are limited, although the Moving Image Resource provides a variety of fascinating choices. That alone might be worth the price of admission.—*Ford Schmidt, Willamette University, fschmidt@willamette.edu*

National Park Service. Access: <http://www.nps.gov/civilwar/index.htm>.

As the United States celebrates the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, the National Park Service, the main custodian of many of the Civil War battle sites, has created a useful and content-rich Web site to guide visitors to the National Park Service’s battle sites, as well as provide history, collections, and preservation information to travelers, educators, students, and history buffs alike.

From the poignant statistic in the middle of the Web page (“4,000,000 freed. 750,000

dead. 1 nation saved.”), the National Park Service Civil War Web site uses 21st-century technology to provide exhaustive, distinctive, and useful 19th-century information. Examples include access to the National Park Service Soldiers and Sailors database allowing the user to search 6.3 million records dealing with information about Civil War soldiers, sailors, cemeteries, and monuments, and a Twitter feed on daily Civil War events.

A “Stories” link on the site provides detailed and descriptive information on well-known (and not so well-known) Civil War history and events that took place beyond the battlefields, including such topics as “The Civilian Experience,” “Women Amidst War,” and “Industry and Economics.”

This information, provided in an easily navigable and readable format, provides the Web user with an encompassing sweep of Civil War history beyond the battlefields and shows how its events affected the nation then and reverberate to this day.

Users can also browse online historical collections that deal with such diverse topics as General Robert E. Lee’s house in Arlington, Virginia (now part of Arlington National Cemetery), and Clara Barton’s role as a nurse and founder of the American Red Cross.

The most impressive feature of the National Park Service’s Civil War Web site is the detailed timeline that contains not only Civil War events, but also other important events occurring at the same time. There are some links to Civil War commemorative events that have already taken place (such as the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Antietam in 2012), which may be a drawback to using this site.

Nevertheless, for all those interested in the history of the Civil War and how its events continue to shape our world, the National Park Service’s Civil War site serves as an important Internet portal for detailed information useful to students, tourists, and historians. Highly recommended for anyone interested in Civil War history.—*Larry Cooperman, University of Central Florida Libraries, Orlando, Laurence.Cooperman@ucf.edu* ↗