

**EPA's Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO).** Access: <http://www.epa.gov/echo/>.

For researchers needing access to historical EPA reports, ECHO is an extraordinary resource. Developed and maintained by EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, ECHO "provides compliance and enforcement information for approximately 800,000 regulated facilities nationwide." Unless a user has some familiarity with EPA and the way it collects and reports information, the site does have a steep learning curve.

The main report categories are: air, water, hazardous waste, drinking water, criminal, and enforcement cases. Unfortunately searching is not uniform across all the data categories. Familiarity with EPA IDs, SIC codes, NAICS codes, and the range of federal agencies is definitely a plus. Once a user retrieves a report, one helpful feature is the "Data Dictionary" linked above each report heading. At the bottom of the homepage, the "Search for Facilities" more or less mirrors the information on the left navigation, but it has a feature that allows cross searching.

From the homepage, three features in particular warrant exploration. "Analytics and Trends" provides data on each of the different categories for which it has reports. For example, the multiyear data on the Clean Water Act for each state provides information about the metrics used as well as exceptional graphs. "Reports and Resources" links to Web sites related to each of the different report categories. For example, the Clean Water Act portal links to legislation and data sources about clean water.

Finally, the ECHO In My Community section allows a user to search by city/state or by

ZIP Code to locate any report for a particular location either in a map or table view. Unless one knows the name of a particular report, this is probably the easiest way to locate reports for a particular locality.

Map results are not as complete as those in the tables, since only reports that include GPS coordinates are listed in the map result page. However, starting with the map will give you a quick overview of the type of reports issued for a particular location, and the color-coded results will make it easy to locate reports where compliance issues have been reported.

Environmental science and public policy students will find ECHO a valuable site.—*Susanne K. Clement, Utah State University, susanne.clement@usu.edu*

### **University of Wisconsin Digital Collections.**

Access: <http://uwdc.library.wisc.edu/>.

The University of Wisconsin Digital Collections (UWDC) site is a beautiful resource, well designed, easy to navigate and very comprehensive. It exposes collections that, if not hidden, may be a surprise to the general user unfamiliar with the breadth of UW's digital collections.

UWDC was created in 2001 to provide faculty, staff, students, and state and global learners, high-quality access to UW library materials. UWDC was formed to digitize, provide access to, and maintain these digital materials; since 2001, UWDC has digitized more than 1 million objects.

Visitors to the UWDC homepage can browse a drop-down list of digitized collections, use a full-text search box for those same collections, or go directly to featured collections, which include materials from the state of Wisconsin, the UW archives, the extensive Ecology and Natural Resources Collection, and the signature Aldo Leopold collection. Additional collections are showcased each month under the Latest News section and then archived for later perusing.

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Items in each collection are represented through high-resolution images, full metadata records, and links to related material. Users will also find a “Learning Resources” tab, which takes them to subject guides and lesson plans covering many subject areas, including agriculture, ecology, Native Americans, and women.

The site is an impressive resource for many reasons. It provides extensive information on a large number of subjects using text, image and media files, and descriptive data. For those researching the state of Wisconsin, there are amazing regional materials to be found and explored. For teachers, both in and out of Wisconsin, the curriculum development materials cover a wide range of topics and are well-designed and simple to use.

The site introduces and promotes UW library collections to a global audience, and its ease of use tempts visitors to dig deeper and learn more about the robust collections of the UW Libraries. And for those of us looking for inspiration, design ideas, and a standards-based, sustainable digital collection model, the UWDC site is a great discovery.—*Sarah Goodwin Thiel, University of Kansas Libraries, sgthiel@ku.edu*

**USAspending.gov.** Access: <http://usaspending.gov/>.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) launched USAspending.gov in December 2007 to meet requirements of the 2006 Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, which establishes a single searchable and freely accessible Web site listing federal agencies’ contracts, grants, loans, and spending.

Some spending is currently not included, such as amounts smaller than \$25,000, federal retirement and disability benefits, and Troubled Asset Relief Program, but OMB is working with agencies to include these. Data are provided from 2000 forward. Agencies are encouraged to provide award information at least weekly; the site is updated daily.

Given the federal budget’s complexity, OMB has done an admirable job of making federal spending data accessible, understandable, and thus transparent. However, the site is still very complex. The advanced search screen is intended for expert searchers, and librarians helping patrons might not want to jump immediately to it. For example, agencies and product/service categories are listed by code rather than alphabetically; additionally, neither list drops down; and three agencies/categories are displayed at a time, which makes browsing difficult.

Instead, librarians new to the site should direct patrons either to the “Summaries” page or to the basic search box. “Summaries” opens with a display of agency spending for the current fiscal year, sorted by dollar amount. A tab for “prime awardee” shows top recipients; a tab by location shows federal spending by state. Each display has a “list view” or “view all” option; all agency, recipient, and state names link to summary pages about that entity, showing the top five recipient states, sub agencies, contractors, and products or services purchased.

Some patrons will want to view information for a sub agency not included in the top five, and should turn to the basic search box, which allows a keyword search of all text fields; phrases can be entered in quotation marks but truncation is not available. The site suggests searches as the patron types. Some agency names are rotated so that a search on “bureau” or “Indian affairs” finds the Bureau of Indian Affairs. However, “affairs” does not return suggestions; librarians will want to search cautiously.

As a publicly available representation of federal outlays to various public and private entities, USAspending.gov will appeal most to political science students, but students of public policy in many disciplines will find it useful to track spending by relevant agencies.—*Heidi Senior, University of Portland, senior@up.edu* ♪