

FRASER. Access: <https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/>.

The stated mission of FRASER (Federal Reserve Archival System for Economic Research) is “to safeguard and provide easy access to economic history—particularly the history of the Federal Reserve System.” FRASER was created by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. Public and academic libraries, the United States Government Printing Office, and Federal Depository Library Program libraries have collaborated with FRASER to fulfill its mission.

From a well-designed homepage displaying historical photographs, recent tweets, and featured collections, the site invites visitors to explore, access, and learn economic and banking history using digitized primary sources. Congressional publications, policy statements and speeches from Federal Reserve System officials, books, statistical publications, photographs, letters, and other archival material are some of the resources available.

Tabs on the navigation bar directly below the FRASER logo lead to three sections: “Economic Data,” “Federal Reserve History,” and “Archival Collections.” FRASER considers these “prominent content areas” that provide access to statistical releases and other data publications, links to histories of the 12 Federal Reserve banks in the United States, and featured archival collections. Keyword searching is the default option, but author and title searching are also available. Searches can be refined using date, author, title, subject, and genre. These options appear as “filters” on the left of the screen.

Each document retrieved is meticulously described, and citation information for inclusion in bibliographies is also provided. For selected resources there are conditions of use. Photographs and documents that are copy-

righted, or that have personally identifiable information, may not be available.

“The How to Use FRASER” page uses screenshots with numbered instructions to guide users in searching the site and explaining its content. This and other tutorials are excellent guides to the site.

FRASER has been described as “a digital library of the economic, financial, and banking history of the United States.” As such, it is an essential site for research on the U.S. Federal Reserve System and on economic events that have shaped U.S. history. Because it includes documents that are part of the Federal Depository Library System, it can serve as an alternative site for accessing these materials. Documents viewed on the site, including typescript pages and books published in the early 19th century, are of the highest quality.—*Maureen James-Barnes, University of Arkansas-Little Rock, mejames@ualr.edu*

International IDEA: Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. Access: <http://www.idea.int/>.

Based in Stockholm, Sweden, IDEA is an international organization created to support worldwide democracy by providing knowledge for democracy builders in the form of policy development and analysis and also to support reform in those areas affected. As its website states, it is “the only global intergovernmental organization with the sole mandate of supporting democracy.”

Resources are organized along a row of tabs across the top that divide the information into the following categories: “Areas of expertise,” “Regions,” “Publications & databases,” “Newsroom,” and “About us.” The site also offers an overall site search function.

“Areas of expertise” lists the four main areas where IDEA tries to exert influence: “Electoral Processes,” “Constitution Building Processes,” “Political Parties, Participation and Representation,” and “Democracy and Development.” Each of these areas contains

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

a Work Programme, which lists resources and activities dealing with that topic.

“Regions” provides a breakdown by geography of the areas where IDEA works. Included here are resources, agendas, and programs related to each region.

“Publications & databases” includes an ever-expanding list of IDEA publications; a collection of research databases and networks, which provide access to election statistics as well as databases created in cooperation with other organizations; and a section on policy analysis, which includes feature articles, public speeches, policy papers, and editorials. You can choose to browse by type of document, topic, region, or author. A collection of training materials is also available. The collection of databases should be especially useful for researchers, as it includes a variety of statistical sources and analyses, such as international voting statistics dating back to 1945. These databases can be searched as a unified database or as individual, more focused collections.

“Newsroom” provides press releases, photos and other multimedia features, a listing of news items concerning IDEA activities, and a calendar of upcoming international elections. In addition, a feature called In Focus examines current IDEA activities.

“About us” provides organizational information including the Board of Advisors, member states, a general FAQ, budget, and the IDEA mission statement.

Besides its core audience of democracy builders, International IDEA will be of particular interest to students and researchers looking into democratic processes, voting statistics, and governmental reform. Highly recommended.—*Ford Schmidt, Willamette University, fsmidit@willamette.edu*

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). Access: <http://www.unccd.int/en/Pages/default.aspx>.

The United Nations identified desertification as one of the greatest challenges to sustainable development. Established in 1994, UNCCD claims to be the sole, legally binding international agreement linking the environment to

sustainable land management. The convention promises “to forge a partnership to reverse and prevent desertification/land degradation and to mitigate the effects of drought in affected areas in order to support poverty reduction and environmental sustainability.”

The UNCCD’s web page generally serves as a conduit for information on upcoming international conferences and workshops on desertification, such as UNCCD’s Third Scientific Conference held in Cancun, Mexico, in March 2015 and World Day to Combat Desertification to be held this June. The UNCCD website also provides more pertinent information, such as a teacher’s kit, which includes Learning to Combat Desertification for primary schools. This material for primary schools includes “A Teacher’s Guide,” which contains 20 separate units (for example, “Climate Change and Desertification,” “Socio-economic Consequences of Desertification,” and “Developing Sustainable Agricultural Practices”). The teacher’s kit also presents a wide geographical range of case studies, including Algeria, Uzbekistan, Peru, Spain, and several other countries. Learning to Combat Desertification is available in English, Spanish, and French.

“Key Topics” provides brief information on a host of topics related to desertification, including land degradation, drought, biodiversity, climate change, food security, forests, gender, and water. The “Publications” section offers a variety of material, including helpful factsheets on different aspects of desertification. Factsheet number three, “The consequences of desertification,” describes how “soil becomes less productive,” “vegetation becomes damaged,” “food production is undermined,” and all of this “contributes to famine.” A sidebar on the page provides quick facts on land degradation. The factsheets resemble the material available via Facts on File both in form and content.

UNCCD is a valuable resource for elementary school teachers and students majoring in elementary education. Lower-division undergraduate students needing fact sheets on desertification for persuasive or argumentative speeches will also find useful information.—*Wendell G. Johnson, Northern Illinois University, wjohnso1@niu.edu* 