Temple University
Paley Library

Internet Sources of Government Information

By Blake Gumprecht, Documents Librarian

Temple University computer users can now access dozens of sources of current government information — Census data, Supreme Court decisions, weather forecasts, the Federal Register, daily White House press briefings, Bureau of Commerce economic reports and much more — free from their homes and offices 24 hours a day or at Paley Library.

Though the U.S. government has been criticized for not making more information available online to the public, enterprising computer users nationwide are taking advantage of the fact that works produced by the U.S. government are not eligible for copyright protection and have themselves made a wealth of information available via the Internet. More and more government agencies too are beginning to establish systems that can be accessed remotely by anyone with a computer and access to the network.

In many cases, there are significant advantages to the sources that can be accessed online over what can be found in the library or via other means. Internet resources are often more up-to-date than their paper counterparts. Frequently they can be searched by keyword. Sometimes they provide information that is simply not available in more traditional formats. A word of warning is necessary, though. Internet resources are constantly changing. What is available one minute may not be available the next. Source and file names are often changed without notice.

This is the first in what is hoped to be a continuing series of guides to Internet sources of government information. To access most of the sources listed using the information supplied, you must have an IBM mainframe or Astro account, or some other method for accessing the Internet. Contact Temple Computer Services at 204-5555 to apply for an IBM or Astro account, or to learn more about the Internet. A few of the sources listed can be accessed without an account by using the Gopher or Telnet services available through the Scholars Information Center at Paley Library.

The sources in this guide are intended to provide the simplest and clearest route known to the information provided. The preferred source is often a Gopher source because of the ease of using the Gopher software. Often, however, there are several sources for the same information. Some may allow more sophisticated file manipulation. Frequently files can be transferred to your personal computer using a feature known as file transfer protocol (ftp). Many files accessible via Gopher, moreover, are also available using a Telnet command, though sources available using this method often require an account or password.

The "source" listed is the "address" of the remote computer where the information described can be found, along with the "path" that a user must take to locate the particular directory or file that contains the information. When more than one source for the same information is known, a second source may be listed. Slashes in the source separate commands, steps, or levels in a menu hierarchy. The first part of any source listing is a command statement that must be executed to access the remote source of the information. Type the first part of the source listing, up to any slashes, and press the Enter key. If there are no slashes, type the entire phrase.

If you have questions about this guide or other sources of government information, contact Blake Gumprecht, Paley Library Documents Librarian at 204-3187, or via e-mail at gumpbw@vm.temple.edu (Internet) or gumpbw@ templevm (Bitnet). This guide is also available electronically. Call or write for details.

AIDS Related Information: National Institutes of Health database provides AIDS statistics, daily summaries of articles on AIDS in major newspapers, full text of *AIDS Treatment News*, reports from the National Commission on AIDS, pamphlets about AIDS and more. Source: gopher gopher.niaid.nih.gov/aids related information

Americans With Disabilities Act: Full text of the 1990 Act. Source: gopher scilibx.ucsc.edu/the library/electronic books

Americans With Disabilities Act Documents: Collection of documents about the ADA, including the Department of Justice technical manual. Source: gopher info.umd.edu/educational resources/united states/government/adaregulation

AskERIC: Archive of education information compiled by AskERIC, an Internet question-answering service for teachers and educators at Syracuse University. Source: gopher ericir.syr.edu

Budget of the United States Government: Full text of the federal budget for the 1993 and 1994 fiscal years; the 1994 budget can be searched by keyword. Source: gopher sunsite.unc.edu/sunsite archives/politics/sunsite political science archives

Bureau of Justice Statistics Documents: Full text of select U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics publications. Source: gopher uacsc2.albany.edu/united nations justice network

Campaign '92 and Election Results: Full text of key position papers, speeches, press releases and other documents from major candidates in the 1992 presidential election. Source: gopher tamuts.tamu.edu/browse information by subject/political science

Canadian Documents: Full text of the Canadian Constitution Act, Meech Lake Accord, Charlottetown Constitutional Agreement and other historic Canadian government documents. Source: gopher wiretap.spies.com./government docs

CancerNet: Full text of National Cancer Institute fact sheets, publications about cancer, patient diagnosis statements and more. Source: gopher helix.nih.gov/health and clinical information/cancernet information

***Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance*:** Provides information about more than 1,000 U.S. government assistance programs, administered by more than 50 federal agencies. Can be searched by keyword. Source: gopher marvel.loc.gov/federal government information/federal information resources/information by agency/general information resources

Census of Population and Housing: 1990 Census data available in text and Lotus 1-2-3 formats for U.S. cities, counties, metropolitan areas, states and the nation, with comparisons from 1980. For an archive of historical Pennsylvania census data, see the entree for the Economic Development Information Network. Source: gopher bigcat.missouri.edu/reference center

Census of Population and Housing (Pennsylvania): Detailed 1990 Census data for Philadelphia, suburban counties and the state. Source: gopher gopher.upenn.edu/penninfo/penninfo/libraries/electronic reference desk/u.s. census and statistical data

Chemical Substance Fact Sheets: Full text of Environmental Protection Agency fact sheets about hundreds of chemicals; can be browsed or searched by keyword. Source: gopher ecosys.drdr.virginia.edu/education/environmental fact sheets

***Citizens Guide to Using the Freedom of Information Act*:** Full text of a popular government guide to obtaining information using the Freedom of Information Act. Source: gopher wiretap.spies.com/ government docs/citizens guide to using the FOIA

***Code of Federal Regulations*:** Experimental system provided by a commercial vendor allows users to browse the code or search it by keyword. Access to the complete *CFR* is not yet available. The system places limits on the amount of information non-subscribers can retrieve. Source: gopher gopher.netsys.com/counterpoint publishing

Congressional Committee Assignments: Provides current Congressional committee rosters; can be browsed or searched by keyword. Source: gopher.lib.umich.edu/social sciences resources/government and politics/u.s. government resources: legislative branch

Congressional Directories: Library of Congress system provides access to a variety of Congressional directories; some can be searched by keyword. Source: gopher marvel.loc.gov/u.s. congress/congressional directories

Congressional firsts: List of firsts for the 103rd Congress. Source: gopher info.umd.edu/educational resources/united states/government/congress/103rd-firsts

Congressional Information: Provides access to Congressional directories, committee rosters, North American Free Trade Agreement documents, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the U.S. budget and more. Source: gopher gopher.lib.umich.edu/social sciences resources/government and politics/u.s. government resources: legislative branch

Congressional Information: Provides access to Congressional and agency directories, biographies, lists of Congressional firsts, information about women in Congress and more. Source: gopher info.umd.edu/educational resources/ united states/government/congress

Congressional Legislation: Library of Congress system allows users to search files that describe and track legislation introduced in the U.S. Congress from 1973 to present. Updated daily. Source: telnet locis.loc.gov/federal legislation

Cooperative Extension System: U.S. Department of Agriculture system provides access to extension service directories, fact sheets, calendars, nutritional data, information on national initiatives related to agriculture, flood information and more. Source: gopher cyfer.esusda.gov

Copyright Information: Library of Congress system allows users to search a database of information about works registered in the U.S. Copyright Office since 1978. Also includes files that provide general information about copyright. Source: telnet locis.loc.gov

Criminal Justice Country Profiles: Full text of a series of United Nations reports on crime and criminal justice in 123 countries. Most include statistics. Source: gopher uacsc2.albany.edu/united nations justice network/u.n. criminal justice country profiles

Earth Science Data Directory: U.S. Geological Survey system provides keyword access to sources of earth science data worldwide. Source: gopher scilibx.ucsc.edu/the researcher/science and engineering/earth and marine sciences

Earth System Data Directory: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) system provides descriptions and location information for earth and space science data sets. Source: telnet esdim1.nodc.noaa.gov/login:noaadir

Earthquake Information: Frequently updated data about recent earthquakes worldwide. Source: gopher gopher.stolaf.edu/internet resources/weather and geography

Economic Bulletin Board: Department of Commerce system provides access to thousands of data files, more than 700 of them updated daily. Includes information about current economic conditions, economic indicators, employment, foreign trade, monetary matters and more in 20 general subject areas. Source: gopher/off-campus services/points of interest. Source: gopher gopher.lib.umich.edu/social sciences research/economics. Source: telnet ebb.stat-usa.gov/ password:test

Economic Development Information Network (EDIN): Pennsylvania State Data Center system provides access to current and historical U.S. Census data for Pennsylvania and the nation, procurement leads, PSDC bulletins and press releases, a variety of business-oriented directories and more. Source: telnet psuvm.psu.edu/press Enter when userid is requested/ebb/edin.

Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC): Provides keyword access to bibliographic information and abstracts for a variety of articles and publications about education and related disciplines. Source: gopher cwis.syr.edu/ library, suinfo and data archives/eric

Environmental Protection Agency Online Library System: Provides access to the online catalogs of EPA libraries; separate databases with citations for sources about environmental financing, chemicals, hazardous waste and lake management; and a directory of government sources of environmental information. Source: telnet epaibm.rtpnc.epa.gov/ public/ols

Executive Branch Resources: Provides access to U.S. executive branch directories, White House information, NAFTA documents, full text of the U.S. budget and more. Source: gopher gopher.lib.umich.edu/social sciences resources/ government and politics/u.s. government resources: executive branch

Fair Credit Reporting Act: Full text of the act, as taken from the *U.S. Code*. Source: gopher wiretap.spies.com/ government docs

Federal Information Exchange: Provides information about federal education and research programs, scholarships, fellowships, grants, minority education and research programs, procurement opportunities and more. Source: gopher fedix.fie.com

Federal Jobs: Lists thousands of federal government job openings, taken from a variety of Office of Personnel Management computer bulletin boards. Source: gopher dartcms1.dartmouth.edu/job openings in the federal government

***Federal Register*:** Commercially produced system allows users to browse or search the daily *Federal Register*. System places limits on the amount of information non-subscribers can retrieve. Source: gopher gopher.netsys.com/counterpoint publishing

FedWorld: National Technical Information Service system provides access to more than 100 U.S. government computer bulletin boards, many of them previously accessible only by modem. Also includes full text of select U.S. government publications, statistical files, federal job lists, satellite images and more. Source: telnet fedworld.gov

Food and Drug Administration Bulletin Board System: Full text of FDA news releases, enforcement reports, import alerts, drug and product approval lists, *Federal Register* summaries, informational publications, articles from *FDA Consumer* and more. Source: telnet fdabbs.fda.gov/login:bbs

Food Labeling Information: FDA database provides access to documents about new food labeling regulations and activities related to the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act. Source: gopher zeus.esusda.gov/other usda and government information/food labeling information

General Accounting Office Reports: Full text of GAO high risk, technical, transition and other reports. Source: gopher wiretap.spies.com/government docs. Source: ftp ftp.cu.nih.gov/user:anonymous/password:guest/cd gao-reports

Genetic Sequence Data Bank: National Library of Medicine database allows researchers to search a collection of nucleotide sequences, as well as relevant bibliographic and biological annotation. Source: gopher helix.nih.gov/ molecular biology databases

Geographic Names Database: Provides geographic coordinates, county and state location, elevation, population, zip code and more for thousands of places listed on U.S. Geological Survey maps. Can be searched by place name or zip code. Source: gopher/off campus services/libraries/reference works/u.s. geographic names database

Government-Sponsored Bulletin Board Systems: Lists U.S. government computer bulletin boards accessible by modem. Source: gopher marvel.loc.gov/federal government information/federal information resources/information by agency/general information resources

Great Lakes Information Network: Provides information on environmental and economic development issues concerning the eight states that are members of the Great Lakes Commission. Source: gopher gopher.cic.net

Gross State Product Tables: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis tables estimating the value of goods and services for 61 industries in 50 states. Source: gopher gopher.lib.umich.edu/social sciences research/economics

Health Security Act of 1993: Full text of President Clinton's health plan and related documents, including his speech to a joint session of Congress in September in which he outlined the details of the plan. Source: gopher ace.esusda.gov/ americans communicating electronically. Source: telnet fedworld.gov

Historical Documents: Full text of dozens of historic U.S. government documents from the time of independence to the present day. Source: gopher wiretap.spies.com/government docs

Library of Congress Information System: Provides access to the Library of Congress online catalog, U.S. government copyright files, databases containing current information on federal legislation and foreign law, a catalog of sources available in braille or audio format, a national directory of organizations and more. Source: telnet locis.loc.gov

Library of Congress Marvel: One stop source for a multitude of government material — Congressional information, Census data, White House documents, crime statistics, State Department reports and more — taken from a variety of sources. Source: gopher marvel.loc.gov

Maastricht Treaty on European Union: Full text of the latest addition to the Treaty on European Union signed at Maastricht in 1992. Source: gopher wiretap.spies.com/government docs. Source: gopher sunic.sunet.se/subject tree/politics

Material Safety Data Sheets: Though not technically government information, material safety data sheets are produced by chemical manufacturers to comply with a variety of government regulations. They provide safety data on hundreds of chemicals. Source: gopher isumvs.iastate.edu/isu research information/msds

Merit Network Information Center: Michigan consortium provides information about the Internet, NSFNET and MichNet, including General Accounting Office and Office of Management and Budget reports, National Research and Education Network (NREN) activity, conference proceedings, newsletters, statistical reports, policy statements, user's guides and more. Source: gopher nic.merit.edu

***Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*:** Full text of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention weekly journal. Source: gopher gopher.niaid.nih.gov/aids related information

National Archives and Records Administration: Provides access to detailed information about audiovisual and electronic records held by the National Archives. Source: gopher marvel.loc.gov/federal government information/national libraries and national archives

National Environmental Data Referral Service: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) catalog provides keyword access to sources of environmental information nationwide. Source: gopher scilibx.ucsc.edu/the researcher/science and engineering/environmental science/noaa national environmental referral service

National Information Infrastructure Agenda: Full text of a Clinton administration report describing the role of government in promoting the development of the telecommunications and information infrastructure by the private sector. Source: gopher ace.esusda.gov/americans communicating electronically

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease: Full text of NIAID press releases, AIDS information publications, institute directories and more. Source: gopher gopher.niaid.nih.gov

National Institute of Standards and Technology: Provides access to a variety of NIST files. Source: gopher gopher-server.nist.gov

National Institutes of Health: Provides access to a broad range of NIH resources, including institute phone books and calendars, library catalogs, molecular biology databases, full text of the *NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts*, files containing AIDS and cancer information and more. Source: gopher gopher.nih.gov

National Library of Medicine: Full text of library fact sheets and current bibliographies. Source: gopher el-gopher.med.utah.edu/health sciences resources on the internet

National Performance Review (Reinventing Government): Full text of *From Red Tape to Results: Creating a Government that Works Better and Costs Less*, the 180-page report of Vice President Al Gore's task force on reinventing government. Source: gopher sunsite.unc.edu

National Referral Center Master file: Directory of more than 12,000 organizations qualified and willing to answer questions and provide information on many topics in science, technology and the social sciences. Source: telnet locis.loc.gov/organizations

National Science Foundation: Provides access to grant information, NSF directories and phone books, press releases, full text of select NSF publications and more. Source: gopher stis.nsf.gov

National Space Science Data Center: NASA database provides access to a catalog of space science data held by research centers worldwide. Source: telnet nssdca.gsfc.nasa.gov/username: nodis

National Weather Service Forecasts: Provides weather forecasts, current weather conditions, information on earthquakes, tropical storms and auroral activity for the 50 states and Canada. Source: gopher ashpool.micro.umn.edu/weather

***NavNews*:** Full text of the Navy News Service, distributed weekly to Navy operations worldwide, providing official news and information about fleet operations and exercises, Navy policy, budget actions and more. Source: gopher marvel.loc.gov/federal government information/federal information resources/information by agency/military agencies

Navy Policy Book: Full text of the Navy policy manual, which provides official statements on the Navy mission, objectives and policy. Source: gopher marvel.loc.gov/federal government information/federal information resources/information by agency/military agencies

North American Free Trade Agreement: Full text of NAFTA. Source: gopher wiretap.spies.com.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Documents: Full text of NATO press releases, fact sheets, speeches, *NATO Review*, *NATO Handbook* and other documents. Source: gopher sunsite.unc.edu/sunsite archives/sunsite political science archives/whitehouse-papers/read nato information

Patent Office Reform Panel final Report: Full text of a U.S. Patent and Trademark Office report recommending that U.S. patent procedures be changed to follow policy held by most industrialized nations. Source: gopher wiretap.spies.com/government docs

PENpages: Pennsylvania State University system provides the full text of thousands of documents about agriculture, food and nutrition, family issues and more. Source: telnet psupen.psu.edu/username: penpages

Political Platforms: Full text of the platform statements of the major parties in the 1992 presidential election, along with other major platform statements. Source: gopher wiretap.spies.com/government docs

President Clinton's Economic Plan: Full text of *A Vision of Change for America*, a summary of the President's economic plan presented to a joint session of Congress in February. Source: gopher wiretap.spies.com/government docs/clinton's economic plan

Presidential Documents from the *Federal Register*: Full text of presidential determinations, proclamations, executive orders and other documents published in the *Federal Register*. Source: gopher gopher.netsys.com/counterpoint publishing/federal register/selected federal agencies. Source: gopher wiretap.spies.com/government docs.

Public Opinion Item Index: Though not government information, public opinion polls provide valuable data about how the population views the government and its officials. This University of North Carolina system allows users to search an archive of data from polls conducted by *USA Today*, Louis Harris, *The Atlanta Constitution* and others. Source: telnet uncvm1.oit.unc.edu/userid:irss1/password:irss/irss/public opinion item index

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute Daily Report: Full text of a daily digest of the latest developments in Russia, Transcaucasia and Central Asia, and Central and Eastern Europe. Source: gopher gopher.lib.umich.edu/ news services

Senate Bibliographies: Bibliographies of Senate hearings, prints and publications for the 99th through the current Congresses. Source: gopher dewey.lib.ncsu.edu/ncsu's library without walls/study carrels/government and law/ mcgeachy's bibliography of senate hearings

Spacelink: National Aeronautics and Space Administration system provides access to NASA news releases, shuttle status reports, mission summaries, NASA congressional testimony and speeches, and many other files with current and historical information about NASA aeronautics and space research. Even allows users to ask NASA scientists questions. Source: telnet spacelink.msfc.nasa.gov/username:newuser/password:newuser

Speeches and Addresses: Full text of historic U.S. speeches. Source: gopher wiretap.spies.com/government docs/us speeches and addresses

Speeches from the 1992 Presidential Campaign: Full text of major speeches by Bill Clinton, George Bush and Libertarian Party candidate Andre Marrou. Source: gopher bigcat.missouri.edu/reference center

State Department Travel Advisories: An archive of State Department travel information and advisories. Arranged by country, files include current conditions, country descriptions, entry requirements, embassy and consulate locations, information about registration, medical facilities, drug penalties, crime and more. Source: gopher gopher.stolaf.edu/ internet resources

Statistics Canada Daily Reports: Full text of daily statistical releases, lists of publications and more from Statistics Canada, the Canadian government's primary compiler of statistics. Source: telnet info.carleton.ca/terminal type:decvt100/ statistics canada daily reports

Supreme Court Decisions: Full text of Supreme Court decisions issued since 1989. Also includes brief biographies of Court justices. Source: gopher info.umd.edu/educational resources/united states/supreme court

Treaties and International Covenants: Full text of major treaties. Source: gopher wiretap.spies.com/government docs

United Nations: Full text of U.N press releases, U.N. Conference on Environment and Development reports, United Nations Development Programme documents, U.N. telephone directories and more. Source: gopher nywork1.undp.org

United Nations Conference on Environment & Development Documents: Access to a broad range of documents pertaining to the June 1992 Rio de Janeiro conference. Source: gopher info.umd.edu/educational resources/international/united nations/environconf. Source: nywork1.undp.org

United Nations Resolutions: Full text of select United Nations resolutions. Source: gopher wiretap.spies.com/government docs

U.S. Constitution: Full text of the U.S. constitution, amendments and articles. Source: gopher info.umd.edu/educational resources/united states/government/constitution

U.S. Geological Survey: USGS Gopher system provides information about the agency, its publications and data as well as miscellaneous information about geology, hydrology, cartography and geographic information systems. Source: gopher info.er.usgs.gov

U.S. Geological Survey Weekly Seismicity Report: Full text of a weekly overview of earthquake activity around the world. Source: gopher somalia.earth.nwu.edu/seismology resources

U.S. Government Gopher Servers: Provides one stop access to more than a dozen U.S. government Gopher systems. Source: gopher stis.nsf.gov/other u.s. government gopher servers

University of Illinois Weather Machine: Provides current conditions, National Weather Service forecasts, severe storm warnings, flood summaries, earthquake bulletins, upper air conditions, satellite images and more for the 50 states, Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean. Source: gopher wx.atmos.uiuc.edu

White House Information: Full text of major policy statements, daily press briefings, speeches, proclamations, the president's daily schedule and more. Source: gopher tamuts.tamu.edu/browse information by subject/political science/information from the white house. Source: gopher sunsite.unc.edu/sunsite archives/sunsite political science archives/whitehouse-papers

World Constitutions: Full text of constitutions of select countries worldwide. Source: gopher wiretap.spies.com/government docs. Other constitutions can be accessed by conducting a Gopher veronica search, using "constitution" as the keyword

***World Factbook* (1990-1992):** Full text of the Central Intelligence Agency-produced *World Factbook*, which provides information about the geography, people, government, economy, communications and defense of countries around the world. Source: gopher wiretap.spies.com/electronic books/cia world factbook

World Health Organization: Provides access to world health statistics, WHO press releases, full text of selected WHO publications and more. Source: gopher gopher.who.ch

Zip Codes: Database of U.S. zip codes, searchable by keyword. Source: gopher gopher.uoregon.edu/desktop reference/geographic and travel information