

News from the Kresge Library

Human Rights Research on the Internet

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Over the last decade, new technology has changed how human-rights specialists access vital information. In 1989, for example, satellite up-links and fax machines made it possible to distribute the news of the Tienanmen Square massacre throughout China and the world as it happened. In 1997, another technology is once again causing change: the Internet. The news of a significant event can be disseminated to the world via the Internet within a few minutes of its occurrence. The anticipated growth of the Internet — it is estimated that around 40 million users currently access the Internet from around the world, and that 66 million will use the Internet by the year 2000 — ensures that it will continue to be a major player in disseminating information.

The Internet not only offers a method of communicating information about current events in a timely manner, but also provides a method for publishing human rights information produced by various international organizations. This includes treaties, reports and declarations from the United Nations and other international organizations, and reports about human rights from around the world. As a result, these materials can be accessed more quickly and easily than ever before.

This article highlights some of the best sites pertaining to international human rights. In the near future, the Kresge Library will provide a much more detailed and complete listing of human rights information at www.nd.edu/~lawlib/. Be sure to check this site periodically for new information.

I N T E R N E T S I T E S

AAAS Directory of Human Rights Resources on the Internet

(shr.aaas.org/dhr.htm)

This site lists, describes and links to over 300 human rights organizations on the Web, and includes links to an assortment of human rights documents.

DIANA International Human Rights Database (www.law.uc.edu:81/Diana/)

The DIANA project actually is composed of several sites and is a collaborative effort by various law schools. Each law school maintains a part of the collection, but all of the resources offered here are accessible from the above address: the University of Minnesota site focuses on U.N., OAS and African documents; Yale Law Library contains the text of many human rights cases, mainly from United States Courts; the University of Toronto Law Library has a wonderful collection of women's rights documents; and the University of Cincinnati provides primarily U.N. and Organization of African Unity resources.

FIDEH — Foro interamericano de derechos humanos

(www.udayton.edu/~fideh/rights.htm)

This site offers a very handy collection of "hot links" to a variety of the most popular human rights Internet sites. For example, it includes organizations — both nongovernmental and intergovernmental — and links to several on-line human rights journals.

Human Rights on the Web

(www.hri.ca/hrweb/index.htm)

This site presents a broad collection of resources, organized by type of international organization, topic or region/country.

International Committee of the Red Cross (www.icrc.org)

This site is the best source for humanitarian law, including the text of various Geneva conventions. It also includes a searchable database of articles.

United Nations High Commission for Human Rights (www.unhcr.ch/)

This is the best site for all United Nations-related human rights information. This site can be searched either through a topical index or by using key words. It contains a complete set of U.N. human rights treaties and declarations, including information about ratification status. This site also contains the texts of reports from the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, Special Rapporteurs, and the treaty-monitoring bodies (e.g., Human Rights Committee, Committee Against Torture). State-party reports submitted to the committees by each state also are available.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (www.unhcr.ch/)

This site contains an excellent collection of instruments, documents, reports, maps and statistics on refugees. This site also supports word searches.

University of Minnesota Human Rights Library (www.umn.edu/humanrts)

This site contains a good collection of instruments and other documents from the United Nations, the Organization of American States, and the European Council. Strengths of this site include OAS materials, such as the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and African human rights resources. A section on United States human rights materials includes a collection on treaty reservations.

www.nd.edu/~lawlib/