
The Critical Media Project (CMP) is a free media literacy website for educators and students, especially middle and high schoolers, designed to develop young people’s empathy, advocacy, and critical thinking skills around issues of identity. From the University of Southern California’s Annenberg School for Communication, CMP contains hundreds of multimedia discussion starters—clips from movies and television shows, magazine ads, newspaper articles, photos, and other media—around issues of identity and society: age, class, disability, gender, LGBTQ, race and ethnicity, and religion. Accompanying each example are descriptions (no more than a couple of paragraphs) and questions to stimulate discussion. Coverage is limited in some respects. For example, the gender or LGBTQ categories scarcely touch on people who identify as asexual, intersex, or nonbinary. Notwithstanding such limitations, CMP eschews talking heads and text in favor of pop culture multimedia sure to resonate with teens in 2019 and beyond.

The CMP website is beautifully designed and intuitive to navigate. Web pages automatically adjust to the size of any mobile device used to view them. A top navigation bar lets visitors jump to each of the major issues the site addresses, while “About” and “Learn & Do” menus offer additional activities, media playlists on topics such as feminism, links to other websites, and a simple glossary. Visitors must rely on a basic keyword search, with no option to facet or filter results. In spite of this, browsing is straightforward because each media example has tags for topic and format (e.g., television or newspaper). Each topic includes subtopics. For example, the religion category breaks down by Catholic, Christian, Jew, Muslim, and Sikh. High-resolution videos play in any web browser with no need for Adobe Flash or other software. Videos are hosted on ad-free commercial hosting service Wistia, but virtually none of the videos feature closed captioning or transcripts, falling short of web accessibility standards.

CMP helps students think critically and empathetically about issues of identity in America. While optimal for high school teachers, college instructors will find some of the clips and prompts helpful when teaching freshmen and sophomores. Similar free websites include the Southern Poverty Law Center’s Teaching Tolerance and Facing History and Ourselves.—Michael Rodriguez, University of Connecticut, michael.a.rodriguez@uconn.edu


The International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT), located in Israel, is an independent think tank and “one of the leading academic institutes for counter-terrorism in the world.” Founded in 1996, ICT is a nonprofit organization, with expertise in many areas, including counter-terrorism, homeland security, threat vulnerability, and risk management. The site is easy to use, and the accessible homepage menu provides ease in locating information on different terrorist-related topics. Selected Publications, Activities, Radio Shows, and ICT in the Media complete the choices users have in locating information.

The Incidents and Activists Database is a “comprehensive survey of Open Sources of Intelligence” and is “one of the most all-encompassing non-government resources on terrorist incidents in the world.” Information has been collected since 1975, and the database has information on more than 33,000 incidents of terrorism. This public domain database includes global terror attacks, organizations, and activities. Monthly summaries of worldwide incidents are available, and full publications can be downloaded.

ICT publishes in many formats. Articles and commentaries can be searched via date, author,
organization (e.g., Boko Haram, Hezbollah), attack (e.g., suicide bombing, cyber-attack), and region (e.g., Asia, Lebanon). Searches can be sorted by name or date. The “Working Paper Series” provides a venue for submission by members of the global counter-terrorism and security community. Readers have the opportunity to review the published papers and contribute “critical analyses and recommendations” for further discussion. The Jihadi Website Monitoring Group monitors websites that support and serve global jihad organizations. Cyber Desk Review looks at cyber-terrorism and cyber-crime as they relate to jihad and also tackles the increasing importance of cyberspace in terrorist activities.

Numerous opportunities for education are available, from undergraduate and graduate programs in government to an executive program in counter-terrorism studies. An online course titled The Puzzle of Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism is available as are unpaid internships for undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate students. For those who prefer videos, YouTube provides access to ICT videos, from plenary conferences to law enforcement and counter-terrorism policing.

ICT offers a wealth of information by professionals on numerous aspects of terrorism and security, making this a recommended site for information on terrorism.—Karen Evans, Indiana State University, Karen.Evans@indstate.edu


NatureServe brings together a network of biodiversity scientists across North and South America with a mission to “provide the scientific basis for effective conservation action.” Formerly known as the Association for Biodiversity Information, NatureServe partners with stakeholders making decisions that could impact biodiversity, e.g., conservation agencies, land developers, public planners, academics, and citizen scientists. Because it serves a wide range of users, NatureServe’s offerings range from scientific reports to software tools and professional consultancy services. This review is focused on the parts of the site that academic audiences may find most useful.

The site is organized into three main categories. “Biodiversity Science” serves as the main repository of NatureServe’s publications, which range from news reports to journal articles and can be filtered by topic and region. “Conservation Tools and Services” focuses on infrastructural products like standards, software, data services, and training. “NatureServe Network” is a searchable directory of affiliated individuals and organizations that can be filtered by region and area of expertise.

In addition to publications, NatureServe provides several interactive sources of biodiversity and conservation information. Web-based maps of species distributions, ecological classifications, and at-risk species are available, and NatureServe Vista, an ArcGIS extension, supports environmental mapping and assessment projects. The Biodiversity Indicators Dashboard provides at-a-glance information via visualizations of key indicators such as CO2 emissions, habitat diversity, and a number of IUCN-listed species. It allows users to create custom global maps using a variety of measures. A citizen science project called iMapInvasives provides a tool for tracking and measurement of invasive species. NatureServe Explorer provides detailed reports on North American plant and animal species, including taxonomic information, conservation status, range, ecology, life history, and more. Finally, LandScope, which is still under development, provides conservation summaries for all states, as well as an interactive map of protected areas, ecosystems, priorities, threats, and at-risk species. Five LandScope pilot states (Colorado, Florida, Maine, Virginia, and Washington) include more complete content, such as state policies, conservation programs, key species, and watershed information.

It is impossible to adequately convey the scope of the resources available at this site within the space allotted to this review. Students, educators, activists, professionals, and anyone passionate about conservation or biodiversity should find something of interest.—Zachary Sharrow, College of Wooster, zsharrow@wooster.edu