Institute for Natural Resources. Access: https://inr.oregonstate.edu/.

The Institute for Natural Resources (INR) is a portal for scientific information, research findings, and GIS data about natural resources in the state of Oregon. INR does its work through several channels. First, it links science to policy-making by conducting new research, facilitating dialogues relevant to policy, performing systematic reviews, and developing and monitoring data tools. Additionally, it manages existing data by integrating existing databases and data sets, links information from the institutional repositories of the Oregon Universities, and curates this information complying with federal and state metadata standards. Finally, INR provides interdisciplinary coordination of grants and research teams.

Librarians using INR will likely find the Oregon Explorer the most immediately useful tool for their patrons. The Oregon Explorer is a geographic information tool that provides location and topical points of access to information on natural resources in the state of Oregon. Users have the option of exploring using location or through a series of topics. Oregon Explorer information is divided into seven broad topical themes: “Animals and Plants,” “Climate, Water, and Air,” “Coast, Ocean, and Marine,” “Forestry and Agriculture,” “Land Use and Planning,” “Landscapes and Ecosystems,” and “People and Communities.” Thus, a user interested in Coos County, Oregon, could start with that area on the map and then sort through the topics available for that region. Alternatively, the user could select a topic, and then find the regions of Oregon that have the most interesting information under that topic.

Librarians will notice that INR’s mission is to make scholarly and GIS data more accessible to decision and policy makers and stakeholders, who may not themselves be scholars. Thus, the access tools may be less specialized or discipline-specific than would be found in a scholarly portal. Users who require direct access to peer-reviewed literature may find the curation and mediation in INR’s information resources to be inefficient. However, if the information need is for more public-facing, popular, or accessible information, INR is a powerful and useful tool.

INR’s data and information is a highly recommended resource for librarians serving Oregon communities or for policy studies librarians. Other librarians may wish to examine the site, especially the Oregon Explorer, to see novel and innovative GIS tools providing access to research data.—Nicholas Schiller, Washington State University, Vancouver, schiller@wsu.edu


Partners in Information Access for the Public Health Workforce (Partners) is a collaboration of health sciences libraries, public health organizations, and government agencies with a goal to connect public health workers with timely access to quality public health resources. The Partners website is curated by the Lamar Soutter Library at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, in conjunction with the National Library of Medicine. The site is updated regularly, and accepts recommendations for additional resources.

Partners advertises themselves as “your trusted resource for online peer-reviewed public health information.” The website includes pertinent information about health education campaigns, current news and events, legislation, policies, reports, grants, datasets, and more. Resources are presented as long lists, usually in alphabetical order by subtopic.
While this comprehensive bibliographic style is not an unfamiliar approach for presenting information, especially in the library world, it can be overwhelming and, at times, difficult to locate the needed information. The website’s menu is also slightly confusing as some links appear to be broken. However, the content and the wealth of information it contains makes it worth the effort.

One of the unique tools that Partners offers is the Structured Evidence Queries for the Healthy People 2020 initiative. Selected objectives within this initiative are paired with preformulated search strategies for the PubMed database. These queries are easy to use and are an excellent way to discover trustworthy published literature about the Healthy People 2020 initiative.

Partners is continuing to develop search strategies, and in time they plan to have structured evidence queries for all of the objectives and subobjectives. Most of the queries are formulated to pull up articles published within the last five years, so researchers can feel confident that they are seeing the most current literature for that objective. Each query also links to the full text of that objective.

While the intended primary audience of the Partners website is public health workers, it is full of reliable information that would be useful for both undergraduate and graduate students researching public health topics.—Emily Underwood, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, underwood@hws.edu

Split This Rock. Access: https://www.splitthisrock.org/

Split This Rock is a nonprofit organization that celebrates and promotes poetry that “bears witness to injustice and provokes social change.” The organization is based in Washington, D.C., and sponsors a number of local events and programs, but its website has much to offer those outside the D.C. area. The homepage features a poem of the week, upcoming events, and a link to The Quarry: A Social Justice Poetry Database, perhaps the most valuable resource for academic librarians.

The Quarry is a searchable collection of more than 300 poems by contemporary socially engaged poets. The search interface provides many options for discovery. In addition to a keyword search for a name, title, or topic, it is possible to filter the entire database by format, language, geography, poet identity, and/or theme. The categories for theme and poet identity are especially well developed, so that it is possible to find poems from particular perspectives on themes as wide-ranging as criminal justice, gentrification, mental health, parenting, racism, and trust. “Poet Identity” includes subcategories for disability, ethnicity/race, religion and faith, sexual orientation, gender identity, and social class. A search tips page states that tags for poet identity were chosen by the poets themselves and provides clear guidance on effective searching and navigating results for further discovery.

Each poem is presented with information about the author and a link to other poems by the author in the database. Many of the poems have audio or video clips of the author reading. A very helpful page, “Suggested Uses for The Quarry,” provides ideas for using poems from the database in curriculum, as part of social justice events, and in the workplace, to name just a few. Librarians will also appreciate the guidance on citing poems from the database in MLA, APA, and Chicago Manual of Style formats.

A “Resources” link leads to an extensive list of literary journals that welcome socially engaged poetry and “voices too often left out of the literary world’s dominant conversations.” The list includes concise descriptions of each journal’s focus and links to submissions or guidelines pages.

Librarians wishing to develop poetry collections will find many ideas in “Featured Poets” from the biennial Split This Rock Poetry Festival. Split This Rock provides many ways to learn about and celebrate poets working for social change and is a valuable and timely resource for librarians.—Lori Robare, University of Oregon, lrobare@uoregon.edu