Internet Reviews


The Jewish Women’s Archive (JWA) is a “national organization dedicated to collecting and promoting the extraordinary stories of Jewish women.” JWA’s collections provide historical context for contemporary Jewish women’s issues, while creating a space for young women to find role models, and for all people to be inspired to work toward change. JWA achieves its goals through the vast wealth of its online collections, a podcast, a blog, a book club, and educational and interactive events.

The material on JWA’s website is well-categorized and searchable through a single portal. Several dropdown menus across the top of the page lead to resources grouped by content type. “Profiles,” “Collections,” and “Multimedia Gallery” contain primary and secondary sources, whereas “Programs,” “Education,” and “About” point visitors toward in-person events, interactive material, and ways to become involved with JWA.

JWA’s collections are strong in both primary and secondary sources. The site offers an in-depth encyclopedia and a set of biographies of Jewish women, together providing more than 4,000 profiles, thematic essays, photographs, and more. Each essay or entry is well-researched. Pages end with references and an MLA citation for researchers who wish to use the page itself. References often link to related sources and even other repositories, making JWA’s collections a solid jumping-off point for continued reading. One excellent example of this bridge to other collections is found in the “American Jewess” online exhibit that leads visitors to a searchable database of digitized periodicals at the University of Michigan.

Much of JWA’s site is geared toward education. This is evident in the robust set of lesson plans and teaching tools offered. Lesson plans span a variety of topics from Yom Kippur to Lilith. Each plan incorporates primary sources. The teaching tools section of JWA’s website sets up educators to use these sources by providing exercises to prepare students and guide them through working with primary sources at JWA and beyond.

JWA’s site is highly recommended for educators, especially at the college or secondary level. Graduate students and researchers will benefit from JWA’s primary sources, especially searched through the Multimedia Gallery. However, young people are a clearly desired audience for JWA, and the site is well-designed for that group to use with or without help.—
Katharine Van Arsdale, Pacific Union College, kvanarsdale@puc.edu


Our World in Data is a free global development website whose purpose is to collect, visualize, and share “research and data to make progress against the world's largest problems.” Affiliated with the University of Oxford, operated by the nonprofit organization Global Change Data Lab, and launched in 2014, the website is designed for a global audience, including scholars, journalists, policymakers, educators, and schoolchildren. The website reportedly sees more than 1 million visits per month and has been cited hundreds of times in research and the media.

Our World in Data contains more than 3,000 interactive charts and dozens of articles across 297 topics. Ten categories ranging from “Energy and Environment” to “Violence and War” enable visitors to drill down to topics such as “Homicides” and “Environmental impacts of food production.” Each topic features interactive charts with annotations and sources. Searchability is basic, limited to browsing by topic, filtering charts by title, or doing a keyword search across

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
the entire website. Topic entries are lengthy and sometimes difficult to skim. Ability to filter information by region, country, and dates would help visitors find what they need more quickly. Visitors can download charts as PNG or SVG images and export datasets in spreadsheet-ready CSV format. Our World in Data’s spin-off site, Sustainable Development Goals Tracker, uses these data to track progress toward the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals, set to be achieved by 2030.

Founder Max Roser’s stated aim is to use statistical data to combat combat doom-and-gloom media coverage that fosters cynicism and apathy among citizens. The worldview behind Our World in Data aligns with psychologist Steven Pinker’s hotly debated claims in The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined (2011). Sure enough, the website repeatedly quotes Pinker and cites his work as a data source. While Our World in Data claims not to cherry-pick or omit data, visitors should recognize its bias in favor of a narrative of steady human progress.

Our World in Data makes it easier to access, share, and understand statistical data that reveal trends in global development. Visualizations are posted under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license, allowing anyone to share and adapt the content freely. Biases are disclosed and sources cited. While the raw data are widely available elsewhere, the website’s broad coverage, open access, and countless charts and graphs make it exceptionally useful to researchers and citizens.—Michael Rodriguez, University of Connecticut, michael.a.rodriguez@uconn.edu


The Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO) has as its stated purpose “to conduct research for a more peaceful world.” Although located in Oslo and loosely affiliated with the University of Oslo, PRIO maintains no formal links to the Nobel Institute. PRIO’s directors do not officially nominate candidates for the Nobel Peace Prize nor do they comment on nominees. However, each year the director issues a shortlist for the Nobel Peace Prize, sparking considerable international interest. PRIO seeks to be an incubator for innovative peace research and produce high-quality academic studies on the subject. In the interest of transparency, the organization posts a financial disclosure statement on its website. Its cash flow is approximately $16 million per year, and its research assignments are dependent on external funding. Major sources of this funding include the Research Council of Norway and the European Commission.

PRIO has a wonderful landing page, it invites visitors to its library in Oslo. PRIO maintains a physical presence in the heart of the city and its library (30,000 books and 430 journals devoted to peace research and conflict studies) is open to the public. Visitors are requested to register in advance, and the link “How to Find” provides contact information as well as directions to its facility.

PRIO’s associates maintain an impressive array of publications. The link “Publication Archive” is essentially PRIO’s institutional repository. Recent articles posted in the archive include “Green economy, degradation narratives, and land-use conflicts in Tanzania” by Mikael Bergius, et al., and “Terra morata: the West Bank in Menachem Begin’s worldview” by Jorgen Jensehaugen.

PRIO publishes two journals: Journal of Peace Research and Security Dialogue. In addition, PRIO’s researchers edit Journal of Military Ethics and International Area Studies Review. The organization employs an international research staff of 85 members and an additional 15 people in administrative and support functions. Curiously, no mention of updates or statement of responsibility is listed on the organization’s homepage. Faculty members and graduate students in Peace Studies are probably familiar with PRIO. Subject specialists dealing with upper-division undergraduates from a variety of disciplines may find the PRIO site useful.—Wendell G. Johnson, Northern Illinois University, wjobnso1@niu.edu