
The Collaborative on Health and the Environment (CHE) maintains a useful and informative website. CHE’s goals include sharing new research on environmental impacts on disease and fostering interdisciplinary and inclusive research efforts. CHE strives to create working partnerships between academic and medical research communities and community action or public policy efforts. As such, it offers both access to peer reviewed research and to popular information sources. Students using the site will need to be able to evaluate each resource independently to determine its suitability for their work.

Among the many projects hosted by CHE, academic librarians may find two resources especially interesting. “Toxicant and Disease Database,” a collection of article citations with correlations between diseases and toxicants, is a powerful and useful resource. Users can search the database by either toxins or diseases and find citation lists of research studies that establish the correlation between the two. This tool appears useful for undergraduate students in lower division courses since it contains only citations with obvious connections between toxins and disease, but it may also present usability issues for novice users. It lacks a search box and citations are not hyperlinked, so users must be able to perform citation searches to retrieve the full text of articles. With appropriate support and training or for skilled researchers, this is an excellent and powerful tool.

Another useful resource provided by CHE is its working groups. The site hosts working groups on specific issues and many of these working groups produce electronic lists and grey literature. Librarians can use these working groups to connect library users with active and ongoing interdisciplinary research communities. This is useful for demonstrating how research is carried out across the globe and between the disciplines.

CHE offers additional services, including a robust and frequently updated newsfeed with journal articles, research in the news, job openings, calls for papers, conferences, and editorials. This feed is an excellent source of student research topic ideas connected to emerging research. There is also a small database of environmental science resources, grey literature publications, factsheets, white papers, and resources for community action and environmental science. Overall, CHE is a useful resource for both subject librarians working in environmental health areas and also for librarians looking for models and examples of interdisciplinary collaboration.—Nicholas Schiller, Washington State University-Vancouver, schiller@vancouver.wsu.edu


The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has broad responsibility for overseeing national security affairs. Its official website has many resources for users including K–12 students, government officials, and average citizens. The site is organized similarly to other federal government sites. Menu choices at the top of the page lead to frequently used links, news, and information about DHS. Several active campaigns and programs focus on human trafficking, cybersecurity education, emergency preparedness, and reporting suspicious activity. There is information for travelers, such as Transportation Security Administration preboarding and overseas travel alerts.

Many publications are available. For example, “Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report” is a summary of occurrences around
the country, including chemical spills, cybersecurity incidents, major fires and accidents, and food safety concerns. Many publications will be helpful to users, such as handbooks on emergency preparedness or securing personal computers and home wireless networks. There are also numerous publications on immigration statistics and enforcement, applying for work visas, and foreign travel. Speeches by key officials and transcripts of official testimony are also included.

The “How do I?” section of the site makes it relatively easy to locate widely requested information, such as applying for a “Green Card” or submitting Freedom of Information Act requests. There is useful material for students, ranging from activities and games intended to educate younger children about disaster preparedness to information for exchange students and internship opportunities within the department. The news blog, which is updated roughly once a week, contains news releases about relevant topics. The fact sheets are similar in scope but focused on formal programs and initiatives lead by the department. These resources may be searched and limited by topic, month, and year using a custom search feature.

As with most government websites, there is an overwhelming amount of material available. It is surprisingly easy to locate relevant resources by browsing the links and menus, and a local Bing search engine allows searching of the entire site. The site should be useful for a wide range of library patrons.—Mark A. Stoffan, Western Carolina University, mstoffan@wcu.edu


The Mark Twain Papers, housed at the University of California-Berkeley’s Bancroft Library since 1949, are an extensive and ever-growing archive of original documents by and about Mark Twain (born Samuel Langhorne Clemens, 1835–1910). Housed in and drawing from this archive is the ongoing Mark Twain Project, a comprehensive scholarly edition of all of Twain’s private papers and published works, estimated to be 70 volumes upon completion. The Mark Twain Project Online (MTPO), launched in October 2007, is envisioned to be a “digital critical edition, fully annotated, of everything Mark Twain wrote.” Although only a fraction of that ambitious goal has been completed to date, the present site is still a notable and highly useful research tool.

The contents of MTPO are divided into “Letters,” “Writings,” and “Images.” Currently, the site contains the full text of more than 2,600 incoming and outgoing letters (among nearly 28,000 indexed), 250 images, and four critically edited texts. Everything is fully searchable, but it is not possible to search across multiple sections at once. Also, “Writings” is presently only searchable one text at a time, although it appears that a general search for that whole section will be coming soon. The advantage of the current setup is that it enables researchers to perform highly customized advanced searches within each section. For instance, one can search within specific categories of the letters, such as the explanatory notes, the textual apparatus, or across all categories. Likewise, one can search the images by person depicted or location, for example, in addition to date. Mirroring the search options are handy facets that allow for easy browsing and serendipitous discovery.

The materials themselves are presented in a convenient format, with the text appearing side by side with the relevant explanatory notes, textual commentary, or facsimiles of the original documents. Another nice feature is “Cite” buttons, included not only with each document, but each footnote. Selected sources are collected in a “My Citations” folder and can be emailed.

Overall, this resource is most intriguing for the potential it holds as a comprehensive digital edition of Twain’s private and published works. In the meantime, it will be of interest to students and scholars seeking free, fully searchable, primary source materials on Twain. As more materials are added, its academic value will continue to grow.—Brian T. Sullivan, Alfred University, sullivan@alfred.edu