Internet Reviews

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The Center for the Study of the American Constitution (CSAC) is a resource for “scholars, educators, and students who are interested in the American Constitution in its historical context.” CSAC emerged from the earlier Ratification Project funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission and the National Endowment for the Humanities. CSAC is as a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization under the direction of the history department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The site is well organized, with tabbed menus for documentary resources, information about the Founding Fathers, publications of the CSAC, and outreach projects. The last section includes lesson plans, a monthly selection of highlighted resources, and links to related organizations. “Documentary resources” has its roots in the Ratification Project and contains the “world’s foremost collection of primary source materials relating to the ratification process.” Organized topically, these documents range in scope from foundational documents to such specific influences as navigation rights on the Mississippi River and the impact of Shays’s Rebellion.

A particularly useful resource is a collection of documents relating to the individual states and the ratification process. A chart lists the dates of each state’s convention, date of its ratification, and voting totals. A map of each state illustrates how individual towns voted and an accompanying essay provides historical background as well as a synopsis of each state’s ratification process. A separate section explores common themes of the ratification period, ranging from political cartoons to common metaphors used, religious issues, and foreign assessments.

The portion of the site devoted to the founders contains quotes by and about such participants as Elbridge Gerry, John Jay, Thomas Jefferson, and Alexander Hamilton, along with brief biographies. Through these materials, researchers may gain a better sense of individual personalities and how their positions were viewed by themselves and others. The publications of CSAC are extensive and cover many aspects of Constitutional scholarship.

The site is easy to use, despite the tremendous amount of information available. However, it assumes a basic understanding of the Constitution and related historical terminology. It is not a resource for a beginning student, but is directed toward those who already have a good understanding of the document and its history but want to delve into deeper study and interpretation. As such, it is an excellent resource that deserves to be better known to the general public.—Mark A. Stoffan, Western Carolina University, mstofffan@wcu.edu


The Digital Einstein Papers are an online, open access version of The Collected Papers of Albert Einstein, a book series from Princeton University Press in association with The Einstein Papers Project at the California Institute of Technology and The Albert Einstein Archives at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. When complete, the series will have 30 volumes and contain more than 40,000 primary documents—each transcribed, annotated, and translated.

Volumes from the Collected Papers appear in The Digital Einstein Papers two years after publication. Currently, The Digital Einstein Papers include the first 13 volumes, covering Einstein’s writings from 1879 to 1923. The volumes collect personal documents, letters,
scientific writings (e.g., proofs, theoretical papers, reviews of other scientists’ papers, and lecture notes), and nonscientific essays. Of the nonscientific materials, those in “Einstein and the Jewish Question” (see Volume 7) are particularly noteworthy for Einstein’s involvement in religion and politics leading up to the Second World War.

Researchers can browse or search this resource. Browse is available via a gallery of book covers, each linking to the book’s full text. Each volume has two versions: one with source documents in their original languages (primarily German), another with source documents in English translation.

The search offers basic and advanced options. The basic option searches across all volumes. Advanced options limit to a specific volume and language.

The texts in The Digital Einstein Papers are identical to the print with hyperlink features added: tables of contents link to individual documents, English translations link to original language documents, and vice versa. The site displays texts via Tizra Publisher, which offers only basic reading navigation (forward, back, table of contents), zoom, search, and print. Users may view and print one page at a time, cannot download, and must use the browser’s bookmarks to return to specific pages.

The primary documents in The Digital Einstein Papers are transcribed. Researchers interested in digitized images of Einstein’s manuscripts should try the Einstein Archives Online, which includes a limited set of scans (about 2,000) in its archival database. Researchers or students at any level seeking information about Einstein’s life, theoretical physics, or late 19th to early 20th century European history could use this collection.—C. Jeff Lacy, Trinity University, clacy@trinity.edu


The Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR) is a think tank founded by the feminist economist Heidi Hartmann with a focus on the “quantitative and qualitative analysis of public policy through a gendered lens.” The organization’s website provides an overview of the group’s mission, a synopsis of its initiatives, access to publications and reports, and a detailed “about” page that covers several areas of the think tank’s scope. The site provides a wealth of statistical information based on IWPR’s research. Viewing it a few days after the Presidential election, the homepage still featured election-related resources primarily focused on the continuing pay inequities related to gender and race, as well as information on educational access. Demonstrating the scope of the organization, the second scroll on the homepage the same day showcased a report on the gender gap in patents.

The website’s interface is remarkably user friendly. For example, under the publications tab is a “publications finder” link, which allows users to search for publications by subject terms (with the option of using Boolean operators) as well as by title. Dropdown menus allow researchers to narrow their search by date and author. Using the basic search string “women AND healthcare” returned more than 100 articles and reports. Among the results of this search were several state-specific policy studies on healthcare access, quality, and cost. A May 2011 report examines the impact paid sick days would have on health care costs in Connecticut (the study concluded it would lower overall costs in that state). A subsection of the site called Femstats.net contains reports on the economic status of women, including reports on the status of women in particular states and regions. The most recent of these reports was completed in 2016 and covers the status of women in the South.

The IWPR website is a comprehensive resource for information on women’s healthcare, economic status, education, and a host of other topics, and would contribute to research papers on a variety of public policy topics related to gender—from income inequality and the economic impact of domestic violence to aging and retirement. Moreover, the site provides information on initiatives seeking to address these topics, all freely accessible to the general public.—Bart H. Everts, Rutgers University-Camden, bart.everts@rutgers.edu