

Social Sciences Information Resource: a study on Open Access Journals

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ABSTRACT

Defines Open access journals. Lists judiciously selected Open access Journals in the field of social sciences available on WWW. The paper covers all disciplines coming under social sciences as listed in CC. The methodology adopted for information gathering from the Internet is described. The criteria for evaluation of open access journals discussed. The list of open access journals with their websites and bibliographic details is provided. Some suggestions for better management of these resources are also put forward for acceptance and discussion

1.0 Introduction

Encyclopedia Britannica defines Social Science as under-

“Social sciences, which deal with human behavior in its social cultural aspects, include the following disciplines- cultural [or social] anthropology, sociology, social psychology, political sciences and economics.” Also frequently included are social and economic geography and those areas of education that deals with the social contexts of learning and the relation of the social order. History is regarded by many as a social science and certain

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areas of historical study are almost indistinguishable from work done in the social sciences.

Internet information resources can be defined as resources in digital format that provide information or indicator to the information and are accessible over the Internet. Online availability of information enables the user to get relevant information and acquaint with latest development taking place in their respected field.

Recent past have witnessed a considerable growth in digital information resources like e- journal, e- books, e-databases .The traditional library system is transforming itself into hybrid information system having a mix of digital and traditional paper resources. The hi-tech development in science and technology coupled with information technology has led to the drastic change in the library and information product and services. The user community is becoming more familiar with the new medium over time and has started to actively bid for alternative forms of access. Technology improvement in the communication network paired with the decreasing cost of hardware, create greater incentives for innovation.

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Indian university libraries, information centers are also creating databases of books, journals, and establishing archives of theses and research papers etc. Online subscription to journals is becoming very popular now- a-days especially due to consortia based cheaper subscription. In online subscription access to the current issues of journals are made available along with some back volumes.

In India approximately 12000 journals are published out of which 1300 belong to social sciences. Most of the journals published in regional languages are not covered in Ulrich's Periodical directory. In Comparison to India on international scene about 50,000 journals are published in social sciences whereas in science more than one lakh journals are published world over. Standard journals published in U.S.A. and European countries have their websites and most of them are available online as well as in print form.

So far Indian journals are concerned most of them are in print form. Almost all the standard and institutional journals have their own websites. No Indian periodical directory indicates which periodical is Online or on CD-ROM. Online Indian Social Science journals are in rarity.

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The speed of putting the literature related to social sciences online is very slow. Advance countries put their Literature on Internet. Developing countries are not in position to follow the same pace because of various reasons. Economic constraint is one of them. Slow connectivity speed, failure of electricity, space charges on net etc. hinder the free flow of information. In spite of all these factors all major universities, institutions and research centers in India are rapidly preparing the databases of their records of thesis, journals, books etc. INFLIBNET, NASSDOC, ICHR, etc. are contributing in the free flow of information for all by providing access to a number of services as well as databases. Though slow yet journey to fully automated libraries, information services related to social sciences has started.

Social sciences itself covers vast subject areas in its ambit. Broadly there are more than 10 basic subject areas (colon classification) and 182 subdivisions within the broad subject areas (DDC-21st Edition). The main subject areas of social science listed in CC are: General Statistics; Political Science; Economics; Law; Public Administration; Social Sciences;

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Association; Education; Commerce, Communication, Transport; Customs, Etiquette, Folklore; Geography; and History. Besides, many new emerging areas as well as multidisciplinary areas evolving in the process also form part of Social Science are not listed here. A variety of different kinds of resources are available in all these subject areas on the internet. However depth and quantum may vary from area to area.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

The Objective of the present study is to provide a list of Open access journals of social sciences, which meets the pre, conceived criteria of selection. The list may be useful to the users to access the latest researches in their respective field, and enables them to know latest developments and get relevant information. The free on-line journal list will also help in updating individual knowledge of the users so that they can fulfill the demand of their profession.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

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Various search engines have been used for searching the open access journals in the field of social sciences. There are various types of search engines such as (1) General search engines like; Google, Excite, NothernLight, Altavista, Lycos, ask, times, deja, Egroups etc. (2) Meta search engines like; Altaseek, C4, Metracrawler, Genieknows etc. (3) Subject specific search engines like; SOSIG , vlib etc. After finding out the titles of Journals these were verified from the actual sites and their details like publishers, editors, periodicity, coverage and medium of availability (print/online/CD-ROM) have been ascertained.

The Internet hosts a lot of information resources but all sources available on the Internet are not equally valuable or reliable. A search executed on a search engine such as Goggle or Alta vista on any topic brings out thousands of links to information resources, most of which are often found irrelevant or found to have ceased to exist.

So it is highly recommended that sites must be evaluated. Some of the criteria employed for evaluating printed information resources are also

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used for evaluating the internet resources. Commonly these points are known as **ASTAFS**.

1. Authority: - First of all the author and publisher of the web documents should be identified. It is very difficult to find the author and publisher of a website on Internet but we can easily find out the organization, which has hosted the site and is responsible for content creation.

2. Scope: - **After** identification of the authority, the subject coverage of the website must be checked. Who are the contributing authors to the website. In case there are many contributors their details? What is the recent level of the website? Whether site provides links to other sites also; if so whether links are working or not.

3. Treatment: - **Here**, we have to check whether subject is covered accurately or not the information given is recent or out dated.

4. Arrangement: - **What** is the system of information rendering on the website besides arrangement the most common feature is the style of rendering information the style must be easily comprehensible.

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5. Format: - We have to check that in which format the document is available. Here format means basically audio, video, text and image format.

6. Special feature: - After checking the above points finally we have to see whether there is any specific feature associated with the document. Indexing has been done, download given etc.

Out of the above criteria of evaluation there are several alternatives also available to evaluate the online resources. These can broadly be divided into the following four categories:

1. Initial appraisal
2. Suitability of resources
3. Content analysis
4. Structure and presentation

1. Initial appraisal:

Initial appraisal of an Internet resource may be made based on the following criteria: -

Author: Author's credentials, i.e. institutional affiliation, educational background, other scholarly works, experience, etc.

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Date of publication: Date of publication or date of last revision is an indication of currency.

Edition or Revision: revision or updation reflects changes in the subject contents.

Publisher: Publication from a university press or scholarly society are likely to be treatises of high scholarly value.

Title of journal: Is the journal popular or scholarly.

2. **Suitability of resource:** Scanning the contents and indices to determine the resource on the following criteria:-

Scope and coverage: Since most of the internet resources do not have a formal introduction or preface, determining the scope and intended audience can be a daunting task. The time period covered in an information resource is also an indication of coverage.

Factual Vs Opinion: The information contents should be factual it should not be propaganda, advertisement or opinion.

Primary Vs Secondary: Access whether the information is primary or secondary in nature. Books, articles in encyclopedia, etc. are secondary

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sources while research articles in journals and conference proceedings are primary sources of information.

Audience: An information resource on Internet should clearly define its potential audience.

3. **Content analysis:** It covers the following aspects:

Accuracy: The contents of a resource should be reliable and error – free.

Authority: The reputation of an author as an accomplished authority in his field of study is an important criterion of evaluation. An author's affiliation to an organization of repute is also an indication to his/her authority.

Objective: Information contents of a resource should be factual, unbiased and written most objectively.

Currency: The date of last update given on the site indicates currency of a resource.

Completeness: The information contents of a website should be complete and comprehensive.

4. **Structure and Presentation:** It covers the following aspects:-

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Writing Style: In general, the text should be easy to read and should follow the basic rules of grammar, spelling and literacy compositions.

Structure: The information resource should be organized logically with major points or headings clearly presented. The resource should follow the basic principles of graphic design, wherever applicable.

Design and Layout: Layout and design of a website should communicate a sense of location to the user, based on apparent patterns and consistent use of visual element such as headings.

Easy to Use: The information source should be easy-to-use even for a novice user.

Accessibility and Reliability: The information should be easily accessible and quick to load.

1.3 CRITERIA TO EVALUATE THE OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS

The aim of the work on Open Access Journals is to increase the visibility and ease of use of open access and scholarly journals on Social science thereby promoting their increased usage and impact.

The aim is to be comprehensive and cover all open access and scholarly journals on social science that use a quality control system to guarantee the content.

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Open Access Journal:

For the purpose of present study open access journals are defined as journals that use a funding model that does not charge readers or their institutions for access.

Research Journal:

Journals that report primary results of research or overviews of research results to a scholarly community.

Periodical:

A serial appearing or intended to appear indefinitely at regular intervals, generally more frequently than annually, each issue of which is numbered or dated consecutively and normally contains separate articles, stories, or other writings.

Selection Criteria

Coverage:

- Subject: all scholarly subjects covered under Social Science
- View papers in full text.
- Acceptable sources: academic, government, commercial, non-profit private sources are all acceptable.
- Level: the target group for included journals should be primarily researchers.
- Content: a substantive part of the journal should consist of research papers. All content should be available in full text.
- English languages

Access:

- All content freely available.
- Registration: **Free** user registration online is acceptable.
- Open Access without delay (e.g. no embargo period).

Quality:

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Quality control: for a journal to be included it should exercise quality control on submitted papers through an editor, editorial board and/or a peer-review system.

PROCESS LOGIC

The different search engines produced different results. The use of logic and actual verification of the sites and their contents was required in every case. The process of evaluation of Internet resources consisted of the following steps.

1. Identification of Links to Resources:

Identification of information resources was done using mailing lists, distribution lists, other Meta resources, Internet resources newsletter, Internet search engines, specialty search engines, directories of Internet resources, etc.

2. Follow a link to Find out More about the Resources

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Following a link to the document where the link was originally referred could provide details about the intended scope and audience and whether the information was likely to be updated and how often.

3 Analysis of the URL: The URL (Uniform Resource Locator) provides useful information for evaluation of an internet resource.

LIMITATION

The uses of various indexing techniques by the different search engines was one of the biggest bottleneck and a comprehensive list could not be prepared. The comprehensive list of all open access journals meeting the criteria could also not be prepared because of limitation of time and the scope of present work.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION:

Out of several searched e-journals it is found that many journals available in full text form, free of cost does not meet the criteria decided for selection. The facility has been provided by the publishers to subscribe these journals through e-mail and can be received regularly without missing even a single issue.

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The following problems and difficulties were encountered and accordingly suggestions and observations are as under

By using the leading search engines, the result for the query comes in bulk and it is not easy to find the appropriate title of journal, There is no specific gateway for finding the social science journals except www.sosig.ac.uk.(WHICH COVERS ONLY ONE JOURNAL OUT OF THE 30 SEARCHED JOURNALS MEETING THE CRITERIA) and DOAJ (doaj.org) which covers only 15.

The subject and titles are found scattered on the Internet. No standard for presenting the bibliographical details of the journals on the Internet were followed. In some journals editors, sub-editors, frequency, place etc. are not found. Many e- journals were detected available full text in first round of search, but a few journals found missing in the second round of search, so it was very difficult to rely on the sites.

It has been observed that information could have been organized on the Internet in a better way to enable to find the relevant information timely. The search engines should eliminate the bulk list of search by using the

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latest IT search techniques.

A common gateway for open access e-journals is required to access or search journals by subject, country, title of journal, title of article, name of author, name of publisher etc. like <http://www.openj-gate.com> (In the present case it covers only one Journals) or DOAJ. Sosig may also extend its coverage through volunteers

The publishers or the editors of the sites should provide complete bibliographical details on the site as per established standards. The journals once published on the internet should be archived by some permanent repository like WebsiteR(www.webcitation.org/index), so that these can be accessed even after the original sites of the journals expires or stop their services.

The listed journals are regular in their periodicity and their articles are properly edited and published by the concerned authority with regular editors and publishers. While going through the text of these journals articles, it is noticed that highly useful information is available in these journal articles which is very useful to the social science professional in

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providing/delivering the latest researches and developments taking place in the field of social science. This highly useful information can be utilized by the students, teachers, researchers, scholars, philosophers and all other users to fulfill their information needs

Sr. No.	TITLE	URL	PUBLISHER	PLACE OF PUB.	LANGUAGE	STARTING FROM
Social Sciences Information Resource: a study on Open Access Journals						
1	Europa	http://www.intellectbooks.com/europa/index.htm	Department of French, University of Exeter, Queen's Building, The Queen's Drive, Exeter EX4 4QH, London, UK; Tel: 01392 264221; Fax: 01392 264377; email: K.C.Cameron@exeter.ac.uk	London	English	1996 – ----- Freq:- Half yearly.
		MANJU YADAV Librarian, G.B.S.S.P-11 Kamdhennu	EX-40H, London, UK; Tel: 01392 264221; Fax: 01392 264377; email: K.C.Cameron@exeter.ac.uk	Mangol Puri, Delhi- 110083	ramakant.shukla@gmail.com man_vadav2004@yahoo.co.in	
2	Reviewing Sociology: A Review Journal.	http://www.rdg.ac.uk/RevSoc/home.htm	School of Sociology, University of Central England with Department of Sociology, University of Reading.	London	English	Electronically from: 1996- Freq:- Tri-yearly
3	. j-spot: Journal of social and political thought	http://www.yorku.ca/spot	York University,	Toronto, Canada.	English	1996-
4	AnthroGlobe	www.anthroglobe.ca	Co-operative place global online		English, Deutsch, Espagnol, Francais, Indonesian, Italiano, Portuguese, Russian.	13 September 1994
5	American Communication Journal	http://acjournal.org	The <u>American Communication Association</u>	Charleston, South Carolina.	English.	1997 -
6	Australian Journal of Educational Technology -AJET	http://www.ascilite.org.au	Australian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education (ASCILITE), the Australian Society for Educational Technology (ASET) and the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI)	University of Wollongong Australia, New Zealand	English.	1985 - Freq:- Tri-yearly.
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7	Michigan Journal of history - MJH	http://www.umich.edu/~history/index.html	Department of History, University of Michigan.	University of Michign.	English.	fall 2001- Freq:- Biannually.

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2)	http://www.rdg.ac.uk/RevSoc/home.htm
3)	http://www.yorku.ca/spot
4)	www.anthroglobe.ca
5)	http://acjournal.org
6)	http://www.ascilite.org.au
7)	http://www.umich.edu/~historyj/index.html
8)	http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/
9)	http://www.swin.edu.au/sbs/ajets/
10)	http://ciiss.net/html/user.php
11)	http://www.hindawi.com/journals/ddns/index.html
12)	http://www.siue.edu/SOCIOLOGY/journal/
13)	http://www.japanesestudies.org.uk/contents/intro.html
14)	http://eserver.org/clogic/interests.html
15)	http://www.usafrica.org/chimera.html
16)	http://www.pipss.org/
17)	http://www.law.northwestern.edu/journals/jihr/ssion
18)	http://www.acme-journal.org/contents.html
19)	http://www.jofssm.org/index.cfm
20)	http://dizzy.library.arizona.edu/ej/jpe/jpeweb.html
21)	http://www.webasa.org/crossroads.htm
22)	http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/hrj/
23)	http://meria.idc.ac.il/
24)	http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/connex/
25)	http://www.socresonline.org.uk/home.html
26)	http://www.cato.org/pubs/journal/index.html
27)	http://www.vuw.ac.nz/atp/
28)	http://www.ejeg.com/about.htm
29)	http://culturemachine.tees.ac.uk

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30)	http://www.worldwords.co.uk/ciec/content/maincontents.asp
31)	http://vlib.org worldwide web virtual library- social sciences
32)	American Journal of Political Science www.library.iisc.ernet.in/access/wklistper/newjournal.html
33)	http://www.apnet.com/journals or www.apnet.com/about.htm academic press
34)	http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/gthursby/socsci/ejournal.html -Register -of Leading Social Sciences E-journals
35)	http://www.elsevier.com/homepage/sae/econworld/menu.htm -ECONbaes Elsevier Science
36)	http://www.psycline.org/journals/psycline.html -PSYCLINE
37)	Australian Journal online(Australia)- http://www.nla.gov.au/oz/ausejour.html
38)	Information Please – www.infoplease.com
39)	International Social Science Journal www.blackwellpublishers.co.uk/asp/journal.asp?ref=0020-8701
40)	The SOSIG Mailing List- www.mailbase.ac.uk/lists/sosig/
41)	Directories of Electronic Journal- http://gort.ucsd.edu/ejournal/jdir.html E-zine-list- http://www.meer.net/~john/e-zine-list
42)	The Ecol-Econ Mailing List- http://csf.colorado.edu/ecolecom/index.html
43)	Journals and Newspapers- http://eserver.org/journals New Jour- http://gort.ucsd.edu/newjour
44)	Deja.com – www.deja.com
45)	Forum One – www.forumone.com
46)	Usenet Groups – ftp://rtfm.mit.edu/pub/usenet-by-hierarchy
47)	Social science Hub – www.sshub.com/index.html
48)	The data and program library service(DPLS) – www.dpls.dacc.wisc.edu
49)	Guide to Primary Social Science Research Data and Related Resources Available on the Internet www.chass.utoronto.ca/datalib/other/
50)	Regard (ESRC) – www.regard.ac.uk/regard/home/index_html?
51)	ERIC – Educational Resources Information Center www.eric.ed.gov/
52)	Population Index on the Web- http://popindex.princeton.edu/
53)	The SSRN (social science research network) www.ssrn.com/index.html
54)	Education-line – www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/
55)	Social Science Research Resources http://socsci.colorado.edu/POLSCI/RES/research.html
56)	British library document centre supply www.bl.uk/services/document.html
57)	TUG Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery Services http://tug.lib.uoguelph.ca/iildd
58)	Yahoo Reference – http://dir.yahoo.com/reference/
59)	Quick Reference Sources www.mtsu.edu/~library/vref.html
60)	World Fact Book- www.odci.gov/cia/publication/nsolo/wfb-all..htm
61)	Internet Public Library- http://ipl.sils.umich.edu
62)	DARE: Directory in social sciences www.unesco.org/general/eng/infoserv/db/dare.shtml

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63)	SOSIG- www.sosig.ac.uk or www.sosig.org or http://sosig.esrc.bris.ac.uk
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65)	Social Science Virtual Library- www.clas.ufl.edu/users/gthursby/socsi/index.htm BUBL http://bubl.ac.uk/link/soc.html
66)	Galaxy – http://galaxy.einet.net
67)	Jump city – www.jumpcity.com/search-page.html
68)	Lycos Top http://search.lycos.com