

# Gateways to social work/welfare on the net

## Practice wisdom to go

by Ed Summers

Given its currency and potential for interactivity, the Internet is a particularly useful tool for students of social work. Much of the success of social workers has been attributed to acquired "practice wisdom," which is the body of knowledge obtained through the actual experience of doing social work.<sup>1</sup> The Internet is an ideal environment for students to observe practicing social workers, while keeping abreast of current developments in social policy and practice.

However, social work is a multifaceted discipline with many areas of specialization: addictions, aging, children, disabilities, education, health, mental illness, and occupational services. Understandably, a thorough guide to Internet resources of potential interest would far exceed the space available here. This guide aims to briefly introduce some excellent gateways to social work information on the net, while providing links to social work organizations, e-journals, and education/employment resources.

### Social work libraries

Several academic libraries have developed useful guides to both print and electronic sources for social work information: **Selected Social Work Resources from the**

**University of Michigan Library** (Access: <http://www.lib.umich.edu/libhome/rrs/selector/swpage.html>); **The Social Work Library at Columbia University** (Access: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/libraries/indiv/socwk/>); and **Social Work Web Resources from Krannert Memorial Library, University of Indianapolis** (Access: <http://www.uindy.edu/~kml/resources/socialwork/index.html>).

- **Social Issues & Social Services from the Michigan Electronic Library.** MEL is a cooperative venture of librarians across the state of Michigan who are collecting Internet resources—with a particular focus on local, state, and federal government resources. This section presents a useful and coherent guide to 38 subjects of interest to social work researchers. Access: <http://mel.lib.mi.us/social/SOC-index.html>.

- **BUBL's Social Work Page.** Established in 1990 as the Bulletin Board for Libraries, BUBL uses the Dewey Decimal Classification to organize Internet resources of interest in higher education. The page for "362 social welfare problems and services" does include many sites, but it is very selective. Access: <http://link.bubl.ac.uk/socialwork>.

- **Social Sciences Information Gateway.** An ongoing project of the UK based

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Electronic Libraries Programme (eLib), SOSIG is an online catalog of high quality Internet resources that are relevant to social science research and

education. The database is organized using the Universal Decimal Classification, and uses a thesaurus of subject terms. *Access:* <http://sosig.esrc.bris.ac.uk>.

- **Grassroots: Social Science Search.**

This Web resource is maintained by the School of Social Work at Andrews University. It is essentially a searchable database of over 1,500 reviewed Web sites of interest to social work students and practitioners. A subject arrangement of the sites is also included with topics such as field, research, practice, values/ethics, cultural and ethnic diversity, social welfare policy, and more. *Access:* <http://www.andrews.edu/SOWK/grassroots.htm>.

### Other general guides and indexes

- **Social Worker Networker.** Judging from the amount of broken links to this resource on the Web, it is an itinerant page—however tracking it down was well worth the effort. It contains a nice topic listing that includes professional resources, search engines, and links to relevant sections of Yahoo. *Access:* <http://www.accessone.com/~hammer>.

- **Social Work and Social Services Web site.** This lengthy page from the George Warren Brown School of Social Work (ranked #1 by *US News* in 1996) may take a fair amount of time to load. The page is broken down into 99 areas of interest and is useful for getting an idea of the breadth of information that is available on the Internet for social work researchers. *Access:* <http://128.252.132.4/websites.html>.

- **Social Work Access Network (SWAN).** SWAN was started in 1993 and is now owned and administered by the College of Social Work at the University of South Carolina. SWAN's mission is to promote technology as an instructional enhancement tool across

the social work curriculum. There is not the same abundance of links as in the previous site from George Warren Brown, but the site is coherently organized into several areas of interest. A list of publications includes links to social work journals and their homepages. One can fill out an online form to become a member; at the time of writing there were 956 members. *Access:* <http://www.sc.edu/swan>.

- **World Wide Web Resources for Social Workers (W3RSW).** W3RSW is maintained by Gary Holden, who is a professor in the Shirley M. Ehrenkranz School of Social Work at New York University. This site is another mammoth listing broken down by subject area, which can lead to many hours of Web surfing. Regrettably, annotations are not included. *Access:* <http://pages.nyu.edu/~holden/gh-w3-f.htm>.

- **Pat McClendon's Clinical Social Work Page.** A friendly and informative site that is maintained by a graduate of the Kent School of Social Work at the University of Louisville. This page is a good place to begin exploring social work on the Internet, since it is well organized into various subject areas (child abuse, violence, substance abuse, gender, legal resources, client support), and it is not overwhelming. *Access:* <http://www.users.mis.net/~patmc>.

- **Praxis: Resources for Social and Economic Development.** A resource developed by Richard Estes, a professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Pennsylvania. This guide will be especially useful for social work researchers with an international focus. *Access:* <http://www.ssw.upenn.edu/~restes/praxis.html>.

- **Web Resources for Social Workers.** This extensive resource is maintained by Michael McMurray, who is a "professional student" at Colorado State University. It includes a host of links to sites relating to disabilities, addiction, domestic violence, gerontology, veteran services, adoption, and more. *Access:* <http://129.82.209.104/webstuff.htm>.

- **Search Engines for Social Work.** This site produced by the Phyllis Lan Lin School of Social Work at the University of Indianapolis is a useful guide to 27 Internet search engines that is specifically tailored for social work researchers. The guide ad-

dresses 24 different categories of questions, and which engine is best suited for each. The special capabilities of the individual engines are also included. *Access:* <http://www.uindy.edu/socialwork/links/search.htm>.

## Organizations

- **National Association for Social Workers.** Founded in 1955, the NASW is currently the largest association of professional social workers in the world. Their Web site includes a catalog of publications, the NASW Code of Ethics, accreditation information, and links to job resources. This site is also a useful current awareness tool. *Access:* <http://www.naswdc.org>.

- **International Federation of Social Workers.** The IFSW was founded in 1950 and is currently affiliated with 59 national organizations around the world. Their Web site includes links to publication of the IFSW (some of which are available in full text), information about current activities and conferences, contact information for representatives, and links to partnership organizations. *Access:* <http://www.ifsw.org>.

- **National Institute for Social Work (UK).** The NISW is the British counterpart to the NASW. This site has a wealth of useful information, including a database of research initiatives, a full text library of NISW publications, and subscription information for INTSOCWORK (a listserv that freely distributes journal table of contents as a current awareness service). Members can access Caredata Abstracts, a bibliographic database, which is also available on CD-ROM for a modest fee. *Access:* <http://www.nisw.org.uk>.

- **Clinical Social Work Federation.** The CSWF is a confederation of 31 state societies for clinical social work. Their Web site includes various links to clinical social work resources on the net, news items, and legislative alerts. *Access:* <http://www.webcom.com/nfscsw>.

- **Society for Social Work Administrators in Health Care.** The SSWAHC is an association of 2,200 members that promotes issues of access, availability, coordination, and cost effectiveness in psychosocial aspects of health care. Apart from organizational information, this Web site includes

news in the field, a career center, and a list of administrative tools for use. *Access:* <http://www.sswahc.org>.

- **American Public Welfare Association.** The APWA Web site is a good place for news concerning welfare, child welfare, health care reform, and other issues involving families and the elderly. Some of the resources on this site include in-depth information on welfare reform, state-by-state listings of relevant news items, and a browsable list of abstracts from the association's journal. *Access:* <http://www.apwa.org/index.htm>.

## Online bibliographies

- **Bibliography on Social and Economic Development.** This bibliography compiled by Richard Estes of the School of Social Work at the University of Pennsylvania lists over 1,750 journal articles, books, book chapters, and reports relating to social development, economic development, social work, social welfare, and other areas. It is well organized by subject. *Access:* <http://caster.ssw.upenn.edu/~restes/biblio/biblio.html>.

- **Child Development Abstracts and Bibliography.** This online edition of the established print resource is currently available for free during a trial period. It should prove to be particularly useful for social work researchers who wish to search 275 journals in the area of child psychology. *Access:* <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/CDAB/journal/index.html>.

- **ERIC.** Although primarily an education database, ERIC is also an excellent source for information on social work education, school social work, child welfare, mental health, mental retardation, and developmental psychology. Four different search interfaces are available—however the fourth from the Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation includes both the CIJE and RIE components back to 1976 and supports subject searching with terms from the Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors. *Access:* <http://www.aspensys.com/eric/searchdb/dbchart.html>.

- **ERIC/AE Test Collection.** Also from the ERIC Clearinghouse for Assessment and Evaluation, this joint project between the Educational Resources Information Center,

the Educational Test Service, and the Buros Institute for Mental Measurements allows social work researchers to locate relevant tests from a database of over 10,000 records. Abstracts and availability information are included—as are separate databases of test publishers and test reviews. *Access:* <http://ericae.net/testcol.htm>.

• **SWBIB: New Technology in Human Services.** This online bibliography is an excellent resource for social work researchers who are interested in the use of information technology in human services. A total of 1,400 citations and abstracts from the 1970s through the 1990s can be browsed by author, keyword, and journal title. *Access:* <http://www.fz.hse.nl/causa/swbib/Welcome.html>.

• **Sociology On-line.** Researchers will find a great deal of relevant information in this resource made available by the publishers of the **Annual Review of Sociology**. Over 6,000 citations and abstracts from the last 12 years of this publication can be searched, and the full text of articles from 1993–1997 can be downloaded (for a fee). *Access:* <http://www.annurev.org/soc/home.htm>.

### Searchable databases

• **The NASW Register of Clinical Social Workers.** This online directory is compiled by the National Association of Social Workers. It is designed as a resource for the public to identify social workers who are qualified by education, experience, and credentials to be providers of mental health services. The register differentiates between social workers who have a minimum of two years, and five years post-masters supervised, experience in social work. *Access:* <http://www.naswdc.org/ClinReg/crdisclm.htm>.

• **The Mental Health Knowledge Exchange Network.** Sponsored by the National Center for Mental Health Services, KEN allows public access to four sizable databases: Mental Health Services Database, Mental Health Directory 1995, Consumer/Survivor Database, and the Mental Health Services Publications Database. These databases are particularly useful for locating mental health organizations around the country. *Access:* <http://www.mentalhealth.org/mhorgsdb/index.htm>.

• **PREVLINe Databases.** This site is maintained by the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information and links to 10 publicly accessible databases that are useful for research in the area of substance abuse. Some of the databases include: Medline, The National Directory of Drug Abuse and Alcoholism Treatment and Prevention Programs, and the ETOH bibliographic database, which focuses on alcohol abuse. *Access:* <http://www.health.org>.

• **Child Abuse and Neglect Clearinghouse: Databases.** From here you can search: the clearinghouse's documents database, which includes over 22,000 records; the Prevention Programs Database, which contains contact and descriptive information for over 400 community-based child abuse programs; and the National Directory of Child Abuse and Neglect Treatment Programs, which is designed to give professionals in child welfare a starting point when looking for referrals. *Access:* <http://www.calib.com/nccanch/database/index.htm>.

• **HUDUSER.** This Web site is maintained by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. It includes links to nine separate databases, which contain social data on a variety of topics related to urban life. *Access:* <http://www.huduser.org>.

### E-journals

• **W3RSW** provides an extensive list of electronic journals and newsletters in the area of social work. *Access:* <http://pages.nyu.edu/~holden/gh-w3-f.htm#journals>.

Several interesting student-refereed social work journals are: **Advocate's Forum** from the School of Social Service Administration, University of Chicago (*Access:* [http://www.chas.uchicago.edu/ssa/advocates\\_forum.html](http://www.chas.uchicago.edu/ssa/advocates_forum.html)); **Social Work Student** from the Department of Social Work, University of Central Lancashire (*Access:* <http://www.uclan.ac.uk/facs/health/socwork/swonweb/journal/index.htm>); and **Sociolog** from the School of Social Work at the University of Pennsylvania (*Access:* <http://www.ssw.upenn.edu/index.htm>).

### Newsgroups, listservs and chatrooms

Extensive listings of relevant newsgroups can be found at **Colorado State Univer-**

city (Access: <http://www.colostate.edu/Depts/SocWork/news.html>) and **SWAN** (Access: <http://www.sc.edu/swan/usenet.html>).

A listing of over 80 relevant social work listserv discussion groups can also be found at **SWAN** (Access: <http://www.sc.edu/swan/listserv.html>).

Web-based chat rooms for social work stu-



dents and professionals can be found at **Human Services Chat Net** (Access: <http://www.naswnm.org/chat>) and **The Social Work Cafe** (Access: <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/4862/swcafe.html>).

### Educational and career resources

• **SSA's Guide to Graduate Schools of Social Work.** This resource is produced by Professor Gary Grant of the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago and is an excellent tool for locating graduate schools of social work in the United States and abroad. It includes links to departmental homepages, mailing address, and telephone numbers. Access: <http://www.chas.uchicago.edu/ssa/links/schools.html>

• **Council on Social Work Education.** CSWE was founded in 1952, and is currently recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation as the sole accrediting agency for social work education in the United States. Their Web site has thorough information on the accreditation process and a listing of accredited baccalaureate and master's degree programs. Access: <http://www.cswe.org>.

• **American Association of State Social Work Boards.** The AASSWB coordinates social work licensing examinations used in the United States and is a central resource for information on the legal regulation of social work. The site includes detailed information on licensing examinations, a directory of social work boards in the United States, and resources available to accredited social workers. Access: <http://www.aasswb.org>.

### • Social Work Examinations Services.

SWES is a publisher of lectures and home study courses for social workers planning to take the various levels of licensing tests. Publication catalogs, a directory of licensing boards, and licensing news are included. Access: <http://www.tiac.net/users/swes/index.htm>.

### • Social Work and Social Services Jobs Online.

This database from the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University lists jobs by geographic location and field of interest. Links to other employment sources are also included. Access: <http://gwbweb.wustl.edu/jobs/>.

• **Introduction to Social Welfare and Social Work.** A work in progress of Professor Steven Hick at Carleton University in Ottawa, who plans to use this site as an instructional resource. Access: <http://ia1.carleton.ca/52100>.

• **Social Work History Station.** This site is another instructional resource that is designed to support classroom instruction in the area of welfare and social work history. Professor Dan Huff from the School of Social Work at Boise State University is the creator, and he hopes that the site will prove useful to other educators and students in this area. Access: <http://www.idbsu.edu/socwork/dhuff/history/central/core.htm>.

### Notes

1. Yitzhak Berman. "Discussion groups on the Internet as sources of information: the case of social work." *Aslib Proceedings* 48(2) (1996): 31-36. ■

### Hotlinks to "Internet Resources"

Articles published in the "Internet Resources" column can also be found on the Web as part of *C&RL News Net*—an abridged electronic edition of *C&RL News*. A hotlink is provided for each resource listed. Check out *C&RL NewsNet* at <http://www.ala.org/acrl/c&rlnew2.html>.

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