

Financial Aid Information Page. Access: <http://www.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs/user/mkant/Public/FinAid/finaid.html>.

The Financial Aid Information Page offers an abundant array of information on financial aid and links to other useful sites. It was established in the fall of 1994 by Mark Kantrowitz, a Ph.D. candidate in computer science at Carnegie Mellon University, who continues to maintain the site. The page is updated frequently, with the date of last update given on the first page. It provides a "What's New" section of new resources within the last month and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) files on financial aid. A table of contents and index to the site are included and, in general, the page is very well organized.

A very useful link featured on the page is called FastWEB, a searchable database of more than 180,000 private scholarships, fellowships, grants, and loans. Also quite useful is the financial aid estimation form, which explains terminology and provides clear instructions. Calculators to estimate loan payments, expected family contributions, and savings growth are provided.

The page contains many informative resources such as a glossary of financial aid terms, a listing of free documents, important financial aid telephone numbers, information from university financial aid offices, foreign study aid, bibliographies, consultants, and warnings on potential scams in financial aid. Links to other sources of financial aid information, including scholarship search services, are given. Information is also provided on relevant mailing lists, newsgroups, and other Web sites. A lot of information from the U.S. government is available through hot links to specific agencies. For users of commercial online services such as America Online, the location of financial aid resources for specific providers is listed.

Overall, this site is a gold mine for locating financial aid resources for students, parents, and



financial aid professionals.—
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DejaNews. Access: <http://www.dejanews.com>.

DejaNews Research Service is a general purpose Usenet search tool. Because DejaNews indexes most Usenet newsgroups, it can be used for searching on a variety of

topics. Its intended audience is the general user seeking current information. According to documentation screens, the alt, talk, and soc hierarchies, as well as all .binaries groups, are specifically excluded. Ostensibly this is done to focus the search on those groups likely to contain actual information, but it can have the effect of removing from the search those groups in the alt hierarchy where the newest technologies are discussed (before there was a comp.infosystems.wais, there was an alt.wais). In fact, searches do retrieve results from talk.politics, soc.culture, and other "excluded" sub-hierarchies, so the limits of the coverage are rather vague.

Currently the site indexes several months' postings. The plan is to keep a rolling year of postings in each newsgroup once a year's news has accumulated. DejaNews supports searching by subject and by author, but defaults to free text keyword searching. Reading the documentation is recommended, since a simple default search is likely to retrieve a large number of miscellaneous postings. Unfortunately, a more complex search using wildcards, parentheses, and Boolean or proximity operators can result in an error message for no apparent reason. The option of narrowing a search by Usenet group or hierarchy is a useful feature, although it does not work exactly as expected: limiting to the newsgroup rec.pets.cats retrieved postings from rec.pets as well. With some practice I was able to retrieve a specific newsgroup's FAQ and postings similar to the results described in the DejaNews tutorial. However, as a general purpose information lookup tool, DejaNews is only of incidental value. It is only a search mechanism; the content it searches is provided

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by those who post messages to Usenet, who are under no obligation to provide accurate information over personal opinion. Some newsgroups do contain a great deal of accurate content, and where this is the case, the most concise source of information is the FAQ file. This can be located via DejaNews, but it is also available in the Usenet FAQ repository at <ftp://rtfm.mit.edu>.

Where Usenet news shines is in its coverage of actual "news," that is, job listings, apartment sublets, and announcements; reports from regions where news is occurring, or from which little published news is available. DejaNews could be used to search for these topics, although it should be weighed against other resources. For example, students seeking career leads are likely to find more relevant material at a site such as CareerMosaic (<http://www.careermosaic.com>), which carries both Usenet and other information related to job seeking. DejaNews shines in its ability to retrieve results from a variety of newsgroups and in its author search. This can be particularly useful when accurate information is not at issue, e.g., when what is sought is an opinion. An interesting side effect of the author search is that DejaNews can be used as a tool for looking up e-mail addresses. Although those who post no Usenet news are automatically excluded, e-mail addresses can be so tricky to locate that this is a handy feature.—*Genevieve Engel, University of California, gen@dla.ucop.edu*

Alternative Care Homepage. Access: <http://www.altcare.com/>.

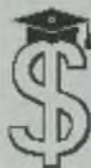
Some of the marks of a good homepage are its ease of use and the ability to interest people from the novice to the professional. The Alternative Care Homepage (ACH) is an informative page that would be of interest and assistance to all involved in alternative care. The site coordinator is Neil Tarvin, a student at Cleveland Chiropractic College. It is well written and

the topics can hold the interest of its readers. The alternative care that is featured includes chiropractic, homeopathy, naturo-pathy, acupuncture, reiki, rolfing, and osteopathy. Brief explanations of the origins and use of each is provided.

ACH provides interesting information to the consumer, the student, and the professional practitioner. The consumer section contains articles and FAQs on topics such as midwifery and herbal dosing. This Web site also contains information about alternative care that may help someone seeking a career in the field. The generality of the information makes it easy to understand by first-time users of alternative medicine.

The student section can be used throughout the student's academic career, providing study tips and advice, information on obtaining funds for tuition, and alternative school listings. The titles of the sections are self explanatory: "How to Remember All This Stuff in the Basic Sciences Even If the Velcro in Your Brain Is Shot, and You Haven't Got a Whole Lot of Empty Neurons Left Anyway" and "The Ambitious Student's Guide to Financial Aid." "Alternative School Listings" contains the names and addresses of schools abroad and in the United States. The professional section is tailored primarily for the practicing chiropractor. This section offers text on upcoming seminars and events as well as current articles about the profession. The listing can help the professional stay up-to-date with credentialing and new state licensure rules and regulations. The state-by-state chiropractic information includes state laws, exams, and contacts.

The two complaints I have with this homepage are that some parts are under construction and it is not updated frequently. However, the site coordinator is a student with limited time, therefore updates will be slow. Overall, this homepage covers all the bases. It is well laid out, easy to navigate, and interesting.—*Charles A. Bradsher, Sherman College of Straight Chiropractic* ■



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