

**BEN (BioSciEdNet) Portal.** Access: <http://www.bioscienet.org/portal/index.php>.

Established in 1999 by the American Association for the Advancement of Science along with 11 original collaborative professional societies, the BioSciEdNet (BEN) portal was chosen in 2005 to be the National Science Digital Library Pathway for biological sciences education. All resources offered through this portal undergo a thorough peer review process administered by scientists and staff members of the participating professional societies. The reviewers maintain clear and consistently high standards when reviewing and adding sites, thus guaranteeing the scientific quality and accuracy of each resource.

The Web design is clean, simple, and easily navigable. The site currently contains more than 18,000 reviewed resources that cover vast and specialized topical areas within the life sciences. Users will quickly discover resources via a variety of locators, beginning with basic and advanced keyword searching, and can easily limit searches by audience level. A word search for “biodiversity,” for example, returned 931 matches. Users may also browse by 77 diverse subject categories such as biostatistics, botany, cell biology, ecology, endocrinology, microbiology, mycology, public health, toxicology, and zoology.

Users can browse by 50 resource types, among them animations, educational standards, historical documents, laboratory exercises, lesson plans, teaching strategies and guidelines, and Webcasts. The “Browse by Audience/Level” feature allows one to locate resources from nearly all educational levels, from preschool to graduate and professional levels. The “Continuing Education” subsection within this area leads users to more than

5,000 resources across the life sciences. Many of the links provide citations to both free and subscription scholarly papers, high-resolution images, brief biographies, and interviews with scientists.

Each resource record typically displays a variety of data—author, title of resource, brief abstract, ratings of the resource when available, links to original publishers of the information along with copyright details, and audience level. Thousands of beautiful still images included in many of the records will enhance the learning experiences of students, teachers, and college faculty, as will the links to more than 2,000 informative videos.

The BEN project states that its mission is to “serve as a catalyst for strengthening teaching and learning in the biological sciences.” The collaborative effort underlying this stellar collection of resources succeeds brilliantly in providing a site of significant value to undergraduate and graduate life science and education students and academic faculty.—*John Creech, Central Washington University, John.Creech@cwu.edu*

**The Quilt Index.** Access: <http://www.quiltindex.org/index.php>.

The Quilt Index is a free, open access digital repository and online reference resource focusing on quilts and quilting. Launched on the Web in 2003, but with a history beginning in the 1990s, the Quilt Index is a collaborative project of the Alliance for American Quilts, MATRIX: Center for Humane Arts, Letters and Social Sciences Online, and Michigan State University Museum. The project has received multiple grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Contributors include the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress and an extensive slate of regional, state, and international organizations.

Online collections include quilts both historic and contemporary and those produced in the United States and internationally. The

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Quilt Index aims to document quilting and key contextual information and data related to quilts, and to provide a forum, through social media (including a wiki, blog, Facebook page, and Twitter feed) for sharing information, constructing of new knowledge related to quilting, and the promotion of communities of interest. An iPad/iPhone app is also available for mobile access to collections.

Quilt Index collections can be searched by pattern name, quiltmaker, quilting group, location made, period/year range, color and fiber aspects, and religious/ethnic and/or cultural affiliation. Content can be browsed by collection name, time period, style/techniques, pattern, purpose/function, location, and titles of quilt periodicals. Educational resources, besides core collections and metadata, include lesson plans and resources for incorporating quilts into curricula. A wide range of resources for scholars, particularly historians and folklorists, are available. There is a special section for oral history material in multiple formats, including films, online presentations, and repositories. This resource is also of compelling value for researchers and practitioners in the visual arts, art history, museum studies, and interdisciplinary and area studies. The site makes excellent use of social media to encourage contributions, to disseminate and promote site content and features, and to encourage the exchange of ideas and the generation of new knowledge. A monograph/journal/open access Web search utility of quilt scholarship (along the lines of Google Scholar) would be a very useful addition to the site.

The Quilt Index is an excellent resource for scholars, quilters, and quilting enthusiasts, and provides an important virtual focus for documentation, scholarship, and celebration of quilts and quilting.—*Genevieve Innes, Western Connecticut State University, InnesG@wcsu.edu*

**United States Department of Labor.** *Access:* <http://www.dol.gov/>.

The stated purpose of the United States Department of Labor (DOL) Web site is to

“enhance public access to the Department’s information.” The site accomplishes this by providing access to information on the DOL’s programs and initiatives. News, statistics, regulations, charts, graphs, and videos on employment and unemployment in the United States can also be accessed.

The upper left portion of the crisp, clean, home screen is titled “Highlights” with five rotating slides of photographs and charts on topics such as disability employment and veterans’ training. Clicking on any of these slides displays expanded information, which in some instances includes recent and historic statistics, program descriptions, videos, and FAQs.

One method of discovery is clicking on one of the bulleted topics displayed on the homepage. Depending on the topic, users may see a brief discussion with links to subtopics or they may be able to file a complaint, ask a question, or see a list of contacts and links. Another method is to enter a term in the “Find it in DOL” search box in the upper right screen. The result is a page that lists links to a wide array of resources.

A “Browse by Location” search allows users to input a ZIP code to determine the most recent address and telephone number of workforce services in their area. Maps and directions are also provided. A “Browse by Agency” search leads to mission statements, organization charts, and key personnel of the offices and agencies of the DOL.

Past and current issues of the DOL Newsletter and the official blog of the DOL, aptly titled Work In Progress, are found here. Providing an e-mail address will trigger blog updates.

The site appears to be well maintained and updated; no dead links were found. The audience most likely to benefit from the information provided at the site includes workers, students, employers, retirees, and the unemployed.

Organizations responsible for managing employees and unemployment agencies will also find valuable information here to help them comply with DOL’s regulations.—*Mau-reen James-Barnes, University of Arkansas-Little Rock, mejames@ualr.edu* 