

# Internet Debate Research

## Rich Edwards, Baylor University

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#### Terms

*Internet Provider:* The commercial service used to establish a connection to the Internet. Examples of a service provider are America Online, Sprint, ATT, MSN, Road Runner etc.

*Internet Browser:* The software used to manipulate information on the Internet. The four major browsers in use are Chrome (the Google product), Mozilla Firefox (the successor to Netscape), Safari (the Apple product) and Internet Explorer (the Microsoft product). Each type of browser will give you access to the same group of search engines, which is the main thing you will care about.

Firefox has one feature that other browsers lack: it can report to you the last revision date of a Web page (select “Page Info” from the top “Tools” menu to access this function). I teach debaters that a Web page may be dated from the last revision date if no other date is shown on the page; Internet Explorer, Chrome and Safari offer no way to know this date.

*URL:* This stands for Universal Resource Locator. It is the <http://www.baylor.edu> etc.

*Internet Search Engine:* The software used to search for information on the Internet. You will use the same group of search engines, regardless of which browser (Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, or Safari) you may be using. Examples of search engines are Google, Bing (formerly Microsoft Live), AllTheWeb, HotBot, Teoma, InfoSeek, Yahoo, Excite, LookSmart, and AltaVista. I have described the strengths and weaknesses of the various search engines in later paragraphs. My personal favorites are Google and Bing for policy debate research and the Yahoo Directory Search for Lincoln Douglas research.

*Metasearch Engines:* These are Internet search engines which will submit your search to other search engines. The best of the metasearch engines are SearchOnLine, Dogpile, Mama, and Webcrawler. The metasearch engines advertise that they are superior to any one search engine since they will report results from four or five major Internet search engines. While this is useful for some purposes, it is not the best means to conduct debate research. The metasearch engine sends a simple search request to other search engines, meaning that you are foregoing the opportunity to use the “advanced search” function that almost all major search engines make available to you. This means that you often are losing the capability to do exact phrase searching, limitation by date, limitation by domain, or limitation by file type. It is also often true that you will receive fewer hits from

each of the major search engines than if you were to issue the search directly within that search engine.

*Domain:* Each web page on the Internet will have a closing three letter code such as “.com,” “.edu,” “.gov,” “.net,” etc. The domain tells you something about the origin of the web page. In most instances, the “edu” domain means the web page is housed in or provided by a college or university. The “gov” domain means the web page is maintained by a federal, state, or local government. The “com” and “net” domains usually mean a commercial enterprise. Most of the major search engines (in the advanced search options) allow the debater to limit a search to particular domains.

*PDF:* This stands for “portable document file” and indicates that a document is being made available in a format which will look just like an original document in print (complete with page numbers). PDF files are designed to be viewed and/or printed in Adobe Acrobat Reader (available free for download from the Internet). The advantage for the debater is that information gathered from a PDF file can be cited at a particular page number (the same page number it would have as if you had access to the original printed document). Almost all congressional hearings (starting with the 105<sup>th</sup> and 106<sup>th</sup> Congresses) are available in PDF format. This not only means that you can download a hearing which will be identical to the printed one, but it also means that you have almost immediate access to a hearing once it has been held. PDF files also carry the advantage that they generally are made available from well-established sources on the Internet. Again, however, the software necessary to “read” PDF documents is available free on the Internet. You will know that a document for download is available in PDF format if the Internet URL ends in “.pdf”. Most of the major search engines allow you to search for only those Web pages which make available a PDF download.

*HTML:* This stands for “hypertext markup language” and is the code used for creating web pages. You don’t really need to be an HTML programmer to be able to write a web page since numerous programs such as Netscape Composer and Microsoft FrontPage can create the code for you from simple-to-operate menu choices. If you want to view the HTML code used to construct a web page you can do so by selection the top menu choice for “View” (In either Netscape or Internet Explorer) and coming down to the choice for “Page Source.” You will see displayed the native HTML code which creates the Web page.

## **Maximizing the Use of the Search Engine**

Why use a search engine? This is the only way to find material on the Internet unless you already know the URL you are looking for. The problem is that you must know the URL precisely; close will not be good enough. In the early days of the Internet folks used to use printed resources such as *Internet Yellow Pages*. But now there are simply too many pages for these types of publications to be very useful. Google and Bing, for example, index more than two billion Internet pages.

*What should I look for in a good search engine?*

**Comprehensiveness:** For the debater, the most important consideration is to find an Internet search engine which indexes as much of the Internet as possible. Powerful search engines do this through two means. First, they invite Web page creators to send a request to have their pages indexed. This is in the interest of Web designers since they almost always want their pages to be easily found. Second, they employ automatic searching programs which continually find new (and unindexed) pages on the Web and index them. The best search engines also do full text indexing. This means that you could literally pick a phrase out of the middle of a web page, enter the phrase in Google or Bing in quotation marks, and the search engine will find the page for you within about a second. This capability is especially important for the debater. You may have written down a portion of a quotation used against you that you would dearly like to find (either because you want to check its context or you want to locate the quotation to use in your own briefs). If the quotation is from an Internet source you can find it very quickly using a comprehensive search engine. There are some limitations to the ability to find text within a web page. Google, for example, indexes only the first 101 kilobytes of a web page (under normal circumstances, this is the first 8 to 10 pages of text).

**Speed:** Not a major criterion any more. In the early days of search engines you could sometimes issue a search and wait a long time (ten or twenty seconds) for the search to be completed. Those days are gone. All of the major search engines are really almost instantaneous now. If you are experiencing problems with speed it is probably due to your own modem's speed or to the limitations of your own computer processor's ability to handle the Web page graphics.

**Proximity searches:** This is a big concern for the debater. If you enter terms like <persons living in poverty> into your search engine, you will receive dramatically varying results depending upon the search engine you are using. Google does the best job of doing automatic proximity searching; meaning that it will order your search results by examining how close your search terms are in proximity to one another. Older or less capable search engines merely report the pages which contain some or all of these words.

**Revision date reporting:** Most of the major search engines allow the user to limit the search by entering a range for the last revision date (assuming you utilize the "advanced search" function). I teach debaters to use the last revision date as the citation date if the date is otherwise unavailable on the Web page. It should be remembered, however, that the Firefox browser makes it possible for you to determine this last revision date for any Web page you are viewing (unfortunately Chrome and Internet Explorer lack this useful feature).

**Exact phrase searching:** This is an essential feature, for the debater, of a good search engine. By placing your phrase in quotation marks you can instruct the

search engine to return only those pages containing the whole phrase as a phrase. When searching for “persons living in poverty” you want to find the whole phrase of the resolution, not just pages which contain the individual words “persons” and “living” and “poverty.” Almost all major search engines allow for exact phrase searching but there are some unfortunate exceptions. Bing does not recognize quotation marks as an indication of a desire for an exact phrase search. In order to instruct Bing to conduct an exact phrase search, it is necessary to select “Advance Search” and use the drop down box to order an exact phrase search.

Image search: Not important for debate research but great for teachers looking for visual images to build PowerPoint presentations.

*Procedures for effective searching:*

What about capitalization? For the major Internet search engines capitalization no longer matters. Searching for “PERSONS LIVING IN POVERTY” will produce the same results as “Persons Living in Poverty” or “persons living in poverty.”

What about quotation marks? Use quotation marks whenever you want the search engine to look for words together as a phrase (assuming you are using a search engine that enables exact phrase searching). If you search for Persons Living in Poverty (without the quotation marks), the search engine will look for web pages containing the word “Persons” and “Living” and “Poverty” but it will not require that the words be next to each other. By putting quotation marks around “Persons Living in Poverty” you are requesting only those pages containing the whole phrase. There is no need to put quotation marks around a single word. As mentioned earlier, Bing – unlike all other major search engines – does not recognize quotation marks as an indication of an exact phrase search.

How can one limit a search to a particular domain? The best Internet search engines have an “advanced search” or “power search” capability. One of the options in the advanced search engine is the capability to limit by domain. Limited your search to the .gov domain will, for example, provide an efficient means of finding government publications on the desired search.

How can one search for a particular URL (you know part but not all of the URL)? Many of the advanced search engines provide the capability to enter a search term and then to indicate whether you wish to make this search apply to “title only,” “full-text,” or URL. You would, of course, select the URL option.

How does the search engine rank the web pages it reports? This is a somewhat controversial issue. Some search engines receive payment from Internet advertisers for the privilege of having their pages reported early in the search list. Most search engines, though, report the web pages in order of the greater

number of occurrences of the term. Google's patented PageRank system is a factors in not only the proximity of the terms but the number of times other users have accessed the web pages.

## Evaluating Search Engines

**AllTheWeb:** AllTheWeb is now a subsidiary of Yahoo. This search engine is useful, but not as useful for the debater as Google or Yahoo's main search site at [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com). [www.alltheweb.com](http://www.alltheweb.com)

**AltaVista:** AltaVista used to be my "hands down" favorite for conducting debate research, both for policy and LD. The problem is that AltaVista has stayed the same (or in some cases has actually removed some useful services such as the reporting of the last revision date and the use of the "NEAR" term) while other search engines have become more powerful. In 2003, AltaVista also became a subsidiary of Yahoo. [www.altavista.com](http://www.altavista.com)

**Bing:** This is the new Microsoft search engine product – formerly called Microsoft Live. Bing has was first offered in June 2009 (followed a period of beta releases). The engine seems nearly as comprehensive as Google in the number of Web sites returned. It does not, however, recognize quotation marks are a shorthand way to order an exact phrase search. Bing also offers far fewer advanced search options than does Google. [www.bing.com](http://www.bing.com)

**Dogpile:** This is a metasearch engine which searches Overture, Fast, LookSmart, FindWhat, and About. The main problem is that it doesn't search the best search engines and it does not return the same number of items for each search engine as if you were searching that engine individually. [www.dogpile.com](http://www.dogpile.com)

**Google:** *Best search engine overall for policy debate research.* Other folks have discovered it as well: According to "Nielsen Netratings" of June 2007, Google is responsible for 56.3% of all search engine referrals worldwide. The next closest search engine is Yahoo at 21.5%, followed by MSN Search ([www.live.com](http://www.live.com)) at 8.4%. What makes Google ("Go" "Ogle") so useful for debate research? Two factors: (1) It provides the most comprehensive search and (2) It does automatic proximity searching among the terms listed in the search box. Suppose, for example, you enter in the search box the following words: wind power global warming. Google will only return those web pages containing the listed search terms and (most importantly) it will list first those web pages which contain the search terms in the closest proximity to one another. Google also makes available a very capable image search database; this is very useful for classroom teachers interested in constructing PowerPoint presentations. [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

**HotBot:** Before 2005 HotBot provided a useful search engine which would report the last revision date of a web site in its search report. In 2005, however, HotBot became simply a portal site for searching Yahoo. [www.hotbot.com](http://www.hotbot.com)

**LookSmart:** More a directory than a search engine. Not well oriented to conducting debate research. [www.looksmart.com](http://www.looksmart.com)

**Lycos:** Best map search engine on the Internet. Unfortunately, debate research doesn't require many maps. Not great for debate related searches. Indexing is not very comprehensive. [www.lycos.com](http://www.lycos.com)

**Overture:** Formerly GoTo. This is a good search engine but not especially useful for debate research. [www.overture.com](http://www.overture.com)

**Webcrawler:** Webcrawler used to be a premier search engine for debate research because it enabled the "NEAR" term in searches (a powerful way to conduct proximity searches). Unfortunately, it no longer has this capability. Now Webcrawler is a "metasearch engine," meaning that it merely submits your search to a variety of other search engines (in this case AllTheWeb, AskJeeves, LookSmart, and FindWhat). I'm not a fan of metasearch engines for debate research because usually the debater wants to use the advanced search engine within whatever search engine is being used. When a metasearch engine is used, the search is submitted in rather simple form to numerous other search engines, failing to use the full potential of those other search engines. [www.webcrawler.com](http://www.webcrawler.com)

**Yahoo:** Yahoo is a good search engine for policy debate research, but it is not as good as Google, Bing, AltaVista, or AllTheWeb. *For LD research, it is my search engine of choice.* The reason is because of the Yahoo Directory system and the capability to search within directories. One of these directories is "philosophers." To call the philosophers database, simply insert "philosophers>" in front of your search term. An example of such a search follows: philosophers>John Locke. The advantage of using this directory search is that the quality of materials returned in the search will be much better overall and much more specifically related to the philosopher John Locke (as opposed to the hundreds of other individuals who later shared his name). [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)

## Tracking the Progress of Legislation

On the policy debate topic – social services for persons living in poverty – it will be especially important to keep track of the status of current legislation. Some of the proposals for assisting persons living in poverty will actually be adopted by the Democratically-controlled Congress and the Obama administration. Fortunately, the Web site of the Library of Congress offers an excellent way to keep track of the status of current legislation. This Web site is called "Thomas" – honoring Thomas Jefferson, the founder of the Library of Congress. The URL is <http://thomas.loc.gov/>, but you can also just type "Thomas" in any search engine (such as Google) and the Library of Congress Web site will be the first item returned in the search. You can type the name of the pending legislation (such as the DREAM Act or the Employee Free Choice Act) in the search box and Thomas will show the current status of the legislation. Thomas will also offer the option of downloading a pdf copy of the proposed legislation.

## Capabilities of Major Search Engines

(Ranked in Order of Preference for Policy Debate Research)

	URL	Exact Phrase Search	News Search Available	Proximity Search Capability	Advanced Search Capability	Limit to PDF files capability?	Image Search for Ayn Rand	"persons living in poverty"
Google	<a href="http://www.google.com">www.google.com</a>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	627,000	47,100
Bing	<a href="http://www.bing.com">www.bing.com</a>	Hard to Find	Yes	No	Yes	No	34,600	21,000
Yahoo	<a href="http://www.yahoo.com">www.yahoo.com</a>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	26,389	49,200
AltaVista	<a href="http://www.altavista.com">www.altavista.com</a>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	23,351	49,200
HotBot	<a href="http://www.hotbot.com">www.hotbot.com</a>	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Unavailable	Number not reported
AllTheWeb	<a href="http://www.alltheweb.com">www.alltheweb.com</a>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	23,556	48,600
Ask	<a href="http://www.ask.com">www.ask.com</a>	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	1,380	841,000
About	<a href="http://www.about.com">www.about.com</a>	Yes	No	No	No	No	Unavailable	504
Dogpile	<a href="http://www.dogpile.com">www.dogpile.com</a>	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	40	58
Webcrawler	<a href="http://www.webcrawler.com">www.webcrawler.com</a>	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	40	43
Excite	<a href="http://www.excite.com">www.excite.com</a>	No	Yes	No	No	No	40	26
Mamma	<a href="http://www.mama.com">www.mama.com</a>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Unavailable	79
Lycos	<a href="http://www.lycos.com">www.lycos.com</a>	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	23,368	32,327
LookSmart	<a href="http://www.looksmart.com">www.looksmart.com</a>	No	Yes	No	No	No	Unavailable	5

## Quality of Evidence on the Internet

Setting rigid standards will be essential: The Internet makes available web pages from fourth grade students right alongside those from world-class experts. Just as in the print medium, one must make a distinction between the *New York Times* and the *National Enquirer*. Since most debate research is squad-based, meaning it is shared by many students, it is essential that there be agreement on minimum standards for the types of web pages which may be used for debate research. Following are some recommended standards:

NO use of web pages which come from discussion groups or chat rooms.

NO use of evidence from comments posted on blogs.

NO use of web pages where the author's qualifications are unknown.

NO use of web pages where the author is a student in grade school, high school, or college.

NO use of web pages from hate groups or from unidentified organizations.

NO use of web pages which are undated or for which a "last revision date" is unavailable.

Prefer web pages sponsored by one of the following groups:

A government institution

A major educational institution

A recognized "think tank" (RAND, Brookings Institution, Heritage Foundation, CATO Institute, Hudson Institute, etc.)

A reputable journalistic organization (CNN, New York Times, Christian Science Monitor, etc.)

Using the URL to sort out author qualifications: Consider the following example.

You enter "John Rawls" and "social safety net" in a Google search. You have a web page returned to you entitled "Notes on 'A Theory of Justice.'" The web page contains some information which you find useful, but you have no information about the author other than just the name Chilton. You notice from the URL that the web page comes from an "edu" domain associated with something called d.umn, but you don't know what school this is, and you don't know whether the author is a professor or an undergraduate student. The URL is <http://www.d.umn.edu/~schilton/3652/Readings/3652.Rawls.ATheoryOfJustice.html>. Take apart the URL to discover more about the author. Click with your mouse up in the URL line and eliminate all of the end of the URL back to schilton, then return. See if you can find more information about the author. If the URL comes from an educational institution with which you are unfamiliar, eliminate all of the end of the URL back to the part which ends in "edu" then hit return. By clicking the button on his web page for "Vita" you can discover information about his background. You find that the author of the web page is Stephen Chilton, Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Minnesota, Duluth,

who earned his Ph.D. from the MIT — a good source. But some additional work was needed to determine the qualification. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT YOU FIND THE PERSON OR GROUP RESPONSIBLE FOR AUTHORIZING THE WEB PAGE. It is NEVER a sufficient qualification that you found it on the Internet.

How to find the date. Some web pages will have the date prominently displayed at the top of the web page. Whenever you have this type of date listed, it should be used rather than the last revision date of the web page. Often, however, there is no date on the web page. In such cases, you can find the last revision date by using the “Tools” menu choice to select the “Page Info” option (available only in Firefox). (Resist the temptation to select “Source Info” because that will just show you the HTML code for the web page). Page Info will usually show you the name of the organization sponsoring the web page and the last revision date.

How to prepare debate citations from the Internet. Example:

Stephen Chilton (Professor, Political Science, U. Minnesota, Duluth), Mar. 8, 2004, “The Enlightenment.” Retrieved July 2, 2009 from <http://www.d.umn.edu/~schilton/3652/Readings/3652.Rawls.ATheoryOfJustice.html>.

This is the citation standard required by the National Forensic League, which follows the Style Manual of the Modern Language Association (MLA). Authors must be listed if present. Qualifications must be given. The date of the web page must be given. The name of the web page should be presented. At the end of the citation, indicate that it was gathered online and that the online source was an Internet URL (as opposed to Lexis/Nexis, Dialogue, etc.). The final date is the date that you accessed the Internet material.

## Carding Evidence

### ADVANTAGES OF ON-DISK EVIDENCE AND BRIEF PREPARATION

**Minimize Printing:** In the age of the information explosion, it is simply not feasible for debaters to print out a hard copy of everything they think they might need to read. The two major impediments are expense and time. It is expensive (in laser printer cartridges) for a debate squad to print out all of the materials that active researchers need. It is also time consuming to print big chunks of material; computer labs typically have many computers but a single printer. The printer becomes the bottle neck. The overuse of printing is also environmentally irresponsible. Debaters chunk huge volumes of paper, often printing out a two-hundred page law review article in order to extract two or three cards. This means that hundreds of pages per day of printed or photocopied materials are simply discarded.

**More Usable Briefs:** Word processed briefs are easier to read (no illegible handwritten tags, no red or blue ink which refuses to photocopy), and they contain much more evidence per page. This ends up saving a squad large amounts of money in photocopy cost. In fact, members of a large squad can simply distribute new positions via disk and have each squad member print out their briefs on their own printer. This dramatically reduces squad photocopy costs. If briefs are to be word processed, it simply makes sense to collect the evidence on-disk. Otherwise, the debater has to re-type the evidence which exists in hard copy.

**Sorting is Easy:** The old way for debaters to construct arguments (a federalism disadvantage, for example) is to create piles on a table-top of evidence which is sorted into different parts of the argument. Inevitably, as the argument is being constructed, there are numerous times when the debater thinks, "I know I have that piece of evidence that says . . . but WHERE IS IT?" When evidence is collected, sorted, and filed on-disk, that doesn't happen. If the evidence isn't found in the right category, the debater simply uses the word processor's "find" function to search for the word or phrase. The card is located in seconds. When evidence is prepared on-disk, the debater can simply use the sorting function of the word processor to put the evidence in order.

### HOW DOES ONE CARD EVIDENCE ONLINE?

**Have Your Word Processor and Internet Browser Both Open at the Same Time:** There was a time when computers simply didn't have enough RAM (current memory) to have two large programs open at once. Almost all current generation computers have plenty of memory to make this possible. Simply open the first program, then minimize the window (minimize button is in the top right corner) and start up the other program. If you are on a PC, switch

back and forth between the two programs by clicking the desired program on the start-bar. On the Macintosh, you can switch between programs by using the icon in the top right hand corner of your screen. An alternative method for switching is to overlap the window just a bit so that a corner of both can be seen. When you desire to switch, just click with the mouse on the other window to make that program active.

#### Steps for On-Disk Carding of Evidence:

##### Text-Saving Method:

This method is useful when debaters have only short periods of access to the Internet.

1. Locate the Internet site from which the evidence will come.
2. Construct the evidence citation on the word processor in accordance with NFL rules.
3. Identify the source in such a way that it will match the text you will save (i.e. Ravitch1). Once the Internet session is completed, save all of these citations to disk as "Sources."
4. Save a text copy of the Internet web site, giving it a name which will match the citation (i.e. Crane1)
5. The student would then follow the steps below on the Online Method, but because they now have a disk copy of the stuff from the Internet, they can finish the work on their home computer.

##### Online Method:

1. Locate the Internet site from which the evidence will come.
2. Construct the evidence citation on the word processor in accordance with NFL rules.
3. Highlight the portion of the text from the web page which will makeup the text of the card. Copy the text into memory (on the PC, this is Cntrl-C; on the Macintosh it is Apple-C).
4. Switch to the word processor and paste in the text just below the evidence citation. (On the PC, this is Cntrl-V; on the Macintosh it is Apple-V)
5. Eliminate unwanted carrier returns in one of two ways: (a) click at the beginning of each line and backspace, or (b) use the word processor's search and replace function to eliminate all paragraph breaks.
6. Continue pasting cards into the word processor until you have taken all of the desired cards from the web page. Then copy and paste as many evidence citation tops as needed to match each of the cards.

## SORTING EVIDENCE ON THE COMPUTER

Design a filing scheme which will allow addition of categories.

Once filed and sorted, your on-disk evidence file functions just like the “piles of cards” on the table. You use the index to see where the cards are which will support the part of the argument you are putting together, then use the search function on the word processor to find the cards, by searching for R301, for example. Read the cards which are filed there, and select the card or cards you want to insert in the brief. Then cut and paste them.

## Suggestions for Online Policy Debate Research

### Finding Definitions of Terms:

OneLook.com: Access to more than one thousand dictionaries is available through [www.onelook.com](http://www.onelook.com).

Google: Google ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)) also provides two little-known definition tools. The first approach is to enter the term “define” in the main search box, followed by a colon, then the term or phrase you wish to have defined. Try, for example, the following Google search – define: social services. You will find dozens of web-based definitions of the term. Notice the difference made by the colon after the word “define.” If the colon is absent, Google looks for any Web pages containing the word “define” and the phrase “social services.” With the colon present, Google detects that you wish to examine only those Web sites which intend to define the specific phrase, “social services.” A second definitional tool built into Google involves the capability to click any underlined term in a search phrase. Try, for example, entering the phrase “persons living in poverty.” You will notice that when Google returns the pages for this search, it now also underlines each of the words contained in your search. By clicking on one of the underlined words, you will see a definition of the term.

### Newspaper & Journal Articles:

Google News: Google news gives you access to otherwise hard to find news articles on the civil liberties topic. In fact, I have found this resource as useful on the poverty topic as the Lexis/Nexis news database (and it is sure a lot cheaper). The normal news database is limited to the past 60 days, but you can click at the left side of your screen on the news archive, allowing access to articles over the past few years. <http://news.google.com/>

FindArticles: The Web’s First Free Article Search. Their advertisement says that “FindArticles.com is a vast archive of published articles that you can search for free. Constantly updated, it contains articles dating back to 1998 from more than 300 magazines and journals.” Among this 300 are numerous publications debaters should find useful: <http://articles.findarticles.com/p/home?tb=art>

Library of Congress Online Reading Room. From this Web site, the debater can find links to hundreds of online newspapers and journals.

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/news/lists.html>

The Write News. This site provides links to all major newspapers maintaining online services. <http://writenews.com/newslinks/>

### **Research Think Tanks:**

American Enterprise Institute: “The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research is dedicated to preserving and strengthening the foundations of freedom—limited government, private enterprise, vital cultural and political institutions, and a strong foreign policy and national defense—through scholarly research, open debate, and publications. Founded in 1943 and located in Washington, D.C., AEI is one of America's largest and most respected think tanks.” <http://www.aei.org/library.htm>

Brookings Institution: “In its research, The Brookings Institution functions as an independent analyst and critic, committed to publishing its findings for the information of the public. In its conferences and activities, it serves as a bridge between scholarship and public policy, bringing new knowledge to the attention of decisionmakers and affording scholars a better insight into public policy issues. The Institution traces its beginnings to 1916 with the founding of the Institute for Government Research, the first private organization devoted to public policy issues at the national level. In 1922 and 1924, the Institute was joined by two supporting sister organizations, the Institute of Economics and the Robert Brookings Graduate School. In 1927, these three groups were consolidated into one institution, named in honor of Robert Somers Brookings (1850-1932), a St. Louis businessman whose leadership shaped the earlier organizations.”

CATO Institute: “The Cato Institute was founded in 1977 by Edward H. Crane. It is a non-profit public policy research foundation headquartered in Washington, D.C. The Institute is named for Cato's Letters, a series of libertarian pamphlets that helped lay the philosophical foundation for the American Revolution. The Cato Institute seeks to broaden the parameters of public policy debate to allow consideration of the traditional American principles of limited government, individual liberty, free markets and peace. Toward that goal, the Institute strives to achieve greater involvement of the intelligent, concerned lay public in questions of policy and the proper role of government.” [www.cato.org](http://www.cato.org)

Heritage Foundation. “Founded in 1973, The Heritage Foundation is a research and educational institute — a think tank — whose mission is to formulate and promote conservative public policies based on the principles of free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defense.” <http://www.heritage.org/>

Hudson Institute: “In Hudson Institute’s policy recommendations, articles, books, conferences, and contributions to the electronic media, we share optimism about

the future and a willingness to question conventional wisdom. We demonstrate commitment to free markets and individual responsibility, confidence in the power of technology to assist progress, respect for the importance of culture and religion in human affairs, and determination to preserve America's national security." <http://www.hudson.org/>

RAND Corporation: "RAND (a contraction of the term research and development) is the first organization to be called a "think tank." We earned this distinction soon after we were created in 1946 by our original client, the U.S. Air Force (then the Army Air Forces). Some of our early work involved aircraft, rockets, and satellites. In the 1960s we even helped develop the technology you're using to view this web site. Today, RAND's work is exceptionally diverse. We now assist all branches of the U.S. military community, and we apply our expertise to social and international issues as well." <http://www.rand.org/>

### **Law Reviews:**

University Law Review Project. <http://www.lawreview.org/>

Yahoo Law Directory. This site provides links to hundreds of law reviews many of which make their archives available online.  
<http://dir.yahoo.com/Government/Law/Journals/>

### **Top "Poverty" Web Sites for Policy Debaters**

Access Project. [www.accessproject.org](http://www.accessproject.org). The Access Project explains its mission as working to strengthen community action, promote social change and improve health, especially for those who are most vulnerable. By supporting local initiatives and community leaders, The Access Project is dedicated to strengthening the voice of underserved communities in the public and private policy discussions that directly affect them. The Access Project is affiliated with the Schneider Institute for Health Policy at Brandeis University. Recent publications available from this Web site include *The Illusion of Coverage: How Health Insurance Fails People When They Get Sick*, *Borrowing to Stay Healthy* and *Living in the Red*.

Alliance for Excellent Education. [www.all4ed.org](http://www.all4ed.org). The Alliance for Excellent Education describes itself as a national policy and advocacy organization that works to make every child a high school graduate – to prepare them for college, work and to be contributing members of society. Founded in 2001, the Alliance focuses on America's six million most at-risk secondary school students – those in the lowest achievement quartile – who are most likely to leave school without a diploma or to graduate unprepared for a productive future. By selecting the "Publications & Materials" tab, the debater can access numerous recent reports on the problem of high school dropouts.

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). <http://www.aarp.org/research/ppi/>. AARP Policy & Research features authoritative information on issues affecting the 50+ population. Examples of relevant documents available from this Web site are the October 2008 report, *The Food Stamp Program and Older Americans*; the September 2008 report, *Millions of Low-Income Americans Can't Get Medicaid*; the March 2008 report, *Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States* and the February 2008 report, *Tracking Changes in Women's Poverty Status*.

American Enterprise Institute. (AEI) [www.aei.org](http://www.aei.org). AEI explains its mission as follows: The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research is a private, nonpartisan, not-for-profit institution dedicated to research and education on issues of government, politics, economics and social welfare. This Web site is an outstanding resource for negative debaters. A prime example are the two 2008

books, *The Poverty of the Poverty Rate: Measure and Mismeasure of Want in Modern America* and *Prices, Poverty and Inequality: Why Americans Are Better off Than You Think*, both available free for download as PDF documents.

- Brookings Institution. [www.brookings.edu](http://www.brookings.edu). Brookings explains itself as a nonprofit public policy organization based in Washington, DC. Our mission is to conduct high-quality, independent research and, based on that research, to provide innovative, practical recommendations. In September of 2008, the Brookings Institution sponsored a conference entitled "Poverty Reduction Strategies for the Next Decade." Scholars from leading institutions presented papers offering proposals; all of these papers are available at [http://www.brookings.edu/events/2008/0929\\_poverty.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/events/2008/0929_poverty.aspx). Also, the Brookings Institution's Engelberg Center for Health Care Reform says that it provides practical solutions to achieve high-quality, innovative, affordable health care with particular emphasis on identifying opportunities on the national, state and local levels. One of the many reports available from the Brookings Institution site is a December 2008 report entitled *Real Health Care Reform in 2009*.
- Casey Family Programs. [www.casey.org](http://www.casey.org). Established by United Parcel Service founder Jim Casey, Casey Family Programs is a Seattle-based national operating foundation that has served children, youth and families in the child welfare system. One of the recent concerns of this organization is that a disproportionate number of African American and Native American families are targeted by child welfare agencies for child removal into foster care. This Web site offers a number of recent reports concerning ways to reduce this disproportionality.
- Catholic Charities USA. [www.catholiccharitiesusa.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org). This organization declares its mission as to work with individuals, families and communities to help them meet their needs, address their issues, eliminate oppression and build a just and compassionate society. Numerous resources are available by clicking the tab for "Poverty Campaign" and then "Campaign Materials." The 2006 report *Poverty in America: A Threat to the Common Good* is especially useful.
- Cato Institute. [www.cato.org](http://www.cato.org). The Cato Institute says that it seeks to engage people in questions of public policy and the proper role of government. Every year, Cato commissions and publishes more than a dozen books and scores of studies, on a wide range of policy issues including taxing and spending, education, free speech, Social Security, regulation, federalism, individual rights, the rule of law, globalization, national security and the environment. Cato Institute scholars typically argue that it is government welfare programs and the resulting culture of dependence that perpetuate poverty.
- Center for American Progress. [www.americanprogress.org](http://www.americanprogress.org). The Center for American Progress describes its function as to improve the lives of Americans through ideas and action with bold policy ideas designed to expose the hollowness of conservative governing philosophy. By selecting the "Poverty" link under the "Issues" tab, the debater can gain access to dozens of recent reports. Most useful is the 80-page, April 2007 report of the Center for American Progress Task Force on Poverty entitled *From Poverty to Prosperity: A National Strategy to Cut Poverty in Half*.
- Center for Immigration Studies (CIS). [www.cis.org](http://www.cis.org). This organization describes itself as an independent, non-partisan, non-profit research organization founded in 1985. The CIS claims that it is the nation's only think tank devoted exclusively to research and policy analysis of the economic, social, demographic, fiscal and other impacts of immigration on the United States. Most of the documents available from this Web site document the many problems associated with immigration.
- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. [www.cbpp.org](http://www.cbpp.org). The Center explains its mission as follows: "The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities is one of the nation's premier policy organizations working at the federal and state levels on fiscal policy and public programs that affect low- and moderate-income families and individuals. The Center conducts research and analysis to inform public debates over proposed budget and tax policies and to help ensure that the needs of low-income families and individuals are considered in these debates. We also develop policy options to alleviate poverty." The debater should select the "Areas of Research" tab to find sub-sections on the Earned Income Credit, Food Assistance, Health Policy, Low-Income Immigrants, Poverty/Income and Welfare/TANF. Each research section contains a wealth of material, all available in PDF format, for the 2009-2010 debate topic.
- Commonwealth Fund. [www.commonwealthfund.org](http://www.commonwealthfund.org). The Commonwealth Fund says its purpose is to

promote a high performing health care system that achieves better access, improved quality and greater efficiency, particularly for society's most vulnerable, including low-income people, the uninsured, minority Americans, young children and elderly adults. One recent report entitled *Interruptions in Medicaid Coverage Trigger Unnecessary Hospitalizations* argues that unreasonable qualification requirements for Medicaid threaten the health of Americans living in poverty.

Economic Policy Institute. [www.epi.org](http://www.epi.org). This think tank was formed by a group of well-known economists including University of Texas professor Ray Marshall, Brandeis University professor Robert Reich and MIT economist Lester Thurow. They describe the organization as follows: "EPI was the first – and remains the premier – organization to focus on the economic condition of low- and middle-income Americans and their families. Furthermore, it adheres to strict standards of sound, objective research and analysis, and couples its findings with outreach and popular education." By selecting the "Publications" tab, the debater will find numerous documents advocating an increase in federal government assistance to persons living in poverty. The experts at the Economic Policy Institute also typically argue that giving more power to labor unions will solve the problems of the working poor.

Employment Policies Institute. [www.eiponline.org](http://www.eiponline.org). This organization describes itself as a non-profit research organization dedicated to studying public policy issues surrounding employment growth. The reports available from this site are conducted by independent economists at major universities. Negative debaters will find this site an excellent resource for high quality studies arguing that raising the minimum wage or imposing "living wage ordinances" will be counterproductive in serving the needs of the working poor. By clicking the "Publications" tab, the debater will have access to many recent studies dealing with the negative economic effects of the minimum wage, Medicaid expansion and health care mandates for employers.

Families USA. [www.familiesusa.org](http://www.familiesusa.org). Families USA describes itself as a national nonprofit, non-partisan organization dedicated to the achievement of high-quality, affordable health care for all Americans. This organization makes available many recent reports which will be highly relevant on the health care topic. Reports prepared in 2008 include *Dying for Coverage, Universal and Equal, Confronting Disparity While Reforming Health Care, A Painful Recession: States Cut Health Care Safety Net Programs, Empty Promises: Searching for Health Insurance in an Unfair Market, Too Many Uninsured Children and Unequal Burden: The True Cost of High-Deductible Health Plans for Communities of Color*.

Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). <http://www.frac.org/>. This organization describes itself as the leading national nonprofit organization working to improve public policies and public-private partnerships to eradicate hunger and undernutrition in the United States. The debater should click the "Publications & Products" tab to find status reports on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (the federal government's new name for food stamps) and numerous other food assistance programs.

Heartland Institute. [www.heartland.org](http://www.heartland.org). The Heartland Institute says that its mission is to discover, develop and promote free-market solutions to social and economic problems. Such solutions include parental choice in education, choice and personal responsibility in health care, market-based approaches to environmental protection, privatization of public services and deregulation in areas where property rights and markets do a better job than government bureaucracies. Of special interest to debaters will be the "Education" and "Health Care" tabs. The Heartland Institute is a strong advocate for vouchers as the means to correct deficiencies in inner city schools. Numerous reports oppose a larger role for the federal government in the provision of health care.

Heritage Foundation. [www.heritage.org](http://www.heritage.org). The Heritage Foundation declares that its purpose is to formulate and promote conservative public policies based on the principles of free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values and a strong national defense. The numerous reports available from the Heritage Foundation warn against increasing government interference in the private marketplace. A prime example is the November 2007 report entitled *Hunger Hysteria: Examining Food Security and Obesity in America*, which argues that increasing benefit levels in federal food assistance programs will increase obesity and undermine the health of low-income Americans.

- Manhattan Institute. [www.manhattan-institute.org](http://www.manhattan-institute.org). The Manhattan Institute describes itself as an important force in shaping American political culture and developing ideas that foster economic choice and individual responsibility. The Manhattan Institute Center for Civic Innovation (CCI) says that it is committed to documenting the successes of welfare reforms which have reduced dependency among low-income Americans and shown them the way out of poverty. Debaters should click the "Welfare Reform" link under the "Issues" tab to find numerous publications defending the "welfare-to-work" transition.
- MDRC. [www.mdrc.org](http://www.mdrc.org). MDRC, a creation of the Ford Foundation, was originally the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation. In 2003, it officially changed its name to MDRC. MDRC describes itself as a nonprofit, nonpartisan social and education policy research organization dedicated to learning what works to improve the wellbeing of low-income people. Through its research and the active communication of its findings, MDRC seeks to enhance the effectiveness of social and education policies and programs. The debater should click the "Welfare & Barriers to Employment" tab and then click the link for "Publications" to find recent reports on the success or failure of numerous job training and employment assistance programs for persons living in poverty. This Web site offers the best information available on the 2009-2010 topic concerning the effectiveness of employment services programs for persons living in poverty.
- National Association of Community Health Centers. <http://www.nachc.com/>. To address the widespread lack of access to basic health care, Community Health Centers serve 18 million people at more than 7,000 sites located throughout all 50 states and U.S. territories. Community Health Centers are often mentioned as an important part of the safety net providing free or low cost medical care for the uninsured. Numerous press releases are available including a December 19, 2007 report entitled *Community Health Centers Adapt to Increased Demand for Care*.
- National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems (NAPH). [www.naph.org](http://www.naph.org). The NAPH says that it represents more than 100 of America's most important safety net hospitals and health systems. These facilities provide high-quality health services for all patients, including the uninsured and underinsured, regardless of ability to pay. This organization publishes numerous reports on the quality and availability of health services for low-income Americans, ethnic minorities and other traditionally underserved segments of society. A December 2008 document entitled *Public Hospitals Focus on Reducing Health Care Disparities* reports that public hospitals do an excellent job of "providing services to a racially, ethnically, culturally and socioeconomically diverse patient base."
- National Alliance to End Homelessness. [www.endhomelessness.org](http://www.endhomelessness.org). This organization describes its mission as to work collaboratively with the public, private and nonprofit sectors to build state and local capacity, leading to stronger programs and policies that help communities achieve their goal of ending homelessness. The debater should select the "Data + Research" tab to find the link for the "Online Library." The reports available from this Web site include *Homelessness Counts: Changes in Homelessness from 2005 to 2007*.
- National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP). [www.nccp.org](http://www.nccp.org). The NCCP, a project of Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health, describes itself as the nation's leading public policy center dedicated to promoting the economic security, health and well-being of America's low-income families and children. By clicking the "Publications" tab the debater will find dozens of recent publications, most available in PDF format, advocating improvements in the availability of child care services, health care and other types of services for children.
- National Center for Policy Analysis (NCPA). <http://www.ncpa.org/>. The NCPA describes itself as a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy research organization, established in 1983. The NCPA's goal is to develop and promote private alternatives to government regulation and control, solving problems by relying on the strength of the competitive, entrepreneurial private sector. Topics include reforms in health care, retirement, entitlement reform, taxation, economic growth and energy and the environment. The main focus of the NCPA is a free enterprise approach to health care, but there are also numerous reports on the broader issue of poverty. One document entitled *Importing Poverty* argues that a key cause of poverty in America is illegal immigration.
- National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER). <http://nieer.org/>. NIEER was established at

Rutgers University's Graduate School of Education with a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts. NIEER declares as its goal to produce and communicate the knowledge base required to ensure that every American child can receive a good education at ages three and four. Debaters should click the "Publications" tab, then select the links for "Policy Briefs" or "Online Reports" to find excellent information on the need for federal support of pre-school educational programs. A prime example is the January 2009 policy brief entitled *Federal Early Childhood Policy Guide for the First 100 Days*.

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (NLCHP). [www.nlchp.org](http://www.nlchp.org). The NLCHP was established in 1989 by Maria Foscarinis, a lawyer on a mission to end homelessness. The organization says that it "strives to place homelessness in the larger context of poverty. By taking this approach, the organization aims to address homelessness as a manifestation of deeper causes: the shortage of affordable housing, insufficient income and inadequate social services. The National Law Center provides outstanding downloadable research resources, but they are a bit difficult to find from the main Web site. A shortcut to these resources is available at [www.nlchp.org/publications.cfm](http://www.nlchp.org/publications.cfm).

National Poverty Center. [www.npc.umich.edu](http://www.npc.umich.edu). The National Poverty Center (NPC) was established in the fall of 2002 at the University of Michigan's Gerald Ford School of Public Policy as a university-based, nonpartisan research center. The debater should select the "Publications" tab and check the links for "Policy Briefs" and "Working Papers" for dozens of recent reports dealing with the problems of poverty.

Progressive Policy Institute: [www.ppionline.org](http://www.ppionline.org). The Institute says that it advocates a philosophy that adapts the progressive tradition in American politics to the realities of the Information Age and points to a "third way" beyond the liberal impulse to defend the bureaucratic status quo and the conservative bid to simply dismantle government. The Progressive Policy Institute is associated with the Democratic Leadership Council, an organization that promoted the welfare-to-work reforms of the 1990s. The debater should click the "Work, Family and Community" link under the "Issues" tab to find numerous recent documents on reducing poverty, increasing housing assistance and improving conditions for the working poor. The "Health Care" link under the "Issues" tab offers reports supporting government assistance for low-income Americans without health insurance.

RAND Corporation. [www.rand.org](http://www.rand.org). RAND explains its mission as follows: The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis. For 60 years, decisionmakers in the public and private sectors have turned to the RAND Corporation for objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing the nation and the world. The debater should click the "Reports & Bookstore" tab to view the topics covered by RAND Corporation reports. On the poverty topic, the relevant categories are "Child Policy," "Education," "Health and Health Care" and "Workforce and Workplace."

Urban Institute. [www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org). The Urban Institute grew out of a commission established by President Lyndon Johnson in the 1960s. It was intended to be an independent nonpartisan institution to evaluate the problems facing America's citizens and their residents. Many of the links under the "Issues" tab will provide useful information on the 2009-2010 topic, including "Poverty/Welfare," "Health/Healthcare," "Education" and "Work/ Income." A March 2008 document entitled *Determinants of Asset Building* suggests that the federal government should facilitate rather than penalize asset-building efforts of Americans living in poverty. Relevant reports on health care for persons living in poverty include the following: a July 2008 document entitled *Making Work Pay: Comprehensive Health Insurance for Low-Income Working Families* and the January 2008 report, *Uninsured and Dying Because of It: Updating the Institute of Medicine Analysis on the Impact of Uninsurance on Mortality*.

U.S. Food and Nutrition Service. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/>. The Food and Nutrition Service is the subdivision of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that administers all federal nutrition assistance programs such as food stamps (now called SNAP, which stands for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). Federal nutrition assistance programs also include the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women and Children (WIC), the National School Lunch Program, the Summer Food Service Program which feeds more than 2 million low-income children during the summer months when school is out, the federal commodities donation program, the Emergency Food Assistance Program which provides food for food pantries and soup kitchens, the

Food Distribution on Indian Reservations program and the Child and Adult Care Food Program which provides food for low-income children and seniors in day care. This Web site provides access to publications explaining the scope of 15 federal nutrition assistance programs.

## Suggestions for Online Lincoln Douglas Research

**Yahoo Philosophy Directory:** Some web sites provide an index of major philosophers with quick ways of finding biographical and other types of information about them. One such useful web site is as follows:

<http://dir.yahoo.com/arts/humanities/philosophy/philosophers/>

**American Philosophical Association Online:** Much of the this site is available only to APA members, but there is a public archive which includes APA Newsletters and some other publications.

<http://www.apa.udel.edu/apa/index.html>

**EpistemeLinks.com:** Maintains links to dozens of philosophy resources on the Internet.

<http://www.epistemelinks.com/Main/MainLink.asp>

**Guide to Philosophy on the Internet:** Operated by Peter Suber of the philosophy department at Earlham College. <http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/philinks.htm>

**Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy:** This is a one-stop-shop for finding the meaning of key terms in philosophy as well as a brief overview of the biography and teachings of major and minor philosophers. <http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/>

**Philosophy Sites on the Internet:** This is a links page maintained by Tel-Aviv University Department of Philosophy. <http://www.tau.ac.il/humanities/philos/links.htm>

**The Radical Academy:** Unlike what the name would suggest, this site provides information on a wide range of philosophical topics. It includes “The Classic Philosophers,” “Glossary of Philosophical Terms,” “Adventures in Philosophy,” and “Religion Resource Center.” In the “Philosophical Resource Center,” there is a database of quotations from great philosophers, searchable by keyword or by philosopher. <http://www.radicalacademy.com/searchpage.htm>

**The WWW Virtual Library: Philosophy** — This philosophy library is made available through the University of Bristol’s Department of Philosophy. This site makes available the philosophy section of the “Social Science Information Gateway” (SOSIG). SOSIG provides a philosophy search engine. <http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/Philosophy/VL/>

**UM-Flint Department of Philosophy:** The top part of this page simply presents information about the course offerings of the University of Michigan-Flint Department of Philosophy. At the bottom of the page, though, is a wonderful collection of philosophy sites on the web. <http://www.flint.umich.edu/departments/phl/>

**Yahoo Philosophers search:** In the normal Yahoo search engine, type “philosophers>” in front of your search to search their philosophy database. Example of a search: philosophers>John Locke. [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)