ONLINE RESOURCES FOR HISTORICAL STUDIES OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

The aim of this article is to provide researchers with a general overview of freely accessible primary and secondary sources available on the web pertaining to the history of European integration. As an overview, the present article makes no claim to be an exhaustive guide to online resources on the history of the European Communities, but instead attempts to provide a solid starting point for researching the topic in question.

Internet resources on European integration can generally be classified in one of three categories: gateway sites, primary-source sites and secondary-source sites. For the purposes of the present article, gateway sites are designated as those that contain extensive links to a variety of web pages falling within the categories of primary and secondary-source sites. Primary source sites have also been subdivided into sites affiliated to the European Union and those that are not.

Before beginning the overview, a brief explanation of the methodology employed is necessary. I have found many of the sites in this guide during the course of my research, specifically, most of the secondary-source sites and the gateway sources listed in this article. Other sites were found through "Google" using the search parameters, "EU primary documents," "EU documents," and "documents of the European communities." Many of the pertinent web pages were found through these searches, or through links on these pages.

As Professor Steven Wolinetz notes, having a "home base" for researching on the web is extremely helpful due to the seemingly limitless number of websites dealing with European integration.[1] Two of the most helpful "home base" or gateway sites are "The European Union-Canada Exchange Program," page, http://www.mun.ca/ceuep/index.html and the "WWW Virtual Library: West European Studies" page, http://www.library.pitt.edu/subject_guides/westeuropean/wwwes/. Nearly all of the primary and secondary-source sites discussed below are accessible through one of these two pages.

"The European Union-Canada Exchange Program" page is dedicated to fostering co-operation and exchanges between European and Canadian Universities. It is also a good gateway page for anyone new to the study of European integration as it includes a clear guide to resources such as the Treaties, official documentation available on the web and member state government homepages. It also contains an excellent bibliography divided into primary sources, secondary sources, general textbooks, general history, as well as other titles, each of which is further subdivided to facilitate research on specific facets of European integration.[2] The strength of "The European Union-Canada" homepage lies in its excellent organization and clarity.

The "WWW Virtual Library: West European Studies" page provides a much more advanced gateway page, sponsored jointly by the Library System and the Centre for West European Studies/European Union Centre of the University of Pittsburgh. Besides containing links to EU and national homepages, the site also contains links to web resources organized by academic discipline. Although history does not appear on the list of academic disciplines, many pertinent sites are listed under the section "Social Science Data and Research." Links to resources for teaching European integration are also included as are links to organizations and centres focusing on European studies such as the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) or the European Community Studies Association (ECSA).[3]

Exploring the links on both of these sites will lead the researcher to other important gateway sites as well as web pages containing either primary or secondary-source information. Primary-sources on the web dealing with the history of European integration are limited, yet important documents are available. Although the overview of primary-sources has been divided into EU and non-EU affiliated sites, the best starting point for both is "European Integration Online Documentation" by Luciano di Fonzo at http://www.ecsanet.org/EUinfo.htm#POLICIES.

The EUROPA server, http://europa.eu.int/, is home to all of the homepages of the institutions of the European Union. The EU has legislated that the activities and records of its institutions should be made as accessible as possible to the public, which means that a substantial volume of primary sources are available through EUROPA. For example, the web page of the recent Convention chaired by Valerie Giscard D'Estaing, charged with drawing up a draft constitution for the European Union, contains speeches, working documents, final reports and a variety of other excellent primary sources.

Many of the databases accessible through EUROPA, such as Celex, Eudor, are not free. Eur-Lex, however, is free and provides access to the Treaties, legislation and case law since 1952, European Parliament (EP) questions since 1999, and the Official Journal of the European Communities going back to 1996. RAPID, is a database of Commission press releases

going back to the late 1970s. Furthermore, the Commission, the EP and the Council of Ministers all have document registers. Unfortunately these databases only go back as far as the mid-1990s, and usually only as far back as 2000 with the exception of the EP website which has the conclusions of the council summits going back to 1985.[4] The difficulty for the historian of European integration is that, besides the legislative acts in Eur-Lex and the press releases in RAPID, EUROPA contains few documents from the pre-Maastricht period (1992).

The Commission, however, provides a database for their historical archives (ARCHISplus) covering the years 1952-1972 in conformance with the thirty years rule. Although the documents within these archives are not available online, there are abstracts containing the official document numbers. ARCHISplus' is an excellent tool to be used in conjunction with a European Document Centre to facilitate research investigations.

Free access to primary documents on the history of European integration on sites not affiliated with the EU is rare, and in most cases links to EUROPA web pages. The following four sites under review have been chosen because either they maintain either excellent source material or sources not available on the EUROPA web pages.

A good general gateway page for primary sources is "Europe as a Supranational Region: Primary documents," http://library.byu.edu/~rdh/eurodocs/ec.html. This site contains links to documents covering the last thousand years of European history, highlighting its supranational elements.

One page providing excellent raw data is the German Social Science Infrastructure Service at http://www.gesis.org/en/data_service/eurobarometer/. The GSIS provides for the development and supply of databases, notably that of *Eurobarometer*, a publication monitoring public opinion in the EU member states since 1971. Access to raw data and reports submitted to the Commission are available through this site.

Two sites of particular interest are the Avalon Project at the Yale Law School, http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/20th.htm, and the International Constitutional Law (ICL) homepage, http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/index.html. The Avalon Project is one of the most extensive online collections of primary documents of the 20th century. While the Avalon Project does not include documents specifically pertaining to European integration, the collection does have many contextual documents, such as the Bretton Woods Agreements. ICL provides the texts of the various constitutions of European countries throughout their histories.

In terms of secondary sources, the Internet has much to offer. Reputable scholarship, usually reprints of periodical articles is readily available online. The European Research Papers Archive, http://eiop.or.at/erpa/, contains 724 papers collected from nine different websites hosting online working paper series. ERPA is one of the most important sites for secondary sources on European Integration online.

One secondary-source site offering a radically different perspective from ERPA is the homepage of the Bruges Group, http://www.brugesgroup.com. Inspired directly by Margaret Thatcher's 1989 Bruges speech, this non-partisan think-tank is ideologically opposed to the idea of an "ever closer union" between the peoples of Europe. The site contains 46 papers that offer eurosceptical perspectives on European integration, and it also furnishes links to other British think-tanks, each of which posts its own policy briefs and working papers.

The present guide to online resources for the study of European integration has been written as a general overview. These resources are best suited as tools to aid primary and access secondary-source research. In the realm of primary research, the activities of the European Union are well documented, but documents related to the emergence of the EU or the history and functioning of the EC are scarce. A worthwhile project would be to fill this document gap on the Internet by posting a collection of documents from early history of the ECSC and EEC.

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1. Steven Wolinetz. "Ten Step Process to EU Enlightenment." [http://www.mun.ca/ceuep/research.htm], March 18, 2000.

2. The other titles are The European Union and Member States, Institutions, The Treaties and European Law, Social and Political Actors, Policy-making and Policies, and Common Foreign and Security Policy and External relations.

3. ECPR homepage at [http://www.essex.ac.uk/ECPR/], ECSA homepage at[http://www.ecsanet.org/]

4. Summit Conclusions from 1975-1985 are avaiable in French at [http://cuej.u-strasbg.fr/archives/europe/europe_01_20.htm].