

Academic BRASS

Published by the
BRASS Business Reference in Academic Libraries Committee

Vol 3(1), Spring 2007

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International Business and Economic Information on the Web

The global nature of the World Wide Web has brought an abundance of formerly hard-to-find information on international business and economics to libraries. Web sites, created by international and regional agencies, U. S. and foreign governments, and trade and business groups include statistical and stock market information, full-text reports (including “how to do business” guides), and periodicals. Many are in English as well as in the countries’ official languages. An article in *Reference Services Review* listed the following Web sites with international information that are favored by librarians:

Internet Public Library—International Business. <http://www.ipl.org/> .

This general portal from the University of Michigan School of Information is very selective and includes a “Business” category with “Commerce and Trade,” and “International Business” subcategories. Brief annotations for each link are included.

Librarians’ Index to the Internet—Business. <http://lii.org/search/file/busfinjobs> This general interest Web portal, run by librarians, includes a business category with “International Trade” subcategory and “Free Trade” within that. All links have annotations.

Library of Congress. *Country studies*. <http://rs6.loc.gov/frd/cs/>

Book-length guides published from 1988 to 1998 to historical, social, economic, and political information on foreign countries.

Library of Congress. *Portals to the World*. <http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/portals.html>

Basic country information and links to other Web sites (including foreign-language Web sites).

University of Michigan. Statistical Resources on the Web. <http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/stats.html>

A University Web portal which includes “Finance,” “Foreign Economics,” “Foreign Governments,” and “Foreign Trade” categories. There are annotations for all links.

U. S. Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook*. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>
Basic facts on foreign countries, including maps.

U. S. Census Bureau. *Statistical Abstract of the United States*. <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/>
Sections 28 and 30 include statistics on foreign aid, foreign trade, and comparative international statistics. The latest edition has a link to “Comparative International Statistics.”

The problem librarians may face when handling an international business question is where to begin to find information. The best place to start may be an international business Web portal—a Web site that includes links in organized sub-categories (e.g., business news or stock markets). The BRASS *Best of the Best Business Web Sites* (<http://www.ala.org/ala/rusa/rusaourassoc/rusasections/brass/brassprotool...>) includes an international business section with the following portals:

GlobalEDGE. <http://globaledge.msu.edu/resourceDesk/>

This is the most comprehensive international business portals; it is from the International Business Center at Michigan State University. It includes links (with annotations) for individual countries and international business topics, original articles, and dynamic tables for country comparison. It also includes foreign-language and fee-based services.

Brint, Inc. *World and Countries: Business and Technnology*. <http://www.brint.com/International.htm>

This commercial Web site is part of an extensive database on other business subjects. Links are grouped based on subject or country, include brief annotations, and include foreign language sites. Screens include numerous ads.

OFFSTATS: Official Statistics on the Web. [http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/subjects/ stats/offstats/](http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/subjects/stats/offstats/)This university Web site from New Zealand is an example of a well-designed portal for finding statistical data. Links are arranged by country, region, or topic (e.g., foreign direct investment), and include links to full-text publications in pdf. Brief annotations are included.

VIBES: Virtual International Business and Economic Sources <http://library.uncc.edu/vibes/>

This university Web site includes links to free, English-language sources, arranged by category (e.g., foreign stock markets), region, and individual country. It is geared toward undergraduate international business students.

Another up-to-date source of information on foreign countries and international organizations is *Country Profiles* from BBC News (http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/country_profiles/). It includes background information and current news on individual countries and regions. Also included are major media connections. A unique feature is an audio link to each country’s national anthem.