

What's New and Updated on My Favorites/Bookmarks for Teaching Social Studies with the Internet

C. Frederick Risinger

Each of us has different criteria for selecting a website for our bookmark list. I have about 40 folders—each with anywhere from 4 to 100+ websites listed. I like to cook, so my “Fred’s Cookbook” folder has more than 80 recipes under sub-headings such as appetizers, soups, and main dishes. But my largest bookmark folder is titled “Social Studies,” and it has many subfolders such as World History, Web 2.0, and Professional Development. You can sort your bookmarks in various ways, so I sorted my folder by “date added.” I selected several recent ones that I think classroom teachers should check out. This is my third column on recommended websites for teachers’ bookmarks/favorites menu.

I have a list of more than 20 sites that I wanted to mention, but there won’t be enough space to include them all. One criterion that I used for selection is whether or not the site has its own list of recommended websites that are relevant to the same topic or issue. So, one of my recommended sites might lead you to a dozen or more similar sites. As Fareed Zakaria says on my favorite news show, “Let’s get started!”

Sweet Search (Finding Dulcinea)

www.sweetsearch.com/

I’m breaking my rule about sites I’ve used in the past by including Sweet Search in this column. I have used this site after an NCSS convention where I went to their session. Sweet Search has developed a search engine and a database of websites that I really recommend. Every site has been examined and approved for use by students—not just for appropriate

content, but also for good resources for both students and teachers. From the home page, click on Social Studies or type it in. It’ll take you to a great list of sites—the first one being “101 Sites for Social Studies Class.” This specific link should be in your bookmark/favorites link. But wait, there’s more. This site provides more lesson plans, video links, professional development links and tools, and just about anything a social educator (pre-K-12 or college-level) could use. I don’t even have it in a folder; it’s number 2 in my total bookmarks list (just after the link to my bank checking account).

The Social Studies Help Center

www.socialstudieshelp.com/

The Social Studies Help Center is a great resource for social studies teachers and provides information and links to other sites that may be helpful. It focuses on U.S. History, Economics, Government/

Civics, and other social studies topics, and has lesson plan outlines on a wide variety of topics. For example, both a first-year teacher and a veteran would find the course outline for Economics both interesting and valuable. A useful “Links Pages” includes links to help integrate technology into social studies.

National Council for the Social Studies

www.socialstudies.org/C3

Yes, this is the NCSS website—with a special inside link featured here: The “College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: State Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History.” The C3 Framework was put together with the collaboration of many professional and well-respected social studies/social science organizations. You can download the complete framework and, while you’re there, check out other great features of the NCSS home site. There are links to social studies in the news, a focus on all grade levels, news about state and local council events, lessons for K-12 students, and many more helpful features. The NCSS “SmartBrief” is published every few days and keeps me up-to-date on what’s going on around the country

and makes me feel proud to be a social studies teacher. The NCSS site should be at the top of your bookmarks folder. And, if you're not already, you should definitely become a member.

World Newspapers-Alternative News

www.world-newspapers.com/alternative-news.html

As many of you know, I'm a news addict. However, I like to see different points of view. The World-Newspapers.com website links to a huge array of newspapers in the world, divided by continent, country, and topics such as history, health, technology, education, and much more. The "alternative news" section highlights links to news with a range of perspectives—progressive, conservative, and everything in-between. I like the one titled *Adbusters*, "devoted to the critique of consumerism and corporate media." I'm not recommending this site for student searching, but there

are well-written opinions on foreign policy and political and social issues that teachers can copy and provide to students doing group projects.

American Social History Project

<http://ashp.cuny.edu/>

Based at The City University of New York Graduate Center, ASHP/CML produces print, visual, and multimedia materials that explore the richly diverse social and cultural history of the United States. Social history, which I consider the most interesting facet of U.S. history, is generally pushed out of the classroom by the "great man, big battles" concept. This website offers an amazing array of art works from well-known museums, some great web projects, a media lab, and a very good newsletter.

Larry Ferlazzo's Websites

<http://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org/>

Ok, I cannot even describe this blog/site. Larry Ferlazzo has more links to good

websites than I could find in a year of searching. And, he's an interesting guy. Scroll down to his "Websites of the Year" link. You will spend an hour on here just checking things out. It's on my bookmark list, for sure.

That's as many of my "new websites" that I can fit into this column. Last time, several of you sent me your suggestions. Three of those are described above. If you want to send me your favorite useful websites or ideas for future column, my e-mail address is below. Be well and do the best you can to push social studies and civic education in your community. The nation needs it ... and us.🌍

C. FREDERICK RISINGER is retired as director of professional development and coordinator of social studies education after 31 years at Indiana University, Bloomington. He currently is working on two writing projects, and works two shifts a week as a bartender at a local microbrewery. He can be reached at risinger@indiana.edu.

MISSION US



Mission 1: For Crown or Colony?

It's 1770. You are Nat Wheeler, a 14-year-old apprentice in Boston. When fighting starts, what will you do?



Mission 2: Flight to Freedom

It's 1848. You are Lucy King, a 14-year-old slave in Kentucky. Will you find a path to freedom?



Mission 3: A Cheyenne Odyssey

It's 1866. You are Little Fox, a Northern Cheyenne boy. Can you help your tribe survive life on the Plains?



Mission US: An Interactive Way to Learn History

Immerse your middle school students in U.S. history through the eyes of peers from the past. The award-winning *Mission US* series offers FREE interactive role-playing games, teacher resources and much more.

Join the experience at mission-us.org.

"This is not a frivolous edutainment title. This innovative game is designed to get you thinking and talking about challenging subjects, while learning more about American history."

—Common Sense Media



Mission US is produced by THIRTEEN Productions LLC in association with WNET. Major funding is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting with additional support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. © 2013 THIRTEEN Productions LLC