In January 2012, a partnership between the UN Library in New York and the UN Office in Geneva to digitize pre-1993 UN documents was announced. This followed the change in January 2010, when the United Nations went green and stopped distribution of documents in paper within its own Secretariat – at a savings of seven tons of paper each year. This move provided a major milepost in the inexorable shift onto the web of most international government documents - especially those of the United Nations. At the same time, give anyone in the world with Internet access a front row seat for - well - the making of history. As well, these sites provide ready access to critical measures of international law, business, the production and distribution of money, education, food, energy, and water, the condition of entire populations, and certainly most important if such things can be measured, the children of the world.

The number of sites, and their breath and scope, along with the current news overlay that occupies the top layer of many, can make access daunting. Many are provided by the United Nations itself. Others have been prepared at reliable sites outside the United Nations. This page contains a highly selective listing of a few that seem especially interesting. But more important, the technique suggested here, of identifying key sites for international documents or for reference to those documents and then approaching them in a systematic way, drilling down for publications, then standards, then statistics and so on, can open a rational portal to this broad "E World of United Nations Documents."

I. League of Nations. Read here the actual documents of a world community failing at the political process and plunging into war, but leaving behind a curious legacy of how they failed, and some key statistical measures not found elsewhere.

Guides and Indexes
- Research Guide to League of Nations Publications from Northwestern  
  http://digital.library.northwestern.edu/league/background.html
- League Documents and Sales Publications  Includes League Statistical Yearbook - from Northwestern  
  http://digital.library.northwestern.edu/league/
- Select League documents: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/ from Yale
- Versailles Treaty http://avalon.law.yale.edu/ from Yale

By Subscription

II. United Nations Documentation. Here are found indexes and for many items in roughly the last two decades, the actual full text of working documents, reports, speeches, and ALL resolutions actually generated and used by the General Assembly, Economic and Social Council, Security Council, and other parts of the U.N.

1. The HomePage of the United Nations (www.un.org/english) This page is a portal to international information about the UN and international issues on a grand scale, with excellent functionality and great content. It is so rich in information that some elements can seem buried, but becoming very familiar with this page is very much worth the effort for those seeking real access to this material.


4. UN Depository Libraries (http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/depolib/) Worldwide listing of locations where UN documents and publications can be accessed. Other research libraries often hold many years of
UN documents which they acquired on subscription. Depository and these research libraries can provide full text of UN documents from 1946 to the present.


6. **Document Symbols** ([http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/resguide/symbol.htm](http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/resguide/symbol.htm)) UN Documents are identified by document symbols as shown here. Symbols are organic, arising from the nature of the part of the UN issuing them and the function of the document. They gather documents together in families which can be helpful in answering a reference question or locating related documents.

7. **UN System Pathfinder** ([www.un.org/Depts/dhl/pathfind/frame/start.htm](http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/pathfind/frame/start.htm)) Identifies a comprehensive range of basic reference tools and includes key publications of historic value (i.e., dating back to the founding of the UN). Also [U.N. Documentation Centre](http://www.un.org/documents/) many UN official documents full text. Including all Resolutions, 1946 to present, from the Security Council, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council.


9. **CyberSchoolBus** ([http://www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/](http://www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/)) Fantastic resource for younger kids on the UN and all sorts of international topics, very much age appropriate. Fun and good educational value. Also found here portal to UN’s Model UN site, comprehensive and age appropriate for teens


**III. Documentation From Other UN Bodies.** Here are found many full text documents, especially for the last five to ten years.

- International Court of Justice ([http://library.lawschool.cornell.edu/WhatWeDo/ResearchGuides/ICJ.cfm](http://library.lawschool.cornell.edu/WhatWeDo/ResearchGuides/ICJ.cfm))
- International Labour Organization - Documents mirror site ([http://library.lawschool.cornell.edu/WhatWeDo/ResearchGuides/ILO.cfm](http://library.lawschool.cornell.edu/WhatWeDo/ResearchGuides/ILO.cfm))
- Permanent Court of Arbitration ([http://library.lawschool.cornell.edu/pca/default.htm](http://library.lawschool.cornell.edu/pca/default.htm))
- Project on Dispute Settlement in International Trade, Investment and Intellectual Property - UNCTAD ([http://r0.unctad.org/disputesettlement/index.htm](http://r0.unctad.org/disputesettlement/index.htm))
- UNESCO Working Documents Index from 1946, full text from 1995, both to the present. ([http://unesdoc.unesco.org/ulis/index.html](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/ulis/index.html))

*The E World of United Nations Documents*

*Page 2*
• World Income Inequality Database, 1950 to the present, from Wider Institute at UN University – Details poverty in much of the world (http://www.wider.unu.edu/research/Database/en_GB/database/)
• World Trade Organization Working Documents Full Text 1995 to the present. (http://docsonline.wto.org/gen_home.asp?language=1&_=_1)
• WTO Legal Documents and Disputes Updates, World Trade Organization (http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/distab_e.htm)

IV. Web Sites of the UN Specialized or External Agencies Many contain full text documentation for recent years, and useful indexes, sometimes for the entire history of the organization.

• FAO Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (http://www.fao.org/)
• IAEA International Atomic Energy Agency (http://www.iaea.org/)
• IBRD International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) (http://www.worldbank.org/)
• ICAO International Civil Aviation Organization (http://www.icao.int/)
• IFAD International Fund for Agricultural Development (http://www.ifad.org/)
• IFC International Finance Corporation (http://www.ifc.org/)
• IMO International Maritime Organization (http://www.imo.org/)
• IMF International Monetary Fund (http://www.imf.org/)
• ITU International Telecommunications Union (http://www.itu.int/net/home/index.aspx)
• MIGA Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (http://www.miga.org/)
• UNIDO United Nations Industrial Development Organization (http://www.unido.org/)
• UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (http://www.unesco.org/)
• UPU Universal Postal Union (http://www.upu.int/)
• World Bank ((http://www.worldbank.org/))
• WHO World Health Organization (http://www.who.int/en/)
• WIPO World Intellectual Property Organization (http://www.wipo.int/portal/index.html.en)
• WMO World Meteorological Organization (http://www.wmo.ch/pages/index_en.html)
• WTO World Tourism Organization (http://www.world-tourism.org/)
• WTO World Trade Organization (Began 1995, formally GATT) (http://www.wto.org/)

V. Regional Commissions A wonderful amount of detail is found on the web sites of the five United Nations Regional Commission, including lots of country information and full text documents.

• Africa (includes Egypt) (http://www.uneca.org/)
• Asia and the Pacific (includes many states of former Soviet Union) (http://www.uneca.org/)
• Europe (also includes many states of former Soviet Union) (http://www.unece.org/)
• Latin America and the Caribbean is especially strong. (http://www.eclac.org/default.asp?idioma=IN)
• Western Asia (the Arab countries of the Middle East, includes Egypt) (http://www.escwa.org.lb/)

VI. Useful Web Sources for UN Research from Outside the UN System. The web is a wondrous place for research on the United Nations. Source and attitude must always be considered. The following are especially useful.

• Academic Council of the UN System - Scholars working on UN issues (http://www.acuns.org)
• AccessUN - Subscription index for UN documents 1945 to present, unique for 1945-1985, from Readex.
• ASIL Electronic Resources for International Law Index and Web Map (http://www.asil.org/resource/home.htm)
• Avalon Project at Yale Law School, Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy
  (http://avalon.law.yale.edu/default.asp)
• Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
  (http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/)
• Country Reports - International Monetary Fund ( http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/CAT/scr.cfm)
• Country Reports on Human Rights - US State Department (http://www.state.gov/g/drl/hr/)
• Hague Conventions (http://net.lib.byu.edu/~rdh7/wwi/hague.html) deposited with the Dutch Ministry
  of Foreign Affairs Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (http://www.minbuza.nl/en/home)
• Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) from UC Berkeley
  (http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/doemoff/govinfo/intl/gov NGOs.html)
• United Nations System, Index and Web Map (http://www.unsystem.org/)
• University of Minnesota Human Rights Library, (http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/)

VII. A Few Good Books. Especially in the age of the Internet, there are still a few key print titles –
books – which are a great help for anyone – librarian or client – serious about understanding and accessing
United Nations documents, publications, statistics, or treaties.

Table, American Library Association. Ed. Susan Tulis and Daniel C. Barkley, Bethesda MD. LexisNexis,
U.S. – of all types – are located, and not just depositories. Libraries move and change over time, and
contact information may be a little stale – but even without an update, this is still a vital source to help track
down where documents are located and who can help untangle a problem with them. Especially useful for
librarians looking for help with Internet access to modern documents, or trying to find heritage – pre-Internet
- documents. Worth the price or a trip or call to a research library.

International Information: Documents, Publications, and Electronic Information Of International
Governmental Organizations. Ed. Peter J. Hajnal. 2nd ed. -- Englewood, Colo. : Libraries Unlimited,
modern international documents, especially useful in putting them into an overall context. These volumes
with their Internet presence as an update for each agency, explain and make rational the world of
international government documents.

of International Law, Bimonthly. Available electronically in Lexis Academic Provides full text of treaties and
other international agreements which are difficult or impossible to find in other sources. Especially useful for
an English text where such was not issued with the original document. An excellent source of last resort.

Paperback. Available from the UN Sales Office, Bookstore, or New Zealand Mission to the UN. The UN
Handbook is prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the government of New Zealand, and is now in its
46th year of publications. It is the only comprehensive printed guide to the United Nations system and how it
works. It lists and describes all UN bodies, and gives essential information about their “aims, structures and
membership.” Inexpensive – current edition is $18, and worth having on hand in any library trying to work
with UN Documents.

United Nations Yearbook, 1946-present. Annual publication from the UN summing up its work.
Often provides answers to questions of what the UN did at a point in time, or how it responded to a crisis.
Numerous references to documents providing details of work or action. Usually two or three years for
publication of a year – worth the wait. Purchase from UN Sales. Useful in Paper. Also free on the web.

World Treaty Index by Peter H. Rohn. -- 2nd ed. -- Santa Barbara, Calif. : ABC-Clio Information Services,
c1983-1984. 5 v. ; 29 cm. Long out of print, and no update in sight, this title is worth knowing about and
using in a research library where it is held. Remarkably comprehensive index to the world’s treaties from
1900-1980, giving the citation to find the text of the treaty in standard treaty publication series. Unique
source for treaty information in many cases.

The E World of United Nations Documents
Page 4