
Library & Internet Resources for Environmental Policy Research

For: GENV 3201: Canadian Environmental Policy

Sept. 29, 2009

This guide is intended to introduce you to some of the resources available for research in Canadian environmental policy and for completing the assignments in this course:

News and Journal Articles

Books & Government Documents

Government & Policy Sites

Current Laws & Regulations

Federal, Provincial Laws & Laws in the Making

Municipal By-Laws & By-Laws in the Making

International Environmental Agreements

Environmental Statistics

Industry and Corporate Information

Evaluating Information & Citing Sources

Articles from Journals, Magazines and Newspapers:

Use an Index or Full-text Database

Select indexes to use based on the topic and type of article required. The following are some that are likely to be useful for research in this course. To access these and others, select the Quick Link: "Indexes & Databases" on the library web site.

News:

Canadian Newsstand (on ProQuest).

Index and full-text collection of Canadian newspapers from across the country.

Years covered: 1985 - present, varies by title. Updated daily, (some delayed 2 days).

Atlantic Canada Overview (NewsScan).

A full-text collection of some Atlantic region papers. Years covered: 1998 - present. Updated daily.

For other news databases select the subject category "News" on the Indexes & Databases web page.

Journal Articles:

ProQuest Databases.

A multi-database index, with abstracts and selected articles in full text. ProQuest databases cover a wide variety of subjects and sources from academic journals, popular press magazines, trade and business journals, some government reports, U.S. and Canadian newspapers, and SSRN working papers. Databases can be searched together or separately. Coverage: Varies by title. Updated daily. Click on "Multiple databases" to select appropriate databases, or search results can be limited to view only scholarly articles, magazines, trade publications, newspaper articles, research reports or working papers.

ScienceDirect.

A good full-text database of peer-reviewed academic journals; can be limited to environmental science journals.

GreenFILE.

An index with abstracts of articles and other sources dealing with environmental issues. Can be limited to peer-reviewed sources only.

Finding Articles Available Through the Library:

If an article does not seem to be available, there are two places to check:

1. Search for the journal title in the library catalogue. Scroll down to the bottom of the full record to see if the library “holdings” include the issue you need; note the format, location, and call number. Journals are kept on the bottom two floors of the library. If the library’s subscription is to an online version, click on the link given.
2. Search for the journal title in the Journal Finder (located under the MtA Library Catalogue access point). (This appears as the @MTA symbol in some databases.)

Articles NOT in the Library or Online:

If the articles or books you want are not available online or in the library, you can request an inter-library loan. Instructions and forms are at the Research Help Desk and on the library web site. There is no charge for this service.

Books & Government Documents Available Through the Library:

Use the Online Library Catalogue

- enter a government, association, or Canadian public company name as Author to find works written, published, or sponsored by them (e.g. New Brunswick, NRTEE, NB Power, Pembina Institute, etc.)
- search using keywords in the author field (Advanced Search) if unsure of the full, correct name (e.g. full author name: Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development)
- use keyword searches to start a search, combine concepts, and to ensure retrieval of all government documents (e.g. new brunswick and forest\$) or (kw in author: new brunswick and kw in title: forest\$)
 \$=all possible endings (keyword searches only)
- limit by location, format, etc. (Advanced Keyword Search)
 (e.g. kw: environmental policy and canada and location: book stacks)
- see subject headings of appropriate books found to find more books on the topic and related topics.

Sample Subject Headings:

Environmental policy
Nature conservation
Land use
Environmental protection
Environmental law
Conservation of natural resources
Energy policy
Renewable energy sources
Power resources

Sub-headings:

-- Canada [province, or more local area]
-- government policy
-- environmental aspects
-- law and legislation

Selected Government & Policy Web Sites:

Canada Site. <http://canada.gc.ca>

- the official Federal Government web site links to federal departments and agencies by name, and to the provincial/territorial government web sites
- has a search engine that covers all federal government web sites
- see “What’s New” for news releases from all federal departments by date or dept (archive now reduced to 1-2 years)
- see the relevant departmental sites which have their own policy information, site maps, search engines, and news archives, e.g:

Environment Canada. <http://www.ec.gc.ca/> , Natural Resources Canada. <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca>

Government departments and ministries and some agencies have a standard url format allowing for an alternative site search option using Google:

- for federal government web sites: enter keywords site:gc.ca (e.g. climate change site:gc.ca)
- for provincial government sites: enter keywords site:gov.bc.ca (exception: gnb.ca for New Brunswick)

Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development. Office of the Auditor General of Canada. http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/esd_fs_e_46.html

- monitors federal departmental sustainable development strategies and manages the environmental petitions process (see for citizen and organizational petitions, and the government response).

Current Laws & Regulations (Federal):

Federal department sites have a page listing the Acts & Regulations for which they are responsible. E.g:

Environmental Acts, Regulations & Agreements. <http://www.ec.gc.ca/enviroregs/eng/>

- information on the regulations, acts, permits, etc. administered by Environment Canada.

Natural Resources Canada Acts & Regulations. <http://www.nrcan-rncan.gc.ca/com/resoress/actacte-eng.php>

Dept. of Justice Canada Laws Web Site, “Consolidated Statutes & Regulations”

<http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/index.html>

- The official site for all of Canada’s laws. Search all federal laws and regulations by keyword in title or text, or browse by subject.

- The most recently passed laws are printed in the Canada Gazette, Part III (regulations in Part II)

<http://canadagazette.gc.ca/index-e.html>

Federal Laws & Regulations in the Making:

Parliamentary Internet Site. <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

- previous Parliaments and Sessions (1994 -) can be searched separately
- search the whole site or just selected portions using the Search button, or select specific sections:

Library of Parliament Research Papers – “Virtual Library”

- has brief overviews on topics requested by Members

Hansard (Debates of the House and Senate) – “Chamber Business”

- verbatim transcript of debates accessible by date, or use the keyword searchable and browsable index to link to the text of debates by topic or speaker.

Status of House Business: – “Chamber Business” – “Status of House Business”

- use to see at what stages a bill is in the legislative process; note key points for further research: e.g. if passed into law, date and committee name if referred to committee, date of second reading (to find most detailed debates in Hansard), chapter number if passed, etc.

Committee Reports, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence: -- “Committee Business”

- “evidence” = verbatim record of committee meetings accessible by date or use the keyword searchable and browsable index to link to the recorded text by topic or speaker. “Witness Information” allows searching specifically for “expert” testimony by groups and individuals.

LEGISINFO. – Select from “A-Z Index”

- a very useful research tool that links, where available, to all the above information and more for each bill currently before Parliament: the text of the bill at first reading and any later amended versions, major speeches in Parliament, status of the bill, selected recorded votes, CIF information, legislative summary, party press releases, further reading and related links.

Canada Gazette Part I. <http://canadagazette.gc.ca/index-e.html>

- for proposed Regulations

Provincial Laws & Laws in the Making:

ACJNet - Access to Justice Network Site. <http://www.acjnet.org/>

- select “Canadian Law”, then “Legislative Materials by Jurisdiction” for the best starting point to links to all provincial legislative sites. Can also search by topic across all jurisdictions.

- information available varies by province but can include statutes, status of bills, debates, regulations, court reports, user guides, etc.

Municipal By-Laws & By-Laws in the Making:

ACJNet Canada. <http://www.acjnet.org/nacanadian/bylaws.aspx>

-select “Canadian Law” – “By-Laws” for links to official municipal government web sites, with council meeting minutes and by-laws where available.

International Environmental Agreements:

Canada Treaty Information. Dept. of Foreign Affairs & International Trade.

<http://www.treaty-accord.gc.ca/Main.asp>

- Canada’s official collection of all up-to-date treaties in effect, searchable by topic or keyword in text.

ENTRI - Environmental Treaties & Resource Indicators. CIESIN, Columbia U., and NASA, with the co-operation of other organizations. <http://sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/entri/index.jsp>

- a database of international environmental treaties searchable by keyword. Country profiles list treaties signed and ratified, by each country grouped by environmental issue.

Environmental Law Instruments. UNEP Environmental Law Programme.

http://www.unep.org/law/Law_instruments/index.asp

- links to major multilateral environmental agreements, non-legally binding instruments and to ECOLEX

for national environmental legislation. Also has a chronological list of environmental agreements from 1933 on.

Selected Sources for Environmental Statistics:

Canadian:

Statistics Canada. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca>

Search the site or select “By Subject” – “Environment” for links to key sources such as:

Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators, Human Activity and the Environment, Annual Statistics, etc.

Environment Canada. National Pollutant Release Inventory.

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/inrp-npri/default.asp?lang=En>

International:

GEO: Global Environment Outlook. United Nations Environment Programme.

<http://www.unep.org/geo/>

This major UNEP publication reviews and analyzes the state of the environment and environmental policy around the world, highlights issues of concern and includes recommendations for policy action. The site includes a link to Geo Yearbook an annual survey of the environment, statistics and analysis.

Other sources: See the research papers, technical papers, etc. published by organizations funding research on your topic. (E.g. IPCC reports on climate change, CEC papers on N. American issues, etc.)

Industry & Corporate Information:

Companies and industry groups are often stakeholders in environmental issues. Associations representing particular industries frequently publicize their arguments for or against policy issues. Their web sites, news releases and trade journals are key sources of information on industry views. Besides the regular news sources, parliamentary committee evidence, and the petitions on the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development site noted above, corporate and other stakeholders can also be identified by using the following sources:

CBCA Business and ABI/INFORM (on ProQuest). Library web site: Find... Articles

- CBCA for coverage of Canadian business magazines, trade journals and corporate news.

Associations Canada Directory. At the Research Help Desk.

- use the Subject Index to find a listing of the Canadian organizations (and foreign ones headquartered in Canada) that are involved in an issue.

Registry of Lobbyists. Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying. <http://www.ocl-cal.gc.ca>

- this federal site is searchable by lobbyist’s name, organization, subject of lobbying activity, keyword, etc. Shows people involved, communication techniques used, and the issues, bills, regulations, policies or programs targeted.

Equivalents exist for the provinces in ON, BC, QC, AB, NS & NL, and for cities: Toronto and St. John’s.

Evaluating Information & Citing Sources:

Reading information critically is an important aspect of research and applies to all sources. Unlike most scholarly, published texts, information found using an Internet search engine may appear out of context, with little to judge its appropriateness for an academic paper. Lack of identifying metadata (information about the information) is your first clue when a text is likely not appropriate for academic research.

For tips see the library web site under “Research & Citation Guides”: “Getting Started”, then “Evaluating Web Sources”.

For guides and examples of how to cite sources including government information, web sites, online journal articles, legal sources, etc., see the library web site under “Research & Citation Guides”. Tip sheets and the complete citation manuals are also available in the library Reference section.

R.P. Bell Library/A.Cannon/Sept.2009