

## A Selection of Consumer Studies Resources on the Web

(Please notify a librarian if any of these links do not work.)



### **AAA Fuel Cost Calculator** <http://www.fuelcostcalculator.com>

Presents gasoline price averages for eight regions of the United States: New England, Mid-Atlantic, Southeast, Great Lakes, Southwest, Midwest, Mountain West, and the Pacific Coast. Offers an online calculator that allows users to enter their starting city, destination, and vehicle information (for newer car models) to determine fuel cost, miles, and gallons used.

### **Airport Security: Special Considerations for People with Disabilities**

<http://www.ddssafety.net/families/airport.htm>

Tips for people with physical or mental disabilities when being screened during airport security procedures. Topics addressed include mobility, prosthetic, orthotic, or related devices; "hidden" disabilities; problems with vision and hearing; service animals; diabetes supplies; and pacemakers and vagal nerve simulators.

### **AnnualCreditReport.com** <https://www.annualcreditreport.com/>

Allows the user to "request a free credit file disclosure, commonly called a credit report, once every 12 months from each of the nationwide consumer credit reporting companies: Equifax, Experian and TransUnion." Includes a FAQ.

### **Anti-Phishing Working Group (APWG)** <http://www.antiphishing.org>

Provides news about and current examples of e-mail fraud and scams (archived back to September 2003, with commentaries and summaries of known details). Also includes a list of Web resources providing trend reports, help for those who have been scammed, and the origin of the term "phishing."

### **Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness** <http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/>

"Provides a step-by-step approach to disaster preparedness ... how to get informed about local emergency plans, how to identify hazards that affect [a] local area, and how to develop and maintain an emergency communications plan and disaster supplies kit. Other topics covered include evacuation, emergency public shelters, animals in disaster, and information specific to people with disabilities." From the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

### **Can You Afford to Retire?** <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/retirement/>

Examines the retirement prospects for the baby boomer generation and current issues with pension and 401(k) savings plans. Provides a FAQ about retirement plans, articles, analysis, interviews, retirement stories, a teacher's guide, and readings and links. Includes video of the full program.

### **\*Child Care and Early Education Research Connections** <http://www.childcareresearch.org/>

Provides free access to nearly 9,000 resources from the various disciplines related to child care and early education and covering a broad spectrum of research, including information on child care and early education experiences of children from birth through age 8. When addressing school-age child care, the literature addresses children to age 13. Other subjects include parents and families using child care and early education services, the early childhood and school-age child care workforce, childcare and early education settings, and national, state, and local child care and early learning policies. Can search for grants, jobs, and events from the home page. Accepts all research and related documents in the field without peer review, making it essential that users evaluate the quality of research they find. Provides a link to "Assessing Research Quality." Links to other research evaluation sites and print resources are also provided. Also searches more than 200 journals and 245 Web sites on a regular basis to maintain currency. Also includes some pre-1995 publications. Allows users to perform basic and advanced searches. Results are marked with icons that allow users to determine if a citation is

a Research Connections publication or if it is a peer reviewed journal article. Users can also see immediately if an article is available in full text. Links to technical assistance provide detailed information about search capabilities and downloading datasets.

**ChildStats.gov** <http://www.childstats.gov/index.asp>

Provides statistics and reports on children and families, including population and family characteristics, economic security, health, behavior and social environment, and education, including biennial reports on “America’s Children: Key National Well-Being Indicators.” Older issues of the “America’s Children” publications go back to 1998. “Topic Contacts” leads to agencies and individual staff members with expertise in content areas covered by the reports, such as school crime, adoptions, and fetal mortality. The “International” link presents reports and formats from relevant agencies in the U.S. and abroad, including the World Health Organization, United Nations Children’s Fund, and Luxembourg Income Study, that include statistics on child and family characteristics across countries in the world. “Related Resources” leads to additional information.

**Consumer Products Safety Commission** <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prerel.html>

“Charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risks of serious injury or death from more than 15,000 types of consumer products” and “protecting consumers and families from products that pose a fire, electrical, chemical, or mechanical hazard or can injure children [...] to ensure the safety of consumer products - such as toys, cribs, power tools, cigarette lighters, and household chemicals.” Includes “Recalls and Product Safety News” section, links to related sites, and a section in Spanish.

**ConsumerReports.org** <http://www.consumerreports.org>

“Features Ratings and recommendations on thousands of products and services in categories including appliances, cars, electronics and computers, home and garden, health and fitness, babies and kids, food, personal finance, and travel [...] accepts no outside advertising, no free test samples, and has no agenda other than the interests of consumers [...] advice; safety alerts; recalls; e-Ratings of online shopping, service, and information sites; and much more.” Some sections require a subscription, but others, such as the “On Safety” section (which includes recall information), do not.

**Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs** <http://www.crbestbuydrugs.org>

A collection of reports that evaluate prescription medicines used for common conditions such as high cholesterol, arthritis, and heartburn, looking at efficacy, safety, and price to recommend the best medicines. Also provides a general overview of the drugs and cost comparisons of the generic and brand-name drugs.

**Cornell University Ergonomics Web** <http://ergo.human.cornell.edu>

“Presents information from research studies and class work by students and faculty in the Cornell Human Factors and Ergonomics Research Group (CHFERG).” Includes news and tips about worker ergonomic safety in libraries, hospitals, hotels, and other venues, and details about safe use of computers (keyboards, screen position, mouse use, chairs, desks, and more) for children, adults, and senior citizens. Also includes links to related sites.

**Credit Scores** - There are many sites on credit scoring, which creditors use to help determine whether to give you credit. **Facts for Consumers: Credit Scoring**, <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/credit/scoring.htm>, from the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), discusses the scoring model, what can be done to improve scores, the reliability of the scoring system, what happens if you are denied credit, and how to file a complaint. **Your Credit Scores**, [http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic\\_text/money/creditscores/your.htm](http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic_text/money/creditscores/your.htm), from the Consumer Federation of America and Fair Isaac Corporation., uses the FICO (Fair Isaac Corporation) scoring system to show the factors affecting a credit score. Includes examples of actions you can take to boost scores, and contacts for credit reporting agencies. **Your Credit Score: How It All Adds Up**, <http://www.privacyrights.org/fs/fs6c->

[CreditScores.htm](#), from the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse, is a consumer fact sheet discussing factors used to determine credit scores, ordering credit reports, and tips for improving your score.

**Cyber Security Tips** <http://www.us-cert.gov/cas/tips/>

A collection of publications with tips for non-technical computer users on online security topics such as password protection, anti-virus software, firewalls, identity theft, online trading, instant messaging and chat rooms, social network websites, "cyberbullies," wireless networks, and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP).

**Deter, Detect, Defend, Avoid Theft** <http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft/>

Provides information on how to protect against identity theft, detect suspicious activity on your accounts, filing a complaint, etc. Contains links to publications and other resources. From the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).

**Don't Be a Victim of Loan Fraud** <http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/buying/loanfraud.cfm>

A consumer information resource from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that provides a definition of predatory lending, tactics used by predatory lenders, and tips on buying and financing a home. Includes a link to a list of HUD's housing counseling agencies.

**\*EPA-Window to My Environment** <http://www.epa.gov>

An interactive site that allows users to obtain local information about environmental issues. Users can identify which landmarks or geographic features are to be mapped and then integrate this with data collected by the partners. From the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in partnership with state and local governments.

**Fact Sheet 8: Medical Records Privacy** <http://www.privacyrights.org/fs/fs8-med.htm>

Features answers to questions about medical records privacy, with a focus on personal medical information not covered by the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Discusses ideas for protecting the privacy of records and provides many resources for further information. From the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse.

**Facts for Consumers: If You've Got The Look, Look Out! Avoiding Modeling Scams**

<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/pubs/services/model.htm>

Provides tips for avoiding scams involving modeling and talent agencies. Discusses typical sales pitch lines, professional photos ("head shots" and "composite cards"), questions to ask to avoid rip-offs, the infant and toddler modeling and acting market, and related topics. From the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).

**Federal Trade Commission For Consumers** <http://www.ftc.gov/ftc/consumer.htm>

Contains publications with advice on avoiding scams and rip-offs, as well as tips on other consumer topics. Includes a form to file a complaint.

**FirstGov for Consumers: Health** <http://www.consumer.gov/health.htm>

A collection of links to federal health resources includes information on aging, choosing quality health care and health insurance, diseases, drugs, health risks, prevention, medical procedures, nutrition, product recalls, referral services, smoking and tobacco, travel health, and more. From the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).

**Flex Your Power** <http://www.fypower.org/>

Features energy efficiency and conservation information for residential, commercial, industrial, governmental, and agricultural users. Topics include energy saving tips, best practices guides, product guides, and more. Also includes information about rebates and the opportunity to sign up for email notification of alerts during California's hot weather season. Some material available in Spanish. Part of California's statewide energy efficiency campaign. From "a partnership of California's utilities, residents, businesses, institutions, government

Except where indicated, descriptions adapted from the [Librarians' Index to the Internet](#) ([www.lii.org](http://www.lii.org)) or the UCSD Libraries web site. (VO-6/07)

\*Descriptions adapted from issues of [Booklist](#), [College & Research Libraries News](#), [Library Journal](#), [Reference & User Services Quarterly](#), and [ResearchBuzz](#) (<http://www.researchbuzz.org/wp/>).

agencies and nonprofit organizations."

**Free Public Records Directory** <http://publicrecords.onlinesearches.com>

Collection of links to U.S. federal and state "real and personal property records, recorded documents, jail and inmate records, sex offender records, wanted persons records, and many more free public records." Links are organized by state and county and are searchable by ZIP code or city. Also includes links to news about public records.

**GasBuddy.com** <http://gasbuddy.com/>

"Comprised of 170 gas price information web sites that help consumers find low gasoline prices." Searched by ZIP code. Information is member-supplied. Registration (free) required to post gas prices on most of the gas sites or to create a fuel log for tracking expenses. Includes tips for conserving gas, links to news stories, and other resources.

**Herbal Safety** <http://www.herbalsafety.utep.edu/default.htm>

Focuses on herbs used at the US-Mexico border; contains information in English and Spanish about 41 widely used herbs. Describes how the herbs work, traditional and current therapeutic uses, safety precautions, herb-drug interactions, and results of clinical trials. Searchable by common or scientific name. Lists up-to-date references published by peer-reviewed journals. Also contains PowerPoint presentations and the full text of three peer-reviewed articles by the Web site authors discussing safety issues and the use of herbs by Mexican Americans.

**Identity Theft** <http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft/>

Information about identity theft from the Federal Trade Commission: how identity thieves work, how to minimize your risk, what to do if you are a victim, how to file a complaint, applicable federal and state laws, examples of recent cases and scams, and links to additional sites, publications, reports, and testimony. Includes the publication, "ID Theft: When Bad Things Happen To Your Good Name."

**IRA Online Resource Guide** <http://www.irs.gov/retirement/article/0,,id=137320,00.html>

IRS guide to traditional and Roth IRAs (individual retirement accounts) and IRA-funded plans such as SEPs (simplified employee pension) and payroll-deduction IRAs. Includes forms and publications, and information for individuals, business owners, and tax professionals. The section for individuals links to a humorous guide, "Ten Reasons to Put Off Saving for Retirement"; the ninth tip is "You never know, I may win the lottery."

**Juvenile Death Penalty Today: Death Sentences and Executions for Crimes, January 1, 1973 - June 30, 2003** <http://www.law.onu.edu/faculty/streib/juvdeath.pdf>

Sketches "the characteristics of the juvenile offenders and their crimes who have been sentenced to death, who have been executed, and who are currently under death sentences" in the United States. Includes case summaries and many statistical tables." Takes no position on the legality, morality, or wisdom of the death penalty for juvenile offenders." Opens directly into a PDF file.

**LooksTooGoodToBeTrue.com** : <http://www.lookstoogoodtobetrue.com>

Contains background information and alerts about Internet scams and fraud. Includes a FAQ, victims' stories, a fraud risk test, and links to places to file a complaint about online fraud.

**Medicare: The Official U.S. Government Site for People With Medicare** <http://www.medicare.gov/>

Provides databases for comparing nursing homes, Medicare plans and providers, dialysis centers, hospitals, home health agencies, and health plan options. Explains eligibility, what Medicare covers, prescription drug programs, billing, contact information and links, a glossary, a directory of medical equipment suppliers, and

information about the Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003. Some material available in other languages.

**MyMoney.gov** <http://www.mymoney.gov/>

Provides annotated links to educational materials "from across the spectrum of federal agencies that deal with financial issues and markets," including budgeting, taxes, credit, financial planning, home ownership, privacy, fraud, retirement planning, and small business. In English and Spanish.

**National Consumers League** <http://www.nclnet.org>

Provides information on various consumer issues, including sections on news, archives of press releases, telemarketing (and how to avoid it), general online privacy, NCL background, publications, and projects, among others.

**Our Bodies, Ourselves: Companion Website** <http://www.ourbodiesourselves.org/book/>

Contains information about body image, healthy diet and lifestyle, relationships and sexuality, sexual health, reproductive choices, pregnancy and childbirth, menopause, medical conditions, and other topics. Includes articles, book excerpts, news briefs, and website and book recommendations.

**Prescription Drugs: Abuse and Addiction**

<http://www.nida.nih.gov/ResearchReports/Prescription/Prescription.html>

Designed "to answer questions about the consequences of abusing commonly prescribed medications. ... how certain medications affect the brain and body, ... treatment options." Covers commonly abused prescription drugs, opioids (pain relievers), depressants, stimulants, trends, and prevention. Includes a glossary.

**Privacy Rights Clearinghouse** <http://www.privacyrights.org>

Provides information on all areas of privacy: financial, medical, Internet, telephone, public records, etc. Includes a section on identity theft and links to other privacy organizations, resources, laws, etc.

**Recall Warnings** <http://www.recall-warnings.com/>

Features information about recalls of consumer products. Includes opportunity to sign up for e-mail alerts. Browsable by category or date, or searchable.

**Safercar.gov** <http://www.safercar.gov>

A collection of consumer resources and data on automobile safety, featuring crash test and rollover ratings for vehicles (models back to 1990), tire ratings, air bag safety and rollover prevention information, and details about recalls and reporting defects. Includes videos of specific rollover situations, air bags, and other driving safety topics. From the National Highway Traffic Safety Association (NHTSA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

**www.Recalls.gov** <http://www.recalls.gov/>

Online resource to alert the public on federal recalls of defective, hazardous, or unsafe products. Categories include consumer products, motor vehicles, boats, food, medicine, cosmetics, and environmental products. Some categories are searchable. A cooperative effort of six federal agencies. Some material available in Spanish.

**IF YOU NEED HELP, ASK A LIBRARIAN.**