

In an age of instant information provided by libraries and Internet resources, a guide such as this can be most useful for helping to narrow and clarify specific issues and lead users to primary materials. Blogs and other Internet sites may be helpful, but knowing the proper, legal, and authoritative documents upon which opinions should be based on proves to be a blessing. With readers often asking for a book with everything about a topic, Maxwell provides an example of an exemplary scholarly work, trustworthy and accurate, which can provide the backbone for any nuances on homeland security. A must-have reference resource, most libraries should find the work a first-consulted source of current and historical topical information providing a base for research into a confusing and multi-layered, but terribly important issue.

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***LexisNexis State Capital Database*. Visited June 5, 2006. LexisNexis Academic and Library Solutions, 4520 East-West Highway, Bethesda, MD 20812-3389. For pricing options call 1-800-638-8380.**

Locating state legislative information such as bills and regulations can be a difficult task without the proper resources and assistance. Trying to find information from a state other than one's own with unfamiliar resources only adds to the level of difficulty. LexisNexis, a leader in legal research and information products, has taken steps to make finding state legislative information much easier. *LexisNexis State Capital Database* provides access to bills, statutes, regulations, and legislative news for all 50 states dating back to the early 1990s. With *State Capital*, LexisNexis has made searching for legislative material from the recent past straightforward and eliminated the need to search individual and unfamiliar state web sites for current state government information.

*State Capital* offers a simple-to-use interface. The database is made up of six search features: Bills, Statutes, Regulations, Issues, Members, and List of Links. In addition to these search features, the *Database* offers a 'How Do I?' and 'Tips.' How Do I? is similar to a frequently asked questions list, with responses to questions such as finding laws on a particular topic in one or more states. 'Tips,' found at the bottom of each search page, proves useful in searching each part of the database. As an example, Tips includes valuable information in using wildcard characters to search for a section of a state's statute by citation. Furthermore, the 'Help' portion of *State Capital* provides the general steps of the legislative process, a glossary of legislative terms, and basic citation principles. In addition, a chart showing the content list of resources for each state, as well as a chart highlighting the schedule and

coverage of available resources can be found within the database. The four areas to search within *State Capital* that prove most useful are bills, statutes, regulations, and additional legislative information.

## 1. Bills

The ‘Bills’ search of *State Capital* offers several different options for locating legislative bills. The first search feature offered is the ability to track a bill. Tracking, which may be done by keyword or bill number, shows how a specific bill progressed through the legislative process. Another search option is the ability to search a bill by full text either by bill number or keyword. Either full-text search option retrieves the text of the proposed legislation included in each version. Grasping the different search techniques and what they do may take some time, but once the techniques are learned, locating bill information can be done in a timely manner.

A feature of the keyword search is the capacity for finding a specific word within a bill across all 50 states. As an example, a researcher is interested in tracking state bills on immigration across the southern border states during the current session. This feature produces a list of 138 bills across the four states. A keyword search can also be limited by a certain date or session.

A small discrepancy was noticed when limiting by session between the text searching and tracking. The text search by number and keyword goes back to the 1991 session while the tracking of bills by number or keyword begins with the 1990 session. A final feature of the Bills portion is the State Legislative Calendar. The calendar provides daily status updates for all state legislatures as well as important dates in a state’s legislative session. The Bills feature offers a fast and efficient means to locate state legislative information across the entire country.

## 2. Statutes

The second major search feature offered is the ability to search state statutes or laws that are currently on record for all 50 states. Statutes can be searched two ways: by keyword or citation—the official format for identifying statutes. The keyword feature is very similar to the keyword search feature used for searching bills. If a difficulty arises in searching with keywords or by citation, there are useful tips available at the bottom of all search screens. Since all states have differing formats for citations, LexisNexis offers a state-by-state guide for formatting.

Furthermore, the *Martindale-Hubbell Law Digest* is included in this section. Martindale Hubbell, a leader in providing legal information and research, provides an online version of their *Law Digest*. The *Law Digest* is an excellent source to begin legal research on numerous topics as well as search relevant legal cases and online summaries of statutory code on a particular subject. A search can be done for all 50 states using keywords. A search can also be limited by topic using Martindale Hubbell supplied topics.

### 3. Regulations

Another aspect of *State Capital* is the ability to search state registers and administrative codes across all 50 states. According to the LexisNexis glossary of terms, regulations are an order or rule of an executive agency implemented under authority of a statute passed by the legislature. The material from a register is codified in an administrative code. This search element of *State Capital* is similar in style to the two previous search facets mentioned above in that regulations can be searched by keyword and citations. Since regulations are amended frequently, it is possible to search proposed regulations as well as track recent regulatory amendments. The ability to search state registers as well as administrative codes online is a useful component of this database.

### 4. Additional legislative information

*LexisNexis State Capital* offers additional search tools for those interested in state legislative information. Within the 'Issues' search area, one has the ability to search *State Net Capitol Journal* using keywords for all states dating back 10 years. The National Conferences of State Legislatures, a bipartisan organization that serves the legislators and staffs of all 50 states with research and technical assistance, offers a list of publications (NCSL News Brief, NCSL Magazine, NCSL Reports) which can also be searched via keyword dating back 10 years as well. Searching by keyword can be an effective means to find information; however, a browse-by-date feature might prove useful for these publications. The Issues feature also offers the searching capabilities of various "State Newspapers of Record." A list of 36 newspapers is available with some states having more than one newspaper. A drawback to this list is that not every state is represented with a newspaper of record. This limitation may be due to licensing agreements LexisNexis has with certain newspapers.

The database also offers a legislative biographical directory of all current legislators and executive members throughout the country in its "Members" section. The directory features committee appointments, mailing addresses, phone numbers, and a brief biographical sketch. The last feature offered on *State Capital* is a "List of Links." A list of States' web site links is offered as well as links to the Governor's Office and State Agencies and Commissions. There are also annotated links to Association web sites such as the Council of State Governments and the Urban Institute. A link to the Seattle Public Library, which maintains an extensive compilation of municipal code resources on the web, is also available.

Overall, *LexisNexis State Capital* is a quality database that offers a vast amount of information at the state legislative level with an easy to use format. Although there are numerous databases offered, and the learning of different search features and techniques may take some time, the overall benefits of receiving legislative information via one's desktop far outweigh the negatives. Large academic libraries with subscriptions to other LexisNexis products, law libraries, or libraries assisting with legal inquires might consider purchasing *State Capital*. Having the capability to search bills from past legislative sessions, state

statutes, and regulations for all 50 states dating back to the early 1990s, makes this database a worthwhile investment.

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**Datapedia of the United States: American History in Numbers. George Thomas Kurian (Editor). Lanham, Bernan Press: 2004. 3rd ed., 528 pp. \$125.00 (cloth). ISBN 0-89059-862-2.**

Data in and of itself can be a dry subject. Data placed within the context of demographic changes over time, however, can illuminate and clarify ongoing trends in broad areas. The *Datapedia of the United States: American History in Numbers* attempts to show just that: changes over time in the United States in broad categories such as vital statistics, health, education, the economy, politics, trade, and government, among others.

The data contained within the *Datapedia* are largely derived from two notable federal government documents published by the U.S. Census Bureau: the *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970* and the *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2003*.<sup>1,2</sup> The *Historical Statistics of the United States* was last published by the Census Bureau in 1976 and is a two-volume, in-depth analysis of historical statistics from the last two centuries. The *Statistical Abstract* is an annual publication that focuses primarily on relatively recent data from the last decades; the 2003 edition contains nearly 1400 tables and figures compiled from government and private sources. The aforementioned federal government documents are freely available online, so the *Datapedia* strives to set itself apart with distinct advantages. This third edition endeavors to show ‘time series data in a reader-friendly format’ and in general, to simplify the process of researching historical data.<sup>3</sup> George Thomas Kurian has been a prolific editor of recognized reference works for many years, including titles such as the *Timetables of World Literature*, the *Atlas of the Third World*, and the *Encyclopedia of American Studies*. Bernan has been publishing and distributing government publications for over 50 years and is known for its works based on federal government statistics; many are standard reference works in government documents libraries, such as the *Handbook of U.S. Labor Statistics* and *Business Statistics of the United States*.<sup>4,5</sup>

The book succeeds in presenting long-range data seamlessly in one publication. It combines historical statistics with more recent data to bridge the gap between the two, which is a considerable accomplishment. If there is one consistent factor about long-term data collection, it is the inconsistency of the questions asked. The decennial census, occurring every ten years since 1790, has given census questionnaire creators ample time to ask new questions, delete