

The Library of Congress: Award-Winning Web Site

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I did research on digital preservation when I first visited the Library of Congress web site. I was immediately impressed by the depth and breadth of information. I decided to review the entire site for this assignment. My local library systems include the Salt Lake County and Salt Lake City libraries. Both library systems were ranked in the top three nationally. The library websites however are not impressive.

The Library of Congress is the largest library in the world. Their web site is just as impressive. I was happy to discover this. I decided to look at the same categories the webby awards uses to evaluate their websites. The webby awards is the online awards given every year.

### ***Content***

The entire Library of Congress card catalog is online. The National Digital Library (NDL) is accessed here too. There is a specific American Memory collection with 18 sub-collections of items specifically from the United States. Multi-lingual resources are included through the library's Global Gateway. The Congressional site THOMAS is also part of the Library of Congress web site. Legislative information can be located here. Major exhibitions were photographed and are available online too. Finally, hundreds of thousands of different images are available.

Links to video segments are included. Pictures are everywhere. Links to additional information is scattered throughout the site. There is just so much going on. Information is detailed and links outside of the library's site are always included. Coverage is comprehensive. Information is current. It is a substantial site that was very valuable to me when I researched digital preservation.

### ***Structure***

The web site is set up well. It is very intuitive. Major links are set up in the left column but these are also scattered throughout the body of texts and near the top. I like the variety of media formats used throughout. Video, audio, graphics and digital pictures give the site variety. There are 22 million items online. Pictures break up text monotony. There is a news and events section that is kept current. The American Memory section has a feature that assembles events that happened on the current day in American history. It is a nice feature. The information displayed has additional links too. Questions are posed throughout and anticipated fact pages are included. There are links specifically created just for kids, families, teachers, librarians, researchers, visitors, and publishers. There is something for everyone.

### ***Navigation***

The same basic format is followed throughout the Library of Congress pages. This makes navigation easy. At the top right corner a search box is also displayed. I like that every link I clicked on actually worked. A common web site problem is links that don't work. It was nice not to encounter that.

### ***Visual Design***

This is very simple. There is nothing distinctive. This is maybe the only weakness I can find. Web sites can be overdone. This is not. If anything it could be cleaner. I recognized the format through our THOMAS study.

### ***Functionality***

The web site does its job and more. There is so much information to examine. The web site is kept current. The people responsible for maintaining the site do an excellent job. I'm so glad I discovered this site. Libraries should have the best sites. It's comforting

to see the great job done by the Library of Congress. They should set the example for libraries throughout the nation and they have set it well. THOMAS is an incredible resource to review legislation.

### ***Interactivity***

The multiple mediums found on the site are fantastic. When I researched digital preservation I read interviews with digital preservation pioneers. I watched 5 different speakers address digital preservation and what it meant to them. I found information on digital preservation recent news and developments. I was led to information on organizations that deal with preservation and given links to related web sites from all over the world.

### ***Overall Experience***

I have nothing but praise for the Library of Congress web site. It is extremely informative, current, and easy to use. What is especially positive for me is it is for all to enjoy. A fantastic web site lets people throughout the nation who can't get to Washington see what the buildings look like as well as examine exhibits, documents, and images. I like the example it sets for all libraries.

### ***Conclusion***

The Library of Congress web site is award-winning and it is not difficult to see why it won so many awards. This year it was nominated in the government section for THOMAS, its legislative section. The top 15% web sites gain honoree status through the webby awards. This year it was given honoree status for Education, Best Practice, and Best Navigation/Structure. I'm glad the Library of Congress was recognized as often as it

was recognized. I can spend hours on the web site exploring different links. I've already added it to my favorites.

References

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