

Government Documents and Resources about Autism on the Internet

Corey Seeman
University of Toledo

It seems that the halls of government are buzzing with discussion and hearings on autism and related Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD). This is a tremendous time where people at all levels of government are addressing services, education, and the causes of Autism. Also, we are at a great watershed of the way that we get information from state and federal governments. With the advent of the Internet, thousands of important government documents on ASD are merely a click away. The greater problem is navigating through the mass of documents and effectively using Internet search tools. In this article, I have some sites from Ohio, the federal government, and other states that will be useful to families, educators, and caregivers. Also, I will provide some helpful hints in using Internet search tools to help fine-tune the searches that we are conducting.

Ohio Sites

SITE: [Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council](#)

URL: <http://www.ddc.ohio.gov/>

DESCRIPTION: The Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council's mission is "to create change that improves independence, productivity and inclusion for people with developmental disabilities and their families in community life." This resource has numerous links to news, projects, publications, and their quarterly newsletter (<http://www.ddc.ohio.gov/Pub/DDQuarterly.htm>).

SITE: [Autism Spectrum Disorder Service Guidelines from the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council](#)

URL: <http://ddc.ohio.gov/Pub/ASDGuide.PDF>

DESCRIPTION: Titled "Autism: Reaching for a Brighter Future," This long document (105 pages as a 849KB PDF file), is intended to offer basic support and best practices for individuals with Autistic Spectrum Disorders from birth to 21 years. The intended audience is everyone that works with people on the autistic spectrum: families, educators, medical professionals, care providers and other service providers. These are not written as mandatory activities, but as a guide for people working with ASD individuals. This is a great introductory work on the subject.

SITE: [Autism Resources in Ohio \(from the Ohio Legal Rights Service\)](#)

URL: http://olrs.ohio.gov/asp/olrs_AutismResources.asp

DESCRIPTION: The Ohio Legal Rights Service (OLRS) is an independent state agency and the federally and state designated Protection and Advocacy system and Client Assistance Program for people with disabilities in the State of Ohio. This site provides information on several state programs and initiatives on ASD. They include: the Autism Scholarship Program, the Ohio Autism Taskforce; Publication About Autism and Services in Ohio; the Autism Waiver; and links to Ohio Autism Organizations

SITE: [Ohio Department of Education](#)

URL: <http://www.ode.state.oh.us/>

DESCRIPTION: The Ohio Department of Education has a great deal of resources and information for parents of children with ASD. Resources specifically related to children with ASD are found under the Office for Exceptional Children

(http://www.ode.state.oh.us/exceptional_children/Children_with_Disabilities/default.asp). Material here includes information on the Autism Scholarship Program, news, information on IEPs (individual

educational programs), and other resources. This is an important place to find out what the state's legal requirements are for a child with ASD.

SITE: [Northwest Ohio Special Education Regional Resource Center](#)

URL: <http://www.nwoserrc.k12.oh.us/>

DESCRIPTION: The Northwest Ohio Special Education Regional Resource Center has an excellent site for parents, caregivers and educators. The site has links pages for parents, educators, and more general material such as assistive technology and other programs to help children with special needs. Site also includes the current and archival issues of their newsletter (*Northwest Passages*) that "contains articles by our staff and others, important resources, web links, and other items of interest to parents, educators, service providers, agency personnel, and other shareholders in the education of children with disabilities."

Federal Agencies

SITE: [Autism Page from National Institute of Mental Health \(NIMH\)](#)

URL: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/autismmenu.cfm>

DESCRIPTION: Excellent source of information on Autism from the National Institute of Mental Health. This site also includes information from the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee and the NIH Autism Listserv.

SITE: [Autism Spectrum Disorders \(Pervasive Developmental Disorders\) information page from National Institute of Mental Health \(NIMH\)](#)

URL: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/healthinformation/autismmenu.cfm>

DESCRIPTION: Excellent basic source of information on Autism Spectrum Disorders from the National Institute of Mental Health. This is a nice overview of the condition, signs & symptoms, treatment options, and local services. This is a great general resource.

SITE: [Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee \(IACC\)](#)

URL: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/autismiacc/index.cfm>

DESCRIPTION: Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (IACC) was mandated by the Children's Health Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-310), Title I, Section 104. The charge of the committee is to coordinate autism research and other efforts within the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) at the NIH has been designated the lead for this activity. This page includes links to numerous reports of the activities of the committee and other government agencies.

SITE: [National Institute of Child Health and Human Development](#)

URL: <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/autism/>

DESCRIPTION: The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's Autism page documents the work of this organization that is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). It is one of the primary Institutes conducting research into the various aspects of autism, including its causes, prevalence, and treatments. While this site has links to a number of interesting reports, the dates of these reports appear primarily through 2001 with only a few extending to 2002. Still, this is an important resource for information on Autism.

SITE: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(Vaccines and Autism Theory\)](#)

URL: <http://www.cdc.gov/nip/vacsafe/concerns/autism/>

DESCRIPTION: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has been an active proponent for the safety of the MMR vaccine and has conducted studies to examine the hypothesis that vaccines have a part in the cause of autism in children. While many organizations see this group as supporting the establishment view that there is no connection between the MMR vaccine and

autism, they have produced a useful website that includes many links for people examining this potential connection. This page includes many links to research papers, statistics, and other sources that examine the connection between the two.

Other Groups

SITE: [Congressional Coalition for Autism Research and Education \(C.A.R.E.\)](#)

URL: <http://www.tash.org/govaffairs/care.htm>

DESCRIPTION: Formed by Representatives Mike Doyle (D PA-18th) and Chris Smith (R NJ-4th), this bipartisan caucus was setup to provide greater visibility for individuals with autism and their families. Hosted by TASH, the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps.

SITE: [Principal Findings from the Epidemiology of Autism in California \(M.I.N.D. Institute at UC-San Diego\)](#)

URL: http://www.dds.ca.gov/autism/pdf/study_final.pdf

DESCRIPTION: This landmark study was commissioned by the California Legislature and submitted on October 17, 2002. The study was commissioned after the 1999 study from the Department of Developmental Services issued a report titled "Changes in the Population of Persons with Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders in California's Developmental Services System: 1987 through 1998" showed an increase of reported cases of autism of 273% during that timespan. The University of California's Medical Investigation of Neurodevelopmental Disorders (M.I.N.D.) Institute conducted this comprehensive pilot study to examine factors that may be associated with this increase. This 70 page reports is one of the most important documents examining the increased rate of ASD.

Internet Searching Hints

When using Google (www.google.com), you can limit your searches to a particular type of site or domain. The domains (most commonly .com, .net, .edu, etc.) help identify what type of website the address refers to. With government documents, there are a large number of choices. They include:

Domain	Category	Example
.edu	United States Higher Education site	www.utoledo.edu
.gov	United States Government Site	www.ddc.ohio.gov
.oh.us	Ohio municipalities and schools	www.columbus.k12.oh.us
.org	United States Organization	www.tps.org

If you want to limit your search to a particular website or domain, Google has a great way to handle this. When you are searching on their site, add this text after your term: "site:<domain or website>". For autism resources only from government sites, search for "autism site:.gov." For autism resources only from the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council's, search for "autism site:.ddc.ohio.gov". Or you can follow the reconstructed links found here:

http://library.utoledo.edu/userhomes/cseeman/asd/gov_ohio.html.

Corey Seeman is an Assistant Dean, University Libraries, University of Toledo. He also reviews books on autism for Library Journal and maintains a web site for ASD resources at <http://library.utoledo.edu/userhomes/cseeman/asd/index.html>. Corey and Pam Seeman are the proud parents of two boys, the younger of whom is autistic