

General Autism Resources on the Internet

Corey Seeman
University of Toledo

In almost every aspect of our lives, the Internet is quickly changing the way that we communicate with each other and the way that we find information. This new dynamic allows parents, siblings, educators, caregivers and others working with people on the Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to find information in a few minutes that might have taken weeks just five years ago. Given the increasing population of children and adults diagnosed with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder, the sources available on the Internet and in print have increased accordingly. In books alone, over 200 titles have been published each of the last three years, accounting for nearly 20% of all books ever produced on the subject. The number of websites on Autism has increased at a much greater rate, providing people with many resources that are but a mouse click away. This represents both the promise and problem with the Internet. Weeding through all the sites and pages on ASD to find resources that are useful and helpful can be a challenge.

To assist students, faculty, and fellow parents of children and adults with ASD, I have been reviewing Internet sites to find ones that provide valuable and balanced information on the syndrome. These resources, like all Internet sites, are fluid and ever changing. Many sites fail to be updated regularly and provide outdated information and numerous broken links that conjure up an error message when you click on them. As I find resources that are useful, I have been adding them to my site for ASD autism resources (see below) that I will be updating and keeping current. In selecting sites for this list, I used the same methods of selecting books. I choose sites that cultivate hope for parents, educators, children or interested persons, while staying away from ones that provide unilateral or simplistic solutions.

In looking at what resources are available, you can find just about anything out there. Information on ASD available through the Internet includes full-text articles and presentations, essays, links for resources, treatments, and providers, discussion groups, calendars of events, and that is just scratching the surface. Basic websites that you are probably familiar with include those of Ohio and Michigan organizations that work with people with ASD. The Autism Society of Northwest Ohio (ASNO) website (<http://www.asno.org>) is an excellent source for local and statewide events and news. The Autism Society of Ohio (<http://www.autismohio.org>) provides a list of statewide providers of services and also has local and statewide news and events. The Autism Society of Michigan's website (<http://www.autism-mi.org>) provides information on their events (many take place a short drive north of Toledo in Southeastern Michigan), and provides links to numerous resources. The Autism Society Ontario (<http://www.autismsociety.on.ca/>) has a great list of Autism links called 1001 links (<http://www.autismsociety.on.ca/links.htm>). (I have not counted them, but there are a lot)!

Below is a list of some good general information web sites on ASD. For more sites, please visit my guide to Autistic Spectrum Disorders resources at:
<http://library.utoledo.edu/userhomes/cseeman/asd/index.html>

SITE: Autism Resources

URL: <http://www.autism-resources.com>

DESCRIPTION: Excellent general information resource on Autism. The site includes links (broken down by category), FAQ, book information, and other resources. The book listing is excellent and offers the information from a number of different ordering structures. Additionally,

the section on "Advice to parents who discover their child is autistic" includes messages from parents on what they would have liked to know when their child was diagnosed with Autism.

SITE: Autism page of Patient Centered Guides

URL: <http://www.patientcenters.com/autism/news/resources.html>

DESCRIPTION: A list of printed material, online resources, and organization taken from Appendix A of Mitzi Waltz's excellent book, *Autistic Spectrum Disorders: Finding a Diagnosis and Getting Help* (O'Reilly & Associates, 2002). This resource is very valuable, though its links may not be updated as web addresses and organizations change. The main page for those resources, <http://www.patientcenters.com/autism/> is very valuable as well and includes excerpts from the book.

SITE: Autism-INFO

URL: <http://www.autisminfo.com>

DESCRIPTION: Created in 1998 by Jenny and Brad Middlebrook, this site offers news, links and information autism for parents, teachers, therapists and doctors. One of its stated goals is to provide balanced information for families of recently diagnosed children. Sections of the site include: quick facts, medical issues, diet, books, news, ABA resources, action plans for newly diagnosed children, and conferences.

SITE: Autism Network Resources for Physicians

URL: <http://home.san.rr.com/autismnet/index.html>

DESCRIPTION: The Autism Network Resources for Physicians is a website with extensive links for autism research of a more medical nature. While they indicate that they are primarily of interest to physicians, they are valuable for parents and others looking for medical research on autism and ASD. This site includes links for autism research, treatment options, articles, reports, hearings, conferences, message boards and others. The Treatment Options and Interventions page has a great summary of both conventional and unconventional treatment options available for children and adults with ASD.

SITE: Tony Attwood's Website (expert on ASD)

URL: <http://www.tonyattwood.com.au/>

DESCRIPTION: Tony Attwood is one of the leading figures in working with ASD and has presented on the subject all over the world. This website includes many resources on Asperger's Syndrome and high functioning autism including: papers he has delivered, excerpts of current articles, links to web resources, and other information.

SITE: Ontario Adult Autism Research and Support Network

URL: <http://www.ont-autism.uoguelph.ca/newpage4.shtml>

DESCRIPTION: A website specifically designed to address the needs of adults with ASD, the Ontario Adult Autism Research and Support Network (OAARSN) provides an unique resource on the web. The site has five basic sections: Autism information, organization/services, communications, Autism-related websites, and unique resource documents. Of primary note are the unique resource documents that provide full-text resources including regional organization newsletters, review of services, and excellent personal narratives of older children and adults with ASD in Ontario. These accounts are primarily in a section entitled "From the Front Lines...Living With Autism" and provide an exceptional complementary online resource to personal narratives available in print.

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