

Studying Africa

a guide to the sources

Edited by Marianne Andersson

3rd. edition

Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2014

Indexing terms

Reference materials

Bibliographies

Internet sources

Periodicals

Statistics

Official publications

Information sources

Social sciences

Africa

ISBN 978-91-7106-750-0

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Layout och original: Byrå4, Uppsala 2014

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Foreword

Studying Africa is a guide to studying Africa primarily within the area of social sciences. Three years have now passed since the last edition of Studying Africa was published. In a changing world, this is quite a long time in terms of provision of information. The literature published about modern Africa has grown considerably in scope and quality in recent years. This new edition is therefore thoroughly revised and covers information sources from 2010 to 2013. For older references, please see the previous edition of [Studying Africa](#) (2011).

In this edition all the chapters about general sources of information have been revised. These chapters provide practical guidance on literature and fact searches, with the aid of bibliographies, databases, handbooks, Internet, periodicals, statistics and official documents. The selection of material has a broad academic aim and both printed and Internet-based sources are dealt with. For further sources on the Internet, please see the Nordic Africa Institute library's link collection [A Guide to Africa on the Internet](#).

This edition will only be available online. Chapters can be downloaded for free in full text format from [DiVA](#), *the Academic Archive Online*.

Studying Africa is primarily aimed at university students and researchers, but other groups, such as teachers and pupils at upper secondary schools and folk high schools, librarians, journalists and aid workers, may also find it useful. The ambition is to provide a clear and practical guide to literature that is reasonably easy to access.

Comments on the content and design of the publication would be gratefully received ahead of future updates.

Uppsala, March 2014

Marianne Andersson

library@nai.uu.se

[About the Nordic Africa Institute library](#)

[About the Nordic Africa Institute](#)

About the authors

Marianne Andersson, Librarian at the Nordic Africa Institute

Ingela Dahlin, Librarian at the Nordic Africa Institute

Birgitte Jansen, Librarian at the Nordic Africa Institute

Kalle Laajala Librarian at the Nordic Africa Institute

Åsa Lund Moberg, Chief Librarian at the Nordic Africa Institute

Mattias Åkesson Librarian at the Nordic Africa Institute

Literature searching and searching for facts

Marianne Andersson

Revised March 2014

Introduction

This chapter consists of two parts: literature searching and searching for facts and points out some key resources for the study of Africa. Part 1, literature searching, deals with bibliographies, journal indexes, databases, web portals and link collections. Part 2, searching for facts, presents encyclopaedias, yearbooks and other reference materials giving access to basic facts and fundamental information concerning particular countries or subjects. Both printed publications and digital resources will be analysed, mainly within the field of social sciences and humanities.¹

An extensive guide to many different categories of information sources is the publication *African Studies Companion Online* (Brill 2013). This resource is continually updated and contains over 1 800 entries covering websites, library collections, periodicals, organisations as well as subjects such as African languages, maps, film, media and more. Many entries directly link to the Internet. The online resource is available at the Nordic Africa Institute Library. *Selected Internet sources for the study of Africa* (Kagan 2011), is a reference guide with 182 entries. The listings are arranged by format and by subject or discipline. Both open access sources and fee-based sources are listed. Some more general guides for African studies can be found under the heading *Digital archives, web portals and link collections*.

Part 1 Literature searching

Bibliographies, article indexes and journal collections

Bibliographies

Presented below are current bibliographies issued at regular intervals, e.g. quarterly or as annual volumes. These collections usually include references to books and journal articles, and are generally arranged according to countries and

¹ The previous editions of this publication, *Studying Africa* ([2011](#)) and ([2005](#)), include references to older material.

subjects. By using bibliographies, it is easy to keep up to date with recently published literature. *Africa Bibliography* has published cumulative online and annual print volumes covering work on Africa since 1984. It lists details of monographs, chapters in books, periodical articles, pamphlets and digital materials in the social sciences, development studies, humanities and arts. A bibliographic article relating to a special topic is also included. To access the bibliography online a subscription is needed. It is accessible at the Nordic Africa Institute Library. *International African Bibliography (IAB)* provides a current awareness service of the latest books, articles and papers published internationally on Africa. Materials dealing with the African continent as a whole are indexed. *IAB* is published in four issues per year, print and online (licensed access). [GIGA dok-line Afrika](#) (Sub-Saharan Africa) and [GIGA dok-line Nabost](#) (Middle East and North Africa) are Internet-based current bibliographies produced since 2000 by GIGA Information Centre in Hamburg. Each issue is devoted to a special theme with annotated references in German and English to monographs, chapters in books, journal articles and free Internet sources. The journal *African Affairs* (3 issues per year) contains a bibliography of recently released African literature. It also provides a list of articles on Africa published in non-Africanist journals. The handbook series *Historical Dictionaries of Africa* provides an extensive bibliographic overview of the literature concerning the respective countries. Literature published in Africa is listed in the current *African Books Publishing Record* which is cumulated in *African Books in Print*.

Article indexes and journal collections

There are special journal indexes that exclusively list articles. African Studies Centre in Leiden releases a current publications index with the title [African Studies Abstracts Online](#). This index has been published since 1968, first in print and online from 2003. It provides a quarterly overview of journal articles and edited works on Africa in the field of the social sciences and humanities. All of the articles are annotated in either English or French. [Africana Periodical Literature](#), a shared database in AfricaBib, contains more than 169,700 references to articles on Africa from over 750 journals. There is a strong focus on journals published in Africa. More than 28 000 articles have a link to full text, and more than 69 000 articles have an abstract. The *Quarterly Index of African Periodical Literature* (1991–2011), previously maintained by the Library of Congress office in Nairobi, is now integrated into the *Africana Periodical Literature database*. [AJOL – African Journals OnLine](#) is an online service providing access to African-published research, and is increasing worldwide knowledge of indigenous scholarship. AJOL lists the table of contents of some [467](#) African-published, peer-reviewed scholarly journals from [31](#) countries. Some [130](#) journals contain downloadable full text articles.

The Sabinet [African Journal Archive](#) is a retrospective digitisation project of full-text journal articles published in Africa, in the sciences, social sciences and

humanities. Numerous references to journal articles, mainly in full text, can be found in [ilissAfrica](#) (presented below under the heading *Digital archives, web portals and link collections*). *SA Media* is a database containing more than 4 million newspaper and periodical articles within social sciences, politics, economics and more. It is searchable through keywords and topics with articles viewable as PDFs. The focus is mainly on southern Africa. *SA Media* is hosted by Sabinet in South Africa and accessible via Nordic Africa Institute Library. More journal indexes are presented on the Nordic Africa Institute's web page [Electronic journals and articles](#), and in the chapter [Periodicals](#).

Databases and library catalogues

Numerous types of databases dealing with literature can be found on the Internet and have nowadays more or less replaced bibliographies. *Reference databases* or *bibliographic databases* consist of references to books, reports, articles and conference contributions, etc. Information is given under each reference about the item's author, title, publisher and generally a summary abstract is included. *Full text databases* are sources that provide complete access online to the publication itself, besides giving bibliographic information. On the Nordic Africa Institute's website, there are links that point to the most important [databases](#) and [library catalogues](#).

Africa-specific databases

Only a few literature databases that concentrate on Africa exist. The largest of these by far is *Africa-Wide Information*, hosted by EBSCO and produced by NISC (National Inquiry Services Centre) in South Africa. Here the user is able to search simultaneously in 50 databases sourced from more than 20 special libraries in Africa, Europe and the USA. This collective database concentrates on the social sciences and humanities. At present it covers more than 4 million records, some with links to full text, to books, news articles, journal articles, grey literature and conference contributions, etc. A list of the databases included is available on [NISC's](#) website. *Africa-Wide Information* is a commercial database for which a subscription is required. In the Nordic countries it is accessible for users at the Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala University, and the University of Oslo

[Aluka Digital Library](#) is an international, collaborative initiative and consists of two databases, *African Cultural Heritage Sites and Landscapes* and *Struggles for Freedom in Southern Africa*. The *Aluka* collections consist of primary source materials of scholarly value from and about Africa. The database documenting the anti-apartheid movement in Southern Africa has resources in the form of images, books, periodicals, reports, personal papers, correspondence, UN documents, oral histories and more. Access to full text documents requires a subscription. *Aluka* is accessible at the Nordic Africa Institute Library.

[AfricaBib](#) is a collection of Africana social science titles and consists of two

bibliographic databases: *Africana Periodical Literature* and *African Women*. It also contains three bibliographies: *Women Travelers, Explorers and Missionaries to Africa*, *Islam in Contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa* and *Kenya Coast*. *AfricaBib* is hosted and produced by the African Studies Centre in Leiden.

Subject databases

One category of bibliographic database that cannot be ignored when searching for African literature is the commercial database, which is subject related. A subscription is necessary, although, as a rule, they can be accessed at university libraries and special libraries. They are run by subject experts and are generally of high standard. The emphasis is placed on journal articles and the references are nearly always provided with abstracts. Some examples of these databases are *Sociological Abstracts*, *ISI Web of Science*, *JSTOR*, *Anthropological Index Online*, *EconLit* and *ERIC*. The latter is also freely available on the Internet through the Institute of Educational Sciences, USDE [ERIC/IES](#). The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) produces the bibliographic database [Women in Politics](#), with references to books and journal articles dealing with women's participation in political life. The database has many options for customised searches in the search function. [The Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations \(NDLTD\)](#) provides access to theses and dissertations, mostly in full text. A list of subject-oriented databases of interest to African studies can be found at the end of this chapter. A selection of [databases](#) is available on the Nordic Africa Institute's website. Sometimes it may be of benefit to do a parallel search in a number of databases since, while many of them overlap regarding subject content, none of them provides complete coverage of its area of focus.

Library catalogues

It is also possible to search in individual library catalogues that function as a type of bibliographical database. Besides libraries that specialise in Africa, such as the [African Studies Centre](#) in Leiden, [SOAS](#) (School of Oriental and African Studies) in London and the [Nordic Africa Institute](#), it is also worth searching in the [WorldCat](#), covering major libraries worldwide, with 2 billion items. A list of [library catalogues](#) can be found on the Nordic Africa Institute's website.

Digital archives, web portals and link collections

Open Access publishing means that scholarly research findings are made freely available online, often in an open access repository. Other material besides research results may also be published. Approximately 3.6 % of the open archives are located in Africa, the majority of these in South Africa. There are services that list digital archives, and services that search archives and collect references and links to the publications in their own databases. Large archives have a disadvantage, however, in that Africa-oriented material easily disappears within the enormous flow of information that exists.

[OpenDOAR](#) – The Directory of Open Access Repositories and [ROAR](#) – The Registry of Open Access Repositories.

OpenDOAR and *ROAR* are directories of academic open access repositories around the world. The archives are listed geographically and include in-depth information on each repository. To search full text material a search service based on Google is provided. *OpenDOAR* is hosted at the University of Nottingham, UK and *ROAR* at the University of Southampton, UK.

[Connecting Africa](#)

Connecting Africa is a service that provides access to African research information and materials produced worldwide. It provides access to more than 40,000 publications from 90 repositories as well as information on some 1,350 Africa experts and on nearly 900 organisations. The service is provided by the Africa Studies Centre in Leiden, the Netherlands.

[ilissAfrica](#) – Internet Library sub-Saharan Africa

ilissAfrica is an Internet portal that offers integrated access to relevant scientific literature and digital information resources on Sub-Saharan Africa. The database on [Internet resources](#) has a collection of more than 5,000 websites, mostly from Africa. The websites are searchable and browseable according to region, country and subject area. Under the option '[Resource types](#)' the portal has good and detailed overviews of various full text resources e.g. organisations, web services, full text collections, periodicals, directories etc. The service is provided by the Africa Department at the University Library Johann Christian Senckenberg in Frankfurt, in cooperation with GIGA Information Centre Africa Library in Hamburg.

[ASKIA](#) – Access to Scientific and Socio-economic Knowledge in Africa

ASKIA is the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's federated search portal for scientific and socio-economic information on Africa from several different sources - including open access literature, commercial databases, online journals, ECA publications etc.

[OAIster](#)

OAIster is a union catalogue of open access digital resources and contains links to more than 30 million records. Theses, reports, research papers, images, movies are types of resources included. The service is provided by OCLC and OAIster records are also fully accessible through the WorldCat.

[The Africa Desk](#)

A portal for Africanist scholars in the UK and Africa prepared by the British Academy and the African Studies Association of the UK .

[*Africa south of the Sahara: selected Internet resources*](#)

An annotated guide prepared by Karen Fung at Stanford University Libraries.

[*African Online Digital Library*](#)

A portal to multimedia collections about Africa built by the African Studies Center at Michigan State University.

[*African Studies Internet Portal*](#)

An Internet research portal produced by Africana Collections and Services at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

[*African Studies Internet Resources*](#)

A compilation of electronic bibliographic resources and research materials on Africa created by the African Studies Department of Columbia University Libraries.

[*Afrique francophone*](#)

A link collection focusing on francophone Africa compiled at Lehman College, CUNY.

[*A Guide to Africa on the Internet*](#)

A link collection with research-oriented Internet resources selected by the Nordic Africa Institute Library.

Part 2 Searching for facts

Part 2 of this chapter introduces yearbooks, encyclopaedias and other reference works giving access to basic facts and fundamental information concerning particular countries or subjects. In the Nordic Africa Institute library's link collection [*A Guide to Africa on the Internet*](#) a selection of good links can be found under the headings [*links sorted by country or region*](#) and [*links sorted by subjects*](#). The same applies to the various link collections previously mentioned in this chapter. An extensive guide to many different categories of information sources is the publication *African Studies Companion Online*. The publication is accessible at the Nordic Africa Institute Library. Suggestions on how to use the general Internet search engines when searching for specific factual information can be found in the chapter [*African information on the Internet*](#).

Country sources

A good way to begin a search would be to look for brief and basic information on the countries concerned in general reference works such as *Nationalencyklopedin Online* or *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*. These are generally available at public libraries. In addition, CIA [World Factbook](#) and BBC [Country Profiles](#) offer brief and up-to-date country information on the Internet. *Länder i fickformat* is a series of small booklets issued by the Swedish Institute of International Affairs. Each booklet deals with one or two countries and briefly discusses aspects such as their history, geography, politics, economics, people and culture. The series is also available as a database entitled [Landguiden](#), and is generally accessible online at public libraries. The database includes maps and statistical data and is updated regularly.

Political Handbook of the World is a yearbook focusing on political conditions. In this volume, a short background, together with information about the government, constitution and political parties of all the world's nations, is given. The wiki [Elections by country](#) and IFES' [ElectionGuide](#), available on the Internet, give insight into political parties, elections and electoral systems, and parliaments of all the world's nations. The [Inter-Parliamentary Union](#) (IPU) gives in-depth information on political conditions, and on issues such as women's participation in political life.

In *Country Reports*, published on a monthly or quarterly basis by The Economist Intelligence Unit, an up-to-date overview is given, chiefly of the economy, but also of the political situation within the country. For more information about the EIU, see the chapter [Periodicals](#).

Country information concentrating on specific topic or problem areas can be found on the websites of various organisations, such as [ELDIS](#) (development research), [Freedom House](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), [IRIN](#) (humanitarian news and analysis), [ReliefWeb](#) (humanitarian information on global crises and disasters), [UNICEF](#), [WHO](#), [OECD](#), [IMF](#) and [World Bank](#).

The Corporate Council on Africa in the USA issues the yearbook *Africa* which contains descriptions of countries, inter alia. With its handy format and affordable price, it is also suitable for smaller libraries. The same applies to the [Norwegian Council for Africa's](#) most useful yearbook, *Afrika-årbok*, which contains [country profiles](#) (only in Norwegian), amongst other information. The annual publication *Africa*, in the *World Today series*, provides information on all the countries of the African continent, including an overview of political and economic histories, current events, and emerging trends. Each country is examined under several categories such as basic facts, land and people, and more. In addition to country chapters, the book has essays on Africa's historical background and the colonial period.

Detailed country profiles appear in the yearbooks *Africa South of the Sahara* and *The Middle East and North Africa*. These include country overviews and introductions to geography, contemporary history and economy. These works

also feature statistical tables dealing with population, production, trade, national accounts, and more. Finally, there is a section with information about the country's constitution and government, its political parties and mass media, schools, transport, defence, and trade and industrial organisations. Development in North Africa can also be followed in *L'Année du Maghreb*, while various aspects of development in the area surrounding the great lakes in Central Africa are discussed in *L'Afrique des grand lacs*. The *Africa Yearbook: Politics, Economy and Society South of the Sahara* contains articles on all Sub-Saharan countries and each of the four sub-regions (West, Central, Eastern and Southern Africa). Detailed information about South Africa can be obtained in the official *South Africa Yearbook* and in a summary version *Pocket guide to South Africa*. These publications are available in printed format and online via the South African government's website.

Africa-specific encyclopaedias also exist, with references to the various nations. *New Encyclopedia of Africa, vol. 1–5* (Middleton & Miller 2008), for instance, contains fairly detailed country descriptions including many maps, while the *Encyclopedia of Africa, vol. 1-2* (Appiah & Gates 2010) has short country information. *Africa A-Z: Continental and Country Profiles* (Esterhuysen 2013), has, in one volume, country surveys and general overviews. The general overviews deal with subjects such as geography, demography, ethnography, history and economics of the continent as a whole. The book, with maps and tables of facts, can be recommended for public or school libraries.

In addition to these publications, the handbook series *Historical Dictionaries of Africa* provides comprehensive information on countries, including a chronology and an extensive bibliography. These reference works tend to be fairly wide-ranging and therefore are not of interest solely to historians. Apart from historical events, entries have also been provided for ethnic groups, geographical names, individuals, organisations, etc.

News services

The most up-to-date information available on a country is to be found in printed or online newspapers and periodicals. A selection of these is introduced in the chapter *Periodicals*. One example is *EIU's Country Reports*, which are excellent for following the economic and political development in a country. Keesing's record of world events (*Keesing's World News Archive*, subscription required), based on daily newspapers and other news sources throughout the world, is a current record of the progress of events both internationally and in individual countries. A corresponding synopsis of development on the African continent can be found in *Africa Research Bulletin*, which consists of a political and an economic series. These are issued monthly and have a detailed annual index. Up-to-date information can also be sought via the Internet through news services, such as *AllAfrica*, *Panapress*, *Afrol News*, *Newsfromafrica*, *Al Jazeera Africa* and *BBC News Africa*. *APO-Source: The African News Source* is an online database for

Africa-related news releases. It offers free access to tens of thousands of Africa-related news releases themed by country, industry and subject. [Pambazuka News](#) is a weekly pan-African newsletter for social justice in Africa. The Norwegian Council for Africa publishes the newsletter [Africa News Update](#) twice weekly, which offers news, background and feature articles from African media. Other news agencies and national media can be reached, for example, via the Nordic Africa Institute's [A Guide to Africa on the Internet](#) under the headings [links sorted by subject / News and media](#) and [links sorted by country or region](#).

Subject related information

Reference works

The *New Encyclopedia of Africa, vol. 1–5* (Middleton & Miller 2008), was mentioned in the previous section on country information. It also contains articles on different subject areas, and has a well laid-out index as well as a chronology. *The Encyclopedia of Africa, vol. 1–2* (Appiah & Gates 2010), focuses on African history and culture with articles that cover prominent individuals, events, places, political movements, art forms, business and trade, religions, ethnic groups and organisations. The *Oxford Encyclopedia of African Thought, vol. 1–2* (Irele and Jeyifo 2010), covers the intellectual tradition in Africa and the African diaspora. African philosophy, political theory, and religion are subjects covered, as well as significant historical individuals and social movements. The *Encyclopedia of South Africa* (Johnson & Jacobs 2011), covers South Africa's history, government and politics, law, society and culture, economy, demography, and more, from the earliest times to the present day.

Some examples of handbooks that relate to the history and culture of Africa are *A History of Sub-Saharan Africa* (Collins & Burns 2014), *History of Africa* (Shillington 2012), *A History of Modern Africa* (Reid 2012) *Africa Since Independence* (Nugent 2012) and *The Oxford Handbook of Modern African History* (Reid & Parker 2013). The book *Modern Middle East and North Africa: a History in Documents* (Clancy-Smith & Smith 2014) contains a mix of documents such as photographs, posters, diaries, diplomatic records, archival sources, and literary works. The *Cambridge History of South Africa, vol. 1–2* (Hamilton and Mbenga 2010–2011) presents historical events, developments, and records of South Africa. [General History of Africa](#), a set of 8 volumes published 1981–1993, has been made freely available online by UNESCO. Volume 9 is forthcoming covering the recent history since the decolonisation, the end of Apartheid and the place of Africa in the world. The *Historical Dictionaries series* also publishes topical dictionaries, for example on women: *The A to Z of Women in Sub-Saharan Africa* (2010) and *Historical Dictionary of Women in the Middle East and North Africa* (2013).

The yearbooks *Africa South of the Sahara* and *The Middle East and North Africa* begin with background articles on the political and economic development in the area. The *Africa Yearbook: Politics, Economy and Society South of the*

Sahara covers major domestic political developments, the foreign policy and socio-economic trends in sub-Saharan Africa. It also has articles focusing on major cross-border developments and sub-regional organisations as well as continental developments and African-European relations. A detailed analysis of economic and social developments in Africa and worldwide can be found in annual reports from international and African organisations. Examples of these are [World Development Report](#) (World Bank), [Human Development Report](#) (UNDP), [African Development Report](#) (African Development Bank) and [Economic Report on Africa](#) (ECA). These organisations are also excellent sources for statistical information. Read more about this in the chapter titled [Statistics](#).

Regional and international organisations

In the yearbooks *Africa South of the Sahara* and *The Middle East and North Africa*, overviews are provided of UN and other international organisations' presence in Africa, as well as of regional African organisations, trade and industrial organisations, and trade unions. *Directory of African Organizations* (2014) provides an up-to-date and comprehensive reference to thousands of intergovernmental and international nongovernmental organisations active in nearly 60 African countries and territories. The [Non-governmental Organizations, NGO Database](#), developed by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA), is a database of civil society organisations active in Africa. The search function allows many combinations, including by region and country, organisation name, areas of expertise, language, and more. Examples of Internet-based lists of organisations are Columbia University Libraries' [International Organizations in Africa](#) and in the Nordic Africa Institute's [A Guide to Africa on the Internet](#) under the headings *Research Institutes, Universities and Organisations* as well as on the *ilissAfrica* website under the option [Resource types/Organizations](#).

Biographical information

The *Dictionary of African Biography*, vol. 1–6 (Akyeampong and Gates 2012), provides a comprehensive overview of African individuals, including philosophers, politicians, activists, entertainers, scholars, poets, scientists, religious figures, kings, and everyday people. *Biographical Encyclopedia of the Modern Middle East and North Africa*, vol. 1–2 (Fischbach 2008), contains more than 300 profiles of contemporary leaders in the region. Indexes of subject, nationality and ethnicity are included. *An African Biographical Dictionary* (Brockman 2006) has more than 700 entries on current and historically famous personalities within various areas of activity. Biographical main entries are also included in *Historical Dictionaries of Africa* series and in the encyclopaedias already mentioned. Information about people of topical interest can be found in, inter alia, *Africa Research Bulletin* and *Afrique contemporaine*. On its website, Columbia University Libraries have compiled the list [African Biography on the Internet](#).

Ethnic groups and languages

Literature in the areas of language and ethnography are not currently included in *Studying Africa*. In this section only a small selection of reference works dealing with this extensive area are mentioned. The handbook *Ethnic Groups of Africa and the Middle East* (Shoup 2011) contains encyclopedic entries arranged alphabetically according to ethno-linguistic groups. [*Ethnologue: Languages of the World*](#) is issued by Summer Institute of Linguistics in the USA, in continually updated editions. It is available as a printed book and in a web version (the latest is the 17th edition, 2013). Here, one can search for [regions](#), [countries](#), particular [languages](#) or [language groups](#), or alternative language names. The online database [World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples](#) provides a country-by-country profile of the history and contemporary situation relating to minorities and indigenous peoples. It is published by Minority Rights Group and updated regularly. The directory also includes an integral database of organisations concerned with minorities, relevant publications and websites. Entries for ethnic groups are also included in *Historical Dictionaries of Africa* series and in the encyclopaedias already mentioned. Columbia University Libraries has compiled a list of [African Language Resources on the Internet](#)

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- [*South Africa Yearbook*](#) (annual). Pretoria: Government Communication and Information System.
- Studying Africa* ([2011](#)), ([2005](#)). Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.

Talhami, Ghada Hashem. *Historical dictionary of women in the Middle East and North Africa*. Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2013.

Wijntjes, Marie-José, ed. *African Studies Companion Online*. Brill Online
[World Development Report](#) (annual). Washington D.C.: World Bank.

Subject related databases

Some databases require a subscription, but are usually available at public libraries, and some are freely available.

Interdisciplinary

PAIS – Public Affairs Information Service, (ProQuest) 1915–

Anthropology

Anthropological Index Online, 1957– (EBSCO)

[AnthroSource](#) - American Anthropological Association

Theses and Dissertations

Dissertations & Theses (ProQuest)

[National ETD Portal](#) - ETDs produced in South Africa Freely available

[The Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations](#) Freely available

Library and information science

Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA), 1969– (ProQuest)

[Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts \(LISTA\)](#) Freely available (EBSCO)

Environment

Environmental Sciences and Pollution Management, 1967– (ProQuest)

[GreenFILE](#) Freely available (EBSCO)

SCOPUS (Reed Elsevier)

Economics

EconLit, 1969– (EBSCO)

Geography, geology and related subjects

Geobase, 1980– (Elsevier)

History

Historical Abstracts, 1955– (EBSCO)

Humanities

Arts and Humanities Citation Index (ISI) (Thomson Scientific)

Art, design

ARTbibliographies Modern, 1974– (ProQuest)

Agriculture

[AGRICOLA Articles](#) Freely available (National Agricultural Library, USDA)

[AGRIS](#), 1975– Freely available (FAO)

CAB Abstracts 1973– (EBSCO)

Literature, language, linguistics

Linguistic bibliography 2010– (Brill)

Linguistics and Language Behaviour Abstracts, 1973– (ProQuest)

Literature Resource Center (Gale)

MLA International Bibliography (Modern Language Association), 1925– (ProQuest)

Medicine

African Healthline (includes several databases, available via *Africa-Wide Information*)

PubMed, 1950– (NLM)

Music

International Library of African Music (ILAM), 1900– (Available via *Africa-Wide Information*)

RILM Abstracts of Music Literature (Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale), 1967– (ProQuest)

Education, pedagogy

ERIC (Educational Resources Information Centre) 1966– (ProQuest)

[ERIC/IES](#) (Institute of Education Sciences, USDE) a free version of ERIC

Psychology

PsyscINFO 1887– (EBSCO)

Religion

ATLA Religion Database 1949– (EBSCO)

Social sciences, gender studies

[African women](#), *AfricaBib*, 1986– Freely available

Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts, ASSIA, 1987– (ProQuest)

International Bibliography of the Social Sciences, IBBS, 1951– (ProQuest)

Sociological Abstracts, 1952– (ProQuest)

Social Sciences Citation Index (ISI) (Thomson Scientific)

Social Services Abstracts, 1979– (ProQuest)

Women in politics, Freely available
Women's Studies International, 1972- (ProQuest)

Political science

CIAO Columbia International Affairs Online 1981- (Columbia University Press)
Worldwide Political Science Abstracts, 1975- (ProQuest)

Web resources

AfricaBib – <http://www.africabib.org>
Africa Desk – <http://www.africadesk.ac.uk/>
Africa Journal Archive – <http://www.ajarchive.org/>
Africa south of the Sahara – <http://www.sul.stanford.edu/depts/ssrg/africa/guide.html>
African Biography on the Internet – http://library.columbia.edu/locations/global/virtual-libraries/african_studies/biographies.html
African Development Report – <http://www.afdb.org/en/documents/publications/african-development-report/>
African Online Digital Library – <http://www.aodl.org/>
African Studies Abstracts Online – <http://www.ascleiden.nl/Library/Abstracts/ASA-Online>
African Studies Centre – <http://www.ascleiden.nl/?q=content/asc-catalogue/>
African Studies Internet Portal – <http://uiuc.libguides.com/africa-research-links>
African Studies Internet Resources – http://library.columbia.edu/locations/global/virtual-libraries/african_studies.html
Afrol News – <http://www.afrol.com/>
AllAfrica – <http://allafrica.com/>
Afrique des grand lacs – <https://www.uantwerp.be/en/faculties/iob/research-and-service/centre-for-the-study/l-afrique-des-grands/>
Afrique francophone – <http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/deanhum/langlit/french/afrique.html>
AGRICOLA Articles – <http://agricola.nal.usda.gov/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?DB=local&PAGE=bbSearch>
AGRIS – <http://agris.fao.org/>
AJOL – <http://www.ajol.info>
Aluka Digital Library – <http://www.aluka.org/>
L'Année du Maghreb – <http://anneemaghreb.revues.org/>
AnthroSource – <http://www.anthrosource.net/AdvancedSearch.aspx>
ASKIA – <http://askia.uneca.org/>
BBC News – Africa – <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/africa/>
CIA World Factbook – <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>
CIAO – <https://www.ciaonet.org/>
Connecting Africa – <http://www.connecting-africa.net/>

Country Profiles (BBC) – http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country_profiles/default.stm
dok-line – <http://www.giga-hamburg.de/en/ic/bibliographies/dok-line>
ELDIS – <http://www.eldis.org/>
ElectionGuide – <http://www.electionguide.org/region.php?ID=1>
Election by country – http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elections_by_country
Ethnologue: Languages of the World – <http://www.ethnologue.com/>
ERIC/IES – <http://eric.ed.gov/>
GreenFILE – <http://www.greeninfoonline.com>
A Guide to Africa on the Internet – <http://www.nai.uu.se/library/resources/guidetoafrica/>
Freedom House – <http://freedomhouse.org/>
Human Development Report – <http://hdr.undp.org/en/global-reports>
ilissAfrica – <http://www.ilissafrika.de/en>
IMF – <http://www.imf.org/external/country/index.htm>
International Organizations on Africa – http://library.columbia.edu/locations/global/virtual-libraries/african_studies/intlorgs.html
Inter-Parliamentary Union – <http://www.ipu.org/>
IRIN – <http://www.irinnews.org/>
Landinformasjon – <http://www.afrika.no/Landinformasjon/index.html>
Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts – <http://www.libraryresearch.com>
The Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations – <http://thumper.vtls.com:6090/search/query?theme=NDLTD>
News from Africa – <http://www.newsfromafrica.org/newsfromafrica/index.html>
Nordic Africa Institute – <http://www.nai.uu.se>
OECD – <http://www.oecd.org/>
OAIster – <http://www.oclc.org/oaister>
OpenDOAR – <http://www.opendoar.org/>
Panapress – www.panapress.com
Pocket Guide to South Africa – http://www.gcis.gov.za/resource_centre/sa_info/pocket-guide/index.html
ReliefWeb – <http://reliefweb.int/>
ROAR – <http://roar.eprints.org/>
SOAS – <http://www.soas.ac.uk/library/>
South Africa Yearbook – http://www.gcis.gov.za/resource_centre/sa_info/yearbook/index.html
UNICEF – <http://www.unicef.org>
WHO – <http://www.who.int/en>
Women in Politics – <http://www.ipu.org/bdf-e/BDFsearch.asp>
WorldCat – <http://www.worldcat.org/>
World Development Report – <http://econ.worldbank.org/wdr>
World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples – <http://www.minorityrights.org/directory>

Africa Information on the Internet

Kalle Laajala, Åsa Lund Moberg

Revised March 2014

The Internet is now the first stop when it comes to finding information, but it also acts as a complement to other sources. Today, there is an increasing amount of information produced locally in Africa, alongside material about Africa from international organisations, institutions and other sources outside the continent. There are also several publications available as full text, both in digital archives and also on ordinary web pages.

Information services, portals and link collections supplied on the Internet from organisations and libraries focusing on Africa are, in many cases, a good starting point for finding structured information about Africa. Correctly used, major search engines, such as Google, Google Scholar and Yahoo can also sift out relevant material from the vast amount of information available on the Internet. Social media such as Twitter, Facebook and blogs are excellent tools to cover debates and hot topics.

Finding information on the Internet that is relevant, up-to-date and reliable is difficult. Just as with printed media, the sources need to be evaluated. In addition to the usual questions “Who?” (originator), “Why?” (purpose), “When?” (topicality), one should also, for sources on the Internet, ask the question “How?” How did one actually arrive at the source?

Search Engines

Search engines (such as, for example, [Google](#)) are characterised by the contents (words) of web pages being searched by machine and gathered together in a database. The robot that searches web pages finds its way via the links located on the web pages. When searching via a form, search words are matched against words in the database, which then point ahead to the web pages where the words were found. All search engines have help pages showing tips for how best to use the service. The greatest problem is the amount of hits that turn up. The answers are ranked according to where the words are to be found on the web page, and according to how many have linked to the page, among other criteria. The web pages where the words appear frequently, in the title, in the metadata of the web page (information about the web page title, author, publication date, subject, type of material, etc., shown in the html code) are shown at the top of the list, as are web pages with many incoming links. There are ways of making the search more precise in order to avoid the large number of hits.

[Google](#)

Question: What is education in Kenya like from a gender perspective?

The search words "gender education Kenya" on Google produce around 114 million hits. The first hits on the list look good, but it is difficult to sift out links that are useful. However, using the advanced search feature on Google, it is possible to limit the search in various ways. Advanced search can be found under settings. If it is locally produced material that is wanted, you can search for links to websites in Kenya under "Region". It is also possible to limit the hits to links on websites with the address ".org", which are often the websites of large international organisations (see below, under evaluation of sources relating to addresses).

It is also possible to try different file formats in advanced searching. By limiting a search to links in PDF format, it is possible to pick out information that gives a more detailed answer to the question. Reports that are already published in print are often published in PDF format.

Tip: Choose further search words based on the links that appear, in order to target relevant material. Example: Add the word "statistics" to produce links to statistics, add "girls" for links to material about primary and lower secondary schools and "higher education" for links to material about universities. Add the file format ".xls." for searches for statistics and the hit list will then contain Excel sheets with statistics. Change ".org" to ".ke" in the domain field to find information published in Kenya, or change it to ".gov" and up comes information from American public authorities. However, see below under evaluation of sources relating to addresses. You can also try to change the order of the words "Kenya gender education" in order to find different focus points. The hit list is sorted in accordance to the order of the search words.

When searching for sources, especially in the light of conflicts and disputes, it can prove useful to keep in mind the diaspora communities with their varying agendas, sometimes strongly involved in the course of events in the home country and with a lively online presence. Try combining the term "diaspora" with the name of an African nationality or country in a search engine to find these communities.

[Google Scholar](#)

Google Scholar is aimed at academic material published both for free online and in licensed databases. Much of what is felt to be irrelevant when searching on Google is filtered out. Students and researchers at Nordic universities often have direct access to the complete text, as several university libraries have linked their licensed resources to Google Scholar. However, it is very unclear how much material published in Africa is included on Google Scholar. They provide hardly any information about what is indexed in the service.

The major weaknesses of search engines are that they are based on robots that collect links via other links, and that they never cover the whole of the Internet.

A robot visits websites with varying frequency. The websites of large organisations and websites that are very dynamic, such as news agencies, are visited more often than more peripheral websites. In Google's database, there are links both to websites that are visited daily by the robot and to websites visited perhaps only once every six months. This means you must always ask yourself if what you are looking for is actually available in the search engine's database. As much of what is published on the Internet is focused on the USA or the West/North, and the search robots gather links via links, you should also ask yourself how well represented locally produced information from Africa is via search engines. There are investigations showing a skewed distribution in favour of the West/North in search engines.

It may be worth trying various search engines, as they differ more than one would think in terms of content. The core of search engines' databases with links to well-known, large websites is the same, but those parts of the databases that include links to smaller websites or individual web pages differ significantly. Investigations have shown that when searching narrow concepts using eight large search engines, more than half the total number of links was found by only one search engine. In order to find different search engines, search for "search engines" on Google, and links with alternatives will be shown. Another aspect to be aware of is the effect that is called the filter bubble. The search engines often have built in features to customise hit lists according to previous searches or the user's activity history.

The answers from the search engines are never better than the content of the database, or the question asked. Search engines work best if you search for unique concepts or words, and least well if a very broad, general question is asked. In this case, it is better to use a link collection.

Social Media

The use and penetration of social media is by no means settled yet, globally or in an African context. The ways of utilising it and its relation to more traditional media are in a flux. We can expect to see them as research objects in themselves.

The different types of social media are, of course, already information sources that cannot be ignored when trying to get a comprehensive view of an issue. Authorities, governments, NGOs, organisations, publishers and other actors often use these platforms as complements to their regular websites – as news feeds, for audio-visual materials, for brief comments and for dialogue. With larger entities you may see links from their websites to profiles on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Youtube](#), [Flickr](#) and even more. In other cases the social media presence may even be the only Internet presence for an actor. The amount of information and work put into these channels from different actors varies considerably. Depending on privacy settings, some – or all – information may be accessible only when signed into the service.

Blog types range from personal to official and everything in between. Finding a reliable blog focused on a specific topic can be very rewarding when trying to keep up-to-date with, for instance, literature or politics, or any alternative views and non-mainstream news. Researchers are also using blogs to disseminate their findings.

Adding selected sources from social media is certainly a way to improve your intelligence gathering and information input, but at the same time you run the risk of increasing the noise. Using social media gives you a chance to cover a topic early on in the information cycle of gossip – news – article – research article – book chapters – books.

The high pace of information and quick changes in trending topics can make it tiresome to search these sources systematically. Using the social media platforms' internal search engines in combination with others may be a good tactic. [Social Searcher](#) lets your search within Facebook, Twitter and [Google+](#). [Technorati](#) is a search engine for blogs in English. It is worth trying the regular search engines also. When finding a source of interest within social media, be sure, if possible, to browse the “followers”, “friends”, “likes” and whatever the connections may be called – to get a picture of affiliated and/or additional related sources.

Even though the globally large social media sites are relatively big in Africa, you should be aware there are also more locally oriented social media present and still developing. Keep track of the progress with the help of, for instance, [oAfrica](#).

When evaluating social media sources one should keep in mind their sometimes ‘semi-informal’ nature. Especially when it comes to the profiles and feeds of individuals: are they claiming something in their capacity as a professional or as a private person? Is it possible or even necessary to make that distinction? Occasionally you find a disclaimer text drawing up some boundaries. With the dialogue and external comments functionalities often included on the social media platforms, extra caution is advised when determining who is in fact saying what. Even official authorities using social media should be evaluated. The question of Why? that is mentioned under the section on Evaluation of sources should always be asked.

At the time of writing the [Government of the Republic of Rwanda](#) can serve as one example of how the social media presence of an official African authority may manifest itself. On the main website there is a “Gov connect” section with links to their [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#) profiles. A prominent banner link also leads to the officially supported [Rwandapedia](#) website, which in turn has its own social media presence.

The [Norwegian Council for Africa's list of African blog portals, aggregators and resource webs](#) can serve as a general starting point to the African blogosphere.

Link Collections

One portal for Africa information is the link collections that are held on the websites of libraries and organisations focusing on Africa. Another way of finding relevant link collections or links is to ask the question "Who would think this worthwhile?" For example, if you want to find out about investments in a country, you can probably find links on the website of the Swedish Trade Council. The advantage of using a link collection is that it usually consists of links that have been checked for quality. When using this, do remember that while there is a quality guarantee, the selection of links is directed by the editor's knowledge about the subject and also by the resources for keeping the link collection updated. The selection criteria also vary between different websites, and sometimes there is no account of these.

[Internet Library Sub-Saharan Africa ilissAfrica](#)

A portal with entries to Internet resources and library catalogues provided by the Africa Department of the University Library Johann Christian Senckenberg in Frankfurt and GIGA Information Centre Africa Library in Hamburg. The links are arranged according to regions, countries, organisations and subjects with a search function. There is a high local content in the collection of Internet resources.

[A Guide to Africa on the Internet](#)

The Nordic Africa Institute's library has developed this guide to meet the need for quality-checked and structured sources of information and databases. The content is aimed at research and many of the links are, in their turn, guides to each subject area, where some have a broader focus than just research. The division into subject guides and country guides is an attempt to capture the various types of questions the users have.

There are around 1 500 links, with annotations in English, which cover, among others, the following subject areas:

Country-specific information sources, Subject-specific information sources, Libraries and databases, Periodicals, News agencies and news dissemination, Radio and television, Research institutes, universities and organisations, Internet portals in Africa, Other collections of information sources about Africa.

[Africa South of the Sahara. Selected Internet Resources](#)

A selection of Internet sources made by Karen Fung at the Africa Collection, Hoover Library, Stanford University for the Electronic Technology Group of the African Studies Association in the USA. The links are arranged according to regions, countries and subjects with a search function.

[African Studies Internet Resources](#)

A summary of bibliographic sources and research material about Africa, created by the African Studies Department of Columbia University Libraries, USA. The links are arranged according to regions, countries, organisations and subjects with a search function where you select Search Website. The selection is aimed at research and also includes links to complete text documents.

[An A-Z of African Studies on the Internet](#)

A link collection compiled by Peter Limb of the Africana Library at Michigan State University, USA. This also includes links to email lists and discussion groups. The links are arranged according to subjects, with a search function.

[Open Directory: Africa](#)

A general link collection with links arranged according to country with a search function. The link collection is compiled by volunteers.

Language

While websites of authorities, organisations and corporations are quite often multilingual, there may be cases where it is difficult to see where to change the language – especially if the default language is one you cannot work out and the toggle link is in that language only. Usually the switch is placed in the header section of the website or in the sidebar, perhaps as part of a drop-down list. Moving the pointer over hyperlinks usually displays a tooltip in your web browser, revealing more information about the destination page or the URL.

Sometimes the content management system of a website adds bits to the URL revealing language settings. An Arabic website may, for instance, have a default URL looking like this: www.sudan.gov.sd/index.php/ar/, where the “ar” reveals that the active language is Arabic, easily confirmed by viewing the screen. Replacing the “ar” with “en” or “fr” and reloading the page would, in this real-life example, switch the website to the English or the French version (also available through a drop down menu). Bear in mind however that the syntax of the URLs may differ a lot and that the language codes may not be as easily understandable as in the example above – making this a method good to know, but not to completely rely on.

[Google Translate](#) has become a popular translation service, and while you should use it with caution, it can be useful when navigating a website written in a language you do not know, giving at least the outline of the information. Afrikaans and Swahili have already been supported for some years, and at the end of 2013 Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Somali and Zulu were added. Use Google Translate by pasting the URL of a webpage – or a snippet of text – into its text area. The service tries to automatically identify the language and you can choose which language to translate to.

Evaluation of Sources

Just as with printed sources, sources on the Internet need to be evaluated. In the first instance, there are four questions that should be asked: Who? Why? When? How? A brief review of these follows below. The review is not at all complete, but should rather be seen as a suggestion for questions to ask when assessing the source, and as a complement to the usual questions asked when evaluating printed sources. There are many good reviews on how to assess Internet sources on the websites of libraries, see the end of the text for references.

Who?

Who is the originator? What authority does he/she/the organisation have? Is there any information about him/her/it?

Publishing on the Internet is both easy and inexpensive. Quality controls, such as editors and subject specialists in publishing houses do not exist. Financial resources are not an obstacle. Information from large, established knowledge organisations sits side by side with information from private individuals and organisations with both honourable and uncertain purposes. Knowledge about who is behind a website on the Internet is needed in order to evaluate the reliability and authority of the source.

Address

Where is the website published?

The address of the web page, the URL (Universal Resource Locator) is constructed according to the model `how://where/what`. The address `http://www.nai.uu.se/press/articles/ecas-keynote-speaker-issa/` can be divided up according to the pattern below.

"Http" shows that the document is transported using hypertext transfer protocol over the Internet, "www" that it is a world wide web document, "nai.uu" is the name of the server (sub domain) and ".se" stands for Sweden (top domain). "/press/" and "/articles/" state in which catalogue on the server the web page is held and "ecas-keynote-speaker-issa/" is the name of the web page itself.

By being able to read the top domain codes, you can usually see which country the web page is published in, or the type of organisation holding the web page. Often, the code gives an indication of whether the originator comes from a large organisation or a larger context.

However, some country codes and certain generic codes ("com", "org", "net") can be bought. Among them is the country code ".nu", from Niue Island, which is popular in Scandinavia.

If the information on the web page does not appear to correspond to the address, you should ask yourself how reliable the source is, such as a statement from Amnesty International about human rights in a country found on a page where the address ends in ".com" or ".net".

Links to list of top domains, both country codes and generic codes, can be found if you search the word "top domains" using the search engine Google. On the Internet there are also services where you can search for those who register an address to a website. This often includes address and other information. Links to these can be found via Google if you search for "whois".

While specific domain names come and go, top domains are quite stable. Political and other changes may however lead to new top domains. For instance, since the last edition of this text, the top domain ".ss" (South Sudan) has been registered, although it is not yet in use. At the time of writing the website of the Government of the Republic of South Sudan is found on <http://www.goss.org/>.

Using this part of evaluation of sources for information produced locally in Africa causes problems. The infrastructure is built up to differing extents in different parts of the continent, which means that the assumption that the websites of major institutions and governments have a country code as the top domain code and are located on a local web server is not always correct. The electricity supply is unstable in some countries. Local connections may be lacking between cities, and also between neighbouring countries. In order to provide a website that is constantly available, even major institutions choose to place their material on a commercial server outside Africa. The availability of space on a local web server may be limited, and while the price for the same may be relatively high locally, there is available web space for free or cheaply in both the USA and Europe. For instance, the official website of Congo: www.congo-site.com is registered at an address in France.

Contact

Can you contact the originator? Is there an email address? Is the email address an established institution? Is the email address located on the same server as the web page? Is there a postal address, a telephone number? Are the authors actually associated with the institution or organisation they state?

Sometimes there is no information on the web page about who is behind the information, in particular if the page is located deep down on a website. By cutting down an address section by section on a web page, you can move up the website and see whether there is information further up in the hierarchy. Examples: http://www.kari.or.ke/sites/default/files/Naivasha_agro-by_products_research_may2010.pdf

On the web page itself, there is a document in PDF format. There is no link to the originator. By removing the entire string after ".ke", you get to the website itself, which turns out to belong to the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute. If an email address is shown with another server address, you can try to get to the server in accordance with the analogy library@nai.uu.se — www.nai.uu.se, i.e. by changing the names before "@" to "www". Many institutions and organisations have personnel lists on their website where it is possible to confirm a person's association with the same.

When it comes to contact information on locally produced pages in Africa that refer to free providers of email services, this is not in itself an indication that the information is not reliable, or that the person is not an established authority within his or her subject. The price of both local email services and of space on web servers may be high, and an established free email service abroad may be more stable than a service from a local company that may not be operating in a few years. The problem with servers going down due to lack of electricity supply is also a reality. Also, many institutions in the public authority sector and the educational sector in African countries do not have the same access to computer resources as do similar institutions in Europe and the USA. Being able to determine whether a person is associated with an established institution through his or her email address is therefore uncertain. If the originator claims to be a researcher or to be associated with academia, this information can be confirmed via library catalogues or in databases. For example, Library of Congress has a large collection of published academic material from Africa. [Africa Journals Online](#) is a platform for over 400 academic journals published in Africa, which also offer opportunities for searching authors.

Why?

Is it advertisement, propaganda or fact?

In order to evaluate a web page, you must place it into context. Sometimes the purpose of the publication is clear, sometimes it is difficult to determine what is fact and what is opinion. Just as some publish in order to inform, others publish in order to disinform. Just as important as what is mentioned on the web page is perhaps what is not mentioned.

When using the websites of international organisations, for example, you should be clear about what is on their agenda. Organisations concerned with human rights do not always bring up positive sides of a country and official websites published in a country may perhaps be aimed at attracting investors, and therefore do not publish negative information. A conflict may be described in right–left terms by a local party, while the same conflict is described in ethnic terms by another party, all depending on ideological background and interests. Subjective information on the Internet is in itself an important source, if it can be evaluated on the basis of why it is published. It is also important to remember the context in which the web page is published. The view of the world around us varies, not just from a north–south perspective, but also between other poles such as Europe and the USA, which are normally regarded as having the same view of the world.

When?

Has the web page a date stamp? How often is the information updated? Is it of importance whether the information is old or new?

How frequently the information on a web page is updated can be an indica-

tion of the amount of resources the organisation/originator has. If it is a current subject that is being discussed, old information can be misleading.

How?

How did the inquirer arrive at that particular site? What other websites link to the web page, and to what websites does the web page have links?

By following how a web page is linked on the Internet, you can get an indication of how reliable the source is. If the website has a link from an established source, this in itself is a quality indicator. Many search services, such as Google, have a search function where you can see who has a link to a web page. With Google, you use the search string `link:web page address` in order to find those who have links to the web page. Example: `link:www.nai.uu.se`

Just as interesting as finding out who has links to a web page is to see what links are located on the web page itself. If a current or controversial subject is being dealt with, and there are no links to established sources within the same subject area, you should ask yourself why. A web page that has links both to and from bona fide sources must be regarded as more reliable than a web page that lacks these.

Comparing Sources

The multitude of sources on the Internet is an asset, but the amount of information also makes it difficult to determine what information is correct. There is contradictory information about nearly everything.

It is important to compare information from several sources. However, having confirmed a piece of information from two sources does not necessarily mean it is correct. The originators may have used the same primary source for their information. Check the extent to which the information agrees. Are there any long quotes that have the same wording? Do the figures correspond down the last decimal?

If the statistical values are far from each other, this does not mean that one source is incorrect, as the definitions used in the calculations may have been different.

It is also important to find out the resources behind the information and the form of the primary source. For example, is it a question of estimates or statistical calculations? If the source was originally printed and later published electronically, you must take into account both that all scanned text-interpreted material always has a percentage error, and also that it is not always the case that the printed version corresponds to the electronic one. Some picture material and appendices are also left out in electronic publications. This applies also to material that originates from established organisations. For example, the Swedish parliament, the Riksdag, has information on its website that the electronic version of the Swedish Code of Statutes may lack appendices.

Lost sources

A great problem with the dynamic Internet is that many web pages disappear after a while, or are moved within the website. Many countries are working on long-term storage of material published on the Internet, but even more countries do not. This applies in particular to material from the south. Much of the so-called grey literature that was previously published in printed format, for example pamphlets, reports and conference materials, is today often published as individual web pages, sometimes far down on the websites. With the help of projects such as [Internet Archive Wayback Machine](#) it is possible to locate these documents if the website address is there. Just as in the case of search engines, Internet Archive has an emphasis on the north/west in the archive, because the material is gathered using search robots.

With the Internet ageing, domain ownership will change over time. When an owner lets a domain expire there are often others wanting to buy it – for different reasons. This way, old references with links to a certain domain may still function technically speaking, when in fact the domain has a new owner with a different agenda and new (or similar) content. A whois search combined with a look in the Wayback Machine may be helpful in the evaluation.

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Web Resources

Most websites or search services mentioned in the text can be found on the Nordic Africa Institute’s website www.nai.uu.se in the link collection [A Guide to Africa on the Internet](#). Many university and college libraries have summaries on their websites about evaluation of sources on the Internet. Search “evaluate Internet sources” using Google, and you will get good hits.

- Africa Internet Usage and Population Statistics – <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats1.htm>
- A Guide to Africa on the Internet* – <http://www.nai.uu.se/library/resources/guidetoafrica/index.xml?Language=en>
- Africa Journals Online* – <http://www.ajol.info>
- Africa South of the Sahara. Selected Internet Resources* – <http://www.sul.stanford.edu/depts/ssrg/africa/guide.html>
- African Blog Portals, Aggregators and resource webs* – http://www.afrika.no/blog/African_Blog_Portals/index.html
- African Studies Internet Resources* – http://library.columbia.edu/locations/global/virtual-libraries/african_studies.html
- An A–Z of African Studies on the Internet* – <http://staff.lib.msu.edu/limb/a-z/az.html>
- Facebook* – <http://www.facebook.com>
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- Rwandapedia* – <http://www.rwandapedia.rw/>
- Social Searcher* – <http://www.social-searcher.com/>
- Technorati* – <http://www.technorati.com/>
- Twitter* – <http://www.twitter.com>
- YouTube* – <http://www.youtube.com>

Periodicals

Birgitte Jansen

Revised March 2014

Introduction

The [*Nordic Africa Institute's library*](#) currently has more than 1 500 periodical publications, of which approximately 450 are active. All periodicals focus on Africa, primarily within the subject areas of social sciences, politics, development issues and humanities. The library's website has [*a current alphabetical list of all periodicals*](#).

The periodicals collection consists of newspapers, journals, current report series and yearbooks in both printed and electronic format, all of which are searchable in the library catalogue [*AfricaLit*](#). In AfricaLit's [*article catalogue*](#) you can also find more than 7 000 selected articles and special issues from important periodicals, primarily from the years 1990–2000, plus a small number for 2001 and onwards. Remote users can order copies of articles on a special order form and have them sent by post.

There is a big range of electronic periodicals in full text in various databases, which are wholly or partly focused on Africa, and they are available via the Nordic Africa Institute's website under the heading [*Electronic Periodicals and Articles*](#).

The Nordic Africa Institute's periodicals collection, which has been built up since the early 1960s, is a unique resource for research into Africa's political development and history. The collection consists of both well-established western periodicals and periodicals published in Africa. During the last decade, development within periodicals publishing has been very rapid, and a 'periodicals collection' is today not the same thing as it was just a few years ago. Today, the concept of a 'periodicals collection' stretches far beyond the limits of the individual library. The number of open access periodicals, i.e. periodicals that are freely available on the Internet, is constantly increasing. Many organisations that previously published printed publications now choose to publish their periodicals and newsletters in electronic format on their websites, and to send them out by email. It is important to select and make these visible as well. Selected report series published in full text by mainly Nordic institutions and organisations can be searched and downloaded from [*E-AfricaLit*](#).

There are several useful AtoZ journal databases focusing on Africa. The [*NAI AtoZ*](#) list of electronic journals contains both titles that are freely available and those with restricted access. Another AtoZ journal database is [*Electronic Journals Library*](#) in [*IlissAfrica*](#) – a German portal with electronic resources focused on

Africa South of the Sahara. The [Africa Studies Centre in Leiden \(ASC\)](#) has compiled a [List of free Africa related e-journals](#) (OA) and the African Studies Centre at Michigan State University provides the [African Journals Directory](#). It's a list of more than 2 000 periodicals about Africa, with links to a searchable list of contents, abstracts and sometimes articles in full text.

In this chapter, I have chosen to present a selection of periodicals that I would like to highlight. I have also selected periodicals within specific areas, which are currently particularly relevant within Africa research. The majority of these are available from the [Nordic Africa Institute's Library](#). The periodicals that are freely available on the Internet are marked '(OA)'.

News Reporting

Newspapers

Today, it is no longer enough for news dissemination to be current for the day; instead, as soon as an item of news occurs it must be available 'here and now'. Because of this, the value of printed newspapers has fallen and been replaced by news reporting on the Internet. However, should it be necessary to find information about the newspapers being published in a specific African country, you can find the most important national newspapers with address and contact information in the handbooks [Africa South of Sahara](#) and [Middle East and North Africa](#).

There is a large range of free African newspapers and other news reporting in full text from most African countries. Links to African newspapers can be found in [A guide to Africa on the Internet](#) under the heading 'News and Media' under each country/region and among the subject links. Another compilation of African electronic newspapers is [Electronic Newspapers of Africa](#), at Columbia University Libraries.

A high quality newspaper that can be warmly recommended is [Mail & Guardian](#) online (OA), published in South Africa. Their news coverage does not only cover Southern Africa, but the entire African continent.

[AllAfrica](#) is a database that, among other things, provides access to Africa's media coverage. They aggregate and distribute the reporting of more than 130 media organisations, including government and opposition-controlled papers, as well as the growing number of independent, professional news publications across the continent. As a subscriber you have access to an archive, which contains more than 3.6 million articles.

Another important news channel is [IRIN – Integrated Regional Information Network, Humanitarian News and Analysis](#) (OA), which is published by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. IRIN monitors the entire African continent and publishes daily reports and news with analysis from all regions and countries in Africa. There are weekly summaries about urgent subject areas, such as conflicts, which are described in more detailed reports with links. You can subscribe to IRIN via email free of charge.

Journals

When it comes to periodicals with news coverage, it is a requirement that they – as a complement to the current periodical – are reporting important events through their websites and/or via email alert services to their readers on a daily basis.

[Africa Confidential](#) has held a singular position over the last 50 years, and has reported news about developments within politics, economics and security issues from the entirety of the African continent. They also identify and illuminate upcoming issues and trends within politics, often before they are noticed by other media.

[Africa-Asia Confidential](#) focuses on relations between Asia and Africa, and Asia's growing influence over politics and finance on the African continent.

Africa Research Bulletin consists of two subsidiary series, *[Economic, Financial and Technical Series](#)* and *[Political, Social and Cultural Series](#)*, which have reported on developments within politics, economy, infrastructure, security, social development, culture and international relations since 1964. Each yearly edition has a register and is therefore also useful as a reference book.

[Africa Intelligence](#) provides the following five newsletters, with exclusive news and analysis from across the continent. The newsletters are published both in English and French:

[Indian Ocean Newsletter](#) reports political and financial news from the Horn of Africa, eastern Africa, parts of southern Africa and the islands in the Indian Ocean.

[Maghreb Confidential](#) takes a close and independent look at the political, diplomatic and business circles in North Africa.

[West Africa Newsletter](#) covers the countries in West and Central Africa, incl. Angola and Namibia and is the bench-mark publication for ruling circles and business leaders in West Africa and the Gulf of Guinea countries.

[Africa Energy Intelligence](#) covers oil, gas and electricity industries in Africa. It is a publication that deals with the politics behind energy, continually reporting on concessions, contracts, corporate strategy and political lobbying campaigns.

[Africa Mining Intelligence](#) has become a leading publication for mining operators in Africa and covers exploration and production, strategies, funding and biographies of leading players in the mining sector.

Africa Intelligence offers also access to an archive of more than 85 000 articles that covers several decades.

[Economist Intelligence Unit \(EIU\)](#) holds a special position as one of the world's best providers of in-depth articles and analyses of the political and economic situation in all the countries in the world. Their target groups are primarily researchers, decision-makers and the world of commerce.

Their Country Reports are published quarterly or monthly, with reports from every African country. The Reports describe the political and economic situation during the latest quarter. They provide economic statistics for imports, exports,

inflation, prices, foreign investments, etc. and forecasts of important political and economic changes during the next two years. As a subscriber you can also sign up for e-mail alerts on [Events](#), that on a daily basis let you know whenever there is something new to say about a country. As a complement or alternative to the Country Reports, [ViewsWire – Africa / Middle East](#), can be recommended, providing daily analysis and forecasts from the entire African continent.

In French, there is [Jeune Afrique: Hebdomadaire International Indépendant](#), which covers all of Africa, although the emphasis is on the French-speaking countries.

Of the bigger news magazines published in English, three should be mentioned: [African Business](#), [New African](#) and [The Africa report](#).

Development and aid issues

Among the leading international periodicals focusing on development and aid issues, the following, which provide continual and solid monitoring of the African continent, can be recommended:

[Development and Change](#), which is one of the leading international journals in the field of development studies and social change.

[Development in Practice](#), offers practice-relevant analysis and research relating to development and humanitarianism.

[Development today](#): Nordic outlook on development assistance, business & the environment.

[European Journal of Development Research](#), which often publishes special issues within areas of current interest.

[Forum for Development Studies](#): the Nordic Journal for Development Research.

[Journal of International Development](#).

[World Development](#): the Multi-Disciplinary International Journal Devoted to the Study and Promotion of World Development.

When it comes to Africa-specific periodicals, the following can be recommended:

[Africanus](#): This is a journal of development studies that brings up development issues in the third world and in particular South Africa.

[African Development Review](#), which is published on behalf of the African Development Bank.

It is aimed at scrutinising and analysing development policy in Africa, and focuses on the policy relevance of research results.

[Development Southern Africa](#): journal of the Development Bank Southern Africa.

Scholarly journals

The highest ranking and internationally recognised Africa-specific journals are mainly published in Europe, South Africa and USA. In terms of indexed articles

in Western international periodicals, African researchers are extremely poorly represented, and amount to only 0.7% (Ngobeni 2010:187).

Many less well-known scholarly journals that were, or are, published by African universities are often of high quality, and should definitely not be underestimated, as they reflect the research that is being carried out on the African continent. However, for decades, the academic journals published in Africa have been coping with great difficulties, such as lack of money and resources, and in some countries lack of academic freedom. Likewise, marketing of these journals has been non-existent. They therefore remained invisible and impossible to find for anyone interested. This resulted in irregular publishing, and despite great willingness, publishing usually ceased after a couple of issues.

Since around the year 2000 there have been some successful initiatives to promote and make scholarly journals published in Africa visible. One of the most successful initiatives is [*African Journals OnLine*](#) (AJOL), which started in 1998, with the help of development support. Over the last 15 years, AJOL has constantly grown and today contains nearly 500 peer-reviewed periodicals from 31 countries, and the number is growing steadily. AJOL gives access to searchable tables of contents and abstracts. After having set up an account, it is possible to pay to download articles in PDF. However, around 130 periodicals in AJOL are freely available open access periodicals.

Sabinet in South Africa, which has for many years been working to make electronic resources available to libraries in southern Africa, provides the database [*Sabinet – Open Access Journals Collection*](#).

An important database with peer-reviewed periodicals in full text freely available on the Internet is [*DOAJ – Directory of Open Access Journals*](#). The database has a considerable number of periodicals focused on Africa, of which many are searchable on article level.

In recent years there has also been a breakthrough, mainly through partnerships and co-publishing agreements between African scholarly publishers and commercial international publishers, particularly [*Taylor and Francis*](#), which currently publishes nearly 50 journals within African studies.

Among the multi-disciplinary periodicals of high academic status, the following can be recommended:

[*Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*](#) focusing on humanities, social sciences and environment.

[*Africa Development / Afrique et Développement*](#), which is a bilingual periodical focusing on social sciences. (OA)

[*Africa Today*](#) is one of the leading periodicals within politics, economics and social sciences.

[*African Affairs*](#), which is published on behalf of the Royal African Society, publishes articles about the latest political, social and economic development in countries south of the Sahara.

[*African Identities*](#). Journal of economics, culture and society.

[*African Studies Quarterly*](#) (OA). This is published only in full text with articles about social sciences, politics and history.

[*Eastern Africa Social Science Research Review*](#). Regional forum with reflective and reasoning analysis within economics, politics, social sciences and development.

[*Inkanyiso*](#): The journal of humanities and social sciences (OA)

[*Journal of Modern African Studies*](#). Its main emphasis is on current issues in African politics, economies, societies and international relations.

[*Journal of North African Studies*](#) with focus on the countries north of the Sahara, brings up subjects such as history, sociology, anthropology and economics.

[*Journal of Southern African Studies*](#) publishes articles about current issues within social sciences and humanities in the countries in southern Africa.

[*Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*](#), is the flagship journal of the Indian Ocean Research.

[*Journal of the Middle East and Africa*](#). Official journal of the Association for the Study of Middle East and Africa.

[*Northeast African Studies*](#). Publishes scholarly articles on all aspects of Northeast African studies, including, but not limited to, works in the social sciences and humanities.

[*Politikon*](#): South African journal of political studies, focused mainly on South African politics following the transfer from apartheid to democracy, women and politics, questions of identity and much more.

[*Review of African Political Economy \(ROAPE\)*](#) provides radical analysis of trends, current issues and social processes in Africa.

[*Social Dynamics*](#): a journal of African studies. Produced in Association with the Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town.

Among the more subject-specific periodicals, the following can be recommended:

[*African and Black Diaspora*](#): an international journal. Publication of the DePaul Centre for Black Diaspora.

[*African Arts*](#). Presents original research and critical discourse on traditional, contemporary, and popular African arts and expressive cultures.

[*African Diaspora*](#): A Journal of Transnational Africa in a Global World (OA)

[*African Journal of Aids Research*](#). Contributes to the understanding of the social consequences of HIV/AIDS in Africa. It publishes articles within sociology, demography, epidemiology, social geography, economics, psychology, anthropology, philosophy, education and social work.

[*African Journal on Conflict Resolution*](#). Focuses on conflict handling. (OA)

[*African Population Studies*](#). Freely available periodical focusing on population studies. (OA)

[*African Security*](#). New periodical focusing on conflicts and security issues within and between countries on the African continent.

[*African Security Review*](#). Published by the Institute for Security Studies in

South Africa. It contains articles about human security in a very broad perspective, such as criminality, justice and corruption, weapons control, peace initiatives and conflict handling.

Africultures. In-depth analysis of contemporary cultural expressions in Africa and the diaspora.

Agenda: Empowering women for gender equity.

Ecquid novi: African journalism studies

Gender and Behaviour published by the Department of Psychology, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. It focuses on gender issues from a psychological and behavioural science point of view.

International Journal of Transitional Justice. Topics covered by the journal include, but are not limited to, truth commissions, universal jurisdiction, post-conflict social reconciliation, victim and perpetrator studies, international and domestic prosecutions, institutional transformation, vetting, memorialisation, reparations and ex-combatant reintegration.

Irinkèrindò: a Journal of African Migration (OA).

Journal of African Business: the official journal of the International Academy of African Business and Development.

Journal of African Cinemas.

Journal of African Cultural Studies is a forum for African culture both within and outside Africa

Journal of African History publishes articles stretching from the Stone Age up to our own time. In recent years, greater focus has been paid to economic, cultural and social history, and subject areas such as gender roles, demography, health, propaganda, labour history and similar have been highlighted.

Journal of African Law. The leading periodical within its area, focusing on Africa south of the Sahara. The periodical has a separate section that deals with new legislation, case studies, proposals for new laws and the latest international developments that affect Africa.

Matatu: Journal of African Culture & Society.

Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art

Nordic Journal of African Studies. Publishes mainly articles about African linguistics, literature and culture. (OA)

Research in African Literatures. The leading periodical within African literature.

SAHARA-J: Journal of Social Aspects of HIV/Aids. (OA)

Urban forum. It examines urban societies from a variety of perspectives, including: issues of local governance, the role of city planning in free market systems, and the impact of multiethnic and multicultural formations in urban affairs.

Older newspapers and periodicals on microfilm, in digital or printed form

That which is news today becomes an important source of information in the longer term, with respect to research into the history of modern Africa. The sources that historians have at their disposal are often limited, because archives of important documentation are not available for various reasons. This is often due to a lack of any archive to take care of documentation, such as official documents, or to them being destroyed in wars or being subjected to moisture and insect infestation, and therefore being in very poor condition.

This means that non-academic sources, such as old newspapers, news magazines and old news broadcasts on the radio with eyewitness reports and interviews are very valuable materials (Ellis, 2002). However, one must be careful and assess the reliability of this type of material very carefully, as many newspapers have been the mouthpieces of regimes that limit the freedom of speech.

The Nordic Africa Institute has a collection consisting of around 90 old newspapers, which can be searched in [AfricaLit](#). The collection consists of newspapers that are unique, that is to say they are only available at the Nordic Africa Institute and cannot be obtained from another library.

[CAMP – Cooperative Africana Materials Project](#) at the Centre for Research Libraries in Chicago is a world-wide collaborative project, the aim of which is to collect and microfilm unique material. An important part of the project since the start in 1963 has been to collect and microfilm African daily newspapers. Microfilmed or digitalised African newspapers can be searched for in [AFRINUL – African Newspaper Union List](#). There is also a current [list of all of CAMP's microfilmed titles](#). As a member of CAMP, the Nordic Africa Institute's library can order-in microfilmed African newspapers via interlibrary loan or by accessing digitalised newspapers.

Another example of a successful project is [The DISA Project](#) – Digital Imaging Project of South Africa – which is a national project with the purpose of which is to collect and make South African material documenting the liberation and anti-apartheid movements, during the period from 1950 up until the first free election in 1994, available. The main part of the documentation in DISA was illegal during the apartheid period. For this reason, periodicals and booklets from many libraries around the world have been collected, among them items from the Nordic Africa Institute's library. [56 periodicals have been digitalised](#) and been made available on the Internet.

[SA Media](#) is a database containing more than 3 million newspaper- and journal articles from the mid-1970s onwards, within social sciences, politics and economics. The content is mainly focused on Southern Africa. The articles are searchable by keyword and subject and can be downloaded in Pdf format.

[Summary of World Broadcasts \(BBC\) – SWB, Middle East and Africa and Latin America](#) – contains summaries of the BBC's foreign radio broadcasts during the years 1939–1997. They have been compiled by the Monitoring Service of the

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). The Nordic Africa Institute has SWB for the period 1964–1997, and they can be ordered up and used in the library's reading room.

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The web addresses are to the publisher's/periodical's website, with information about the periodical and its subject area, subscriptions and prices. The year is when the periodical started.

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- World development*. The Multidisciplinary International Journal Devoted to the Study and Promotion of World Development. Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1973– http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/386/description#description

Databases and other web resources

- Africa Intelligence* – <http://www.africaintelligence.com>
- AfricaLit (Nordic Africa Institute's library catalogue)* – <http://africalit.nai.uu.se/F/>
- African Journals Directory* – <http://africa.isp.msu.edu/AEJP/directory.php>
- African Journals OnLine (AJOL)* – <http://ajol.info/>
- AFRINUL – African Newspaper Union List* – <http://www.crl.edu/grn/aftrinul/search>
- AllAfrica* – <http://allafrica.com/>
- A-Z Electronic Journals focused on Africa – Nordic Africa Institute* - http://www.nai.uu.se/library/resources/journals/africa_specific_ejournals/
- CAMP – Cooperative Africana Materials Project* – <http://www.crl.edu/area-studies/camp>
- The DISA Project – Digital Imaging Project of South Africa* – <http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za/>
- DOAJ – Directory of Open Access Journals* – <http://www.doaj.org/>
- E-AfricaLit* – http://africalit.nai.uu.se/F/-/?func=file&file_name=find-b&local_base=e-africalit
- Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)* – <http://eiu.com>
- Electronic Journals Library – EZB (IlissAfrica)* – <http://www.ilissafrika.de/en/ezb/ezb.html>
- Electronic Newspapers of Africa* – http://library.columbia.edu/locations/global/virtual-libraries/african_studies/newspapers.html
- A Guide to Africa on the Internet* – <http://www.nai.uu.se/library/resources/guidetoafrica/>
- IlissAfrica – Internet library Sub-Saharan Africa* – <http://www.ilissafrika.de/en>
- IRIN – Integrated Regional Information Network, humanitarian news and analysis* – <http://www.irinnews.org/irin-africa.aspx>

List of free Africa related e-journals (OA) <http://www.ascleiden.nl/?q=content/list-free-africa-related-e-journals>

Nordic Africa Institute – <http://www.nai.uu.se/>

Nordic Africa Institute library. Periodicals – <http://www.nai.uu.se/library/resources/journals/index.xml?Language=en>

SA Media - <http://www.samedia.uovs.ac.za/>

Sabinet – Open Access Journals Collection – <http://www.sabinet.co.za/>

Taylor & Francis – <http://www.tandfonline.com/action/showPublications?category=43983479>

Statistics

Katarina Hjortsäter

Entirely revised by Ingela Dahlin March 2014

Statistics consist of numerical data that describes a phenomenon or an activity. Using statistical information, you can gain insight into society and how it is managed. Statistical data is important, both as a component in publications and as the basis for studies and research. Statistics describing, for example, population, education, occupation, salaries, prices, interest rates, exports, imports, production, health and housing reflect a country's social and economic conditions. Today, these can be accessed in both printed and electronic format, and they are usually classified into two groups, national and international statistics, based on the sources of the information.

Finding Statistics

National Statistics

National statistics means statistical data collected from national sources. This is information that is produced by state authorities with responsibility for statistics. The central statistics agencies of individual countries are important producers. They have the task of producing official statistics and are responsible for coordinating the state's production of statistics, and for making it accessible. Today, most African countries have statistics agencies. Other important producers of national statistics are central and commercial banks, non-governmental institutions, research institutes and individual researchers' publications in scholarly journals. In other words, national statistics describes the activities of an individual nation. They are detailed and information is usually available at the regional level.

International Statistics

International statistics can be found through large organisations such as the World Bank, OECD, UN and other organisations. They produce both their own statistics and also publish statistics from individual countries' central statistics bodies. International statistics are not as detailed as national statistics, but may fulfil an important function when comparing countries.

Statistics in Printed Format and on the Internet

National and international statistics are currently produced in both printed and electronic format. Printed publications consist primarily of handbooks of vari-

ous kinds, such as yearbooks, bank reports, periodicals, official publications and more. Statistics are also included in other publications, and, when looking for such information, it can therefore be useful to search in documents that not only report statistical data. The Nordic Africa Institute library has a large amount of national and international statistics in printed form, which can be searched via the library catalogue [AfricaLit](#). Particular mention should be made of the library's large collection of official publications from African countries containing various types of national statistics. This material is described in more detail in the chapter [Official publications](#).

The growth of information technology has given us statistics in electronic format, which in turn offers many advantages, not least ease of access. More and more statistical information is now available in databases and for downloading via the Internet. The development has also affected the production of statistics, and has contributed to the fact that large amounts of data can now be transferred, stored and processed quickly. As a user, it is easy to tailor one's own tables, maps and diagrams as statistical data can be processed together. Libraries, research institutes and international organisations offer – via their websites - the opportunity to search for references in databases or library catalogues and link collections with links to websites and statistical material. Databases on the Internet are not always accessible to the general public, but larger libraries usually have access through agreements. You can, of course, choose to go directly to the central statistics agencies or similar bodies in individual countries to get national statistics, or directly to the websites of international organisations. On the website of the Nordic Africa Institute, the library has collected links to national statistics sources, such as statistics agencies and central banks in the link collection [A Guide to Africa on the Internet](#). They can be found under each country under the heading [Links sorted by country or region](#). Links to other sources of statistics on the Internet are available under the heading [Links sorted by subject](#). On its website, [Statistics Sweden has a link collection](#) that functions as a guide to international statistics on the Internet. The links are organised according to country and subject.

Free text searching using search tools on the Internet can work as a complement, as this can give hits for material that had not been considered before. All information gathered from the Internet, and in particular statistical information, must be quality controlled.

Quality Control

Regardless of whether you use printed or electronic sources, quality control is important. When it comes to control of statistics, you should consider in particular how many intermediaries there are between the source/producer and the publisher of the information. The primary source is the body that gathers, compiles and produces statistical information. The best way is to gather the information direct from the source. A body that only publishes statistical data

collected and compiled by someone else is a secondary source. More about what to consider in terms of quality control in general can be found in the chapter [Africa information on the Internet](#).

Official statistical information is made up of estimates, and is often based on representative samples; for this reason sampling errors may occur. However, in some cases they are based on entire population counts. The information from different countries or from different points in time is not always comparable either, due to differing definitions and measuring processes. The situation in a country may also be of importance as to whether it is possible to find certain statistical information.

Some Sources of Statistics

Handbooks

Printed publications that include statistics, such as handbooks, can currently be sought out in various library catalogues via the Internet, among them the Nordic Africa Institute library catalogue [AfricaLit](#). Handbooks of particular interest when searching for statistics are the yearbooks *Africa South of Sahara and The Middle East and North Africa* (Europa Publications). They include country by country summaries with statistics showing social and economic conditions. Other handbooks are presented below in the sections about organisations and the UN system.

One title that should be mentioned, even if it is published at long intervals, is *Africa at a Glance: Facts and Figures* published by the Africa Institute of South Africa (Pretoria) since 1968 (the latest was published 2013). It contains basic facts and statistics showing social, economic and political conditions, presented in clear tables. Due to its reliable sources the handbook is recommended, both for public libraries and for specialised Africa collections.

Africa: A Publication of the Corporate Council on Africa and Business Books International (Business Books International) is a book published annually. It does not contain large amounts of statistics, but is a handbook worth mentioning in the circumstances. It lists addresses, telephone numbers, email and, if available, web addresses of agencies in the African countries.

The reference work *African Studies Companion Online* edited by Marie-José Wijnjtjes (Brill) also gathers together sources of statistics. This publication is available electronically via the Nordic Africa Institute library.

The periodical EIU Country Reports, which is published on a quarterly or monthly basis by the Economist Intelligence Unit, presents summaries for each country relating to economics in particular but also to political circumstances, and contains up-to-date statistics. It is available online via the Nordic Africa Institute library. Further information about this periodical is available in the chapter [Periodicals](#).

Organisations

International organisations and institutions both produce and publish statistics, and are important sources. They publish printed material in the form of annual reports, bulletins, newsletters and similar. This material is often also available on their websites in various electronic formats. Often there are special websites where all statistical information has been gathered together. Below is a presentation of various organisations that supply statistics relevant to Africa. All of the organisations are listed at the end of this chapter, together with their website addresses.

[AFRISTAT](#): *Observatoire Économique et Statistique d'Afrique Subsaharienne* is an international organisation whose goal it is to strengthen the development of social, environmental and economic statistics in the member countries. The organisation supports the national central statistics agencies in their work and works for regional and economic integration, which in turn leads to correspondence and more comparable statistical data. On AFRISTAT's website there are national statistics for 19 countries, mainly Francophone Africa.

[African Development Bank Group](#) (AfDB Group) consists of African Development Bank (AfDB), African Development Fund (ADF) and Nigeria Trust Fund (NTF). It is the foremost institution in Africa working with financial development, the goal of which is to promote sustainable economic growth and reduce poverty in Africa. AfDB publishes several publications containing statistical information. *[African Development Report](#)*, contains statistics showing economic and social conditions. *[Compendium of Statistics on Bank Group Operations](#)* reports on various banking operations in relation to loans and the exchange rates of different countries. *[Gender, Poverty and Environmental Indicators on African Countries](#)* provides both comparative statistics between countries and country-specific information about gender, environment, living conditions and poverty in Africa. The publication also follows up the development goals in the UN's Millennium Declaration. *[AfDB Statistics Pocketbook](#)* summarises various economic and social data about the member countries and the ADB's activities. Most of the information is gathered from the publications mentioned above. African Economic Outlook (AEO) is a publication jointly prepared and published by the African Development Bank (AfDB), the OECD Development Center, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The report gives a broad overview of the economic conditions on the continent. The goal is to annually review the current situation and short-term development in selected African countries, seen from a global perspective. A further development of the report is the website *[AfricanEconomicOutlook.org](#)*, which provides comprehensive and comparable data and analysis in 53 African countries.

[Afrobarometer](#) is an independent research project that measures public attitudes and opinions on social, political, and economic matters in Sub-Saharan

Africa. Presently, surveys are conducted in 35 African countries and are repeated on a regular cycle. The results are based on face-to-face and house-to-house interviews of individuals and are considered reliable. Because the instrument asks a standard set of questions, countries can be systematically compared. Its goal is to increase democratisation and civic participation.

Bank for International Settlements (BIS) is an international organisation that supports monetary and financial cooperation and serves as a bank for central banks and international organisations. On the website *BIS Statistics*, BIS publishes statistics relating to the international banking system and financial market. The website makes a number of publications available for downloading, among them *BIS quarterly review*. There is also a *list of central banks* in the world with links to their respective websites, on which statistics can often be found.

Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG). Established in 2007, the IIAG is the most comprehensive collection of quantitative data on governance in Africa. Compiled in partnership with experts from a number of the continent's institutions, it provides an annual assessment of governance in every African country. The IIAG provides a framework for citizens, governments, institutions and business to assess the delivery of public goods and services, and policy outcomes, across Africa.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) collects statistics about economic and social development. The statistics come from the member countries' central statistics agencies. The organisation's website has lots of statistical information that can be downloaded, in particular from the website *OECD Data Lab*. On *The OECD and Africa* you can find more specific information about Africa. A particular one of these is the website *AfricanEconomicOutlook.org*, which is a further development of the annual report with the same name, and the database *International Development Statistics (IDS)*. The latter covers bilateral and multilateral aid to developing countries. *OECDiLibrary* (licensed resource) is OECD's online library, in which you can find e-books, e-periodicals and interactive statistics databases. Examples of such databases are *OECD.Stat*, which contains the OECD's complete statistics, and *OECD.Stat Extracts*, containing a selection of statistical information. The publications *African Economic Outlook (AEO)* and *Geographical Distribution of Financial Flows to Aid Recipients* can both be downloaded in their entirety from *OECDiLibrary*. *AEO* is a study focusing only on Africa, in which the countries are compared country by country. It illuminates African economic conditions from a global perspective. A *pocket edition of AEO* is available online. In the other publication, you can find information about aid and help to developing countries.

OECD and BIS, together with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (which is presented later on in the chapter) have compiled their individual statistical information about foreign debts of developing countries

on [Joint External Debt Hub](#) (JEDH). The database is freely available and makes it easy to compare countries.

[World Trade Organization](#) (WTO) deals with the global rules of trade between nations. Its main function is to ensure that trade flows as smoothly, predictably and freely as possible. The WTO produces a wide range of publications focusing on various aspects of its activities and the latest developments in world trade. [World Trade Report](#), is an annual publication that aims to deepen understanding about trends in trade, policy issues and the multilateral trading system. Another important publication is [International Trade Statistics](#), which offers an annual overview of global trade statistics, providing detailed statistics on trade by region, merchandise trade by product and trade in commercial services by category. The website [WTO Statistics database](#) provides trade profiles, tariff profiles and a time series section on international trade.

The UN System

The UN and its various bodies both produce and publish statistics. [United Nations Statistics Division](#) (UNSD) lists on its website a number of statistical publications divided up according to subject, such as demography, energy, environment, gender, human settlement, industry, economics, social issues and trade. It also lists publications that are available electronically. Since 1949, the UNSD has published the [United Nations Statistical Yearbook](#), which provides a long list of international statistics covering social and economic conditions, and also activities at national, regional and global level. It covers periods of one to ten years, depending on the availability of statistical data. The information is collected from both national and international sources, and compiled by UNSD. Other frequently requested publications are [World Statistics Pocketbook](#) and [Monthly Bulletin of Statistics](#) (MBS). The first publication gathers together comprehensive statistics country by country. All the African countries are represented. The second publication, MBS, reports current statistics covering social and economic conditions. It contains more than 50 tables of data, reported by month, quarter and/or year, across a number of various subjects covering important economic trends and developments. [UNdata](#), is a web-based data service for the global user community. It provides access to major UN statistical databases and those of several international organisations. 34 databases and some 60 million records, covering economic, social, financial and development topics, are available. There is also a glossary of statistical terms and general country information.

[United Nations Economic Commission for Africa](#) (UNECA) works with regional integration and promoting international cooperation for Africa's economic and social development. UNECA compiles and publishes a number of different publications that contain statistics, including a number of series, among them the [Economic Report on Africa](#), published annually. Another important publication is the [African Statistical Yearbook](#) in which statistical data for UNECA's

member countries is presented country by country, and also regionally. There are also further publications for downloading, dealing with subjects such as demography, population, gender, agriculture and environment, including statistical information.

[*United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*](#) (UNCTAD) promotes the development-friendly integration of developing countries into the world economy and monitors the areas of trade and development, and closely related areas, such as finance, technology, investment and sustainable development. UNCTAD compiles, validates and processes a wide range of statistical data collected from national and international sources. [*UNCTADstat*](#), is a data dissemination platform with all of UNCTAD's online statistical databases accessible. The *ICT Analysis Section* of UNCTAD works to measure ICT in enterprises and the ICT sector. The [*Measuring ICT Website*](#) provides information on the development of ICT statistics and indicators worldwide, with an emphasis on supporting ICT policies and the information economies in developing countries. Selected *UNCTADstat* data is also disseminated in various publications available in printed format, and some of these are also available as downloads. [*The UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics*](#) provides a comprehensive collection of statistical data relevant to the analysis of international trade, investment and development, for individual countries and for economic and trade groupings. The [*World Investment Report*](#) focuses on trends in foreign direct investment (FDI) worldwide and at the regional and country levels, as well as emerging measures to improve FDI's contribution to development. The [*Economic Development in Africa Report*](#) analyses selected aspects of Africa's development problems and major policy issues confronting African countries. [*Development and Globalization: Facts and Figures \(2012\)*](#) is a brief synopsis of data and information that offers some explanations for new and emerging economic trends. It is published at longer intervals, but is important from a statistical point of view. Information about further publications and downloadable documents can be found on UNCTAD's website.

[*Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*](#) (FAO) works to reduce famine and malnutrition, and to improve food standards. The organisation also helps its member countries with sustainable development within the agricultural sector. [*FAOSTAT*](#), the FAO statistical database, is a multilingual database that contains more than one million statistical series from 1961 and onwards, and covers 245 countries and territories and 35 regional areas with statistics on agriculture, forestry and fisheries, land and water resources and use, climate, environment, population, gender, nutrition, poverty, rural development, education, health and more. [*CountrySTAT*](#) is focused on a small number of countries, several of which are African.

As regards printed publications, FAO publishes a large number of titles every year containing statistical information, such as yearbooks, all with the title FAO Yearbook. [*FAO Statistical Yearbook*](#) is available for download on the website.

The [*International Labour Organization*](#) (ILO) works out strategies and programmes for promoting human rights, improving working and living conditions and increasing opportunities for work. ILO issues a long list of publications containing statistics about labour-related issues, among them *Yearbook of Labour Statistics*, which presents statistical data in time series or by country. The organisation also has a comprehensive website, where a lot of statistics can be found. The [*Statistics and Databases*](#) website has a number of useful and accessible databases. *ILOSTAT* is a new database that will completely replace *LABORSTA*. The database shows labour statistics, covering variables such as employment, unemployment, salaries and similar. For statistics on child labour, see the website [*Child labour statistics*](#)

The [*World Health Organization*](#) (WHO) runs and coordinates international healthcare, and promotes and coordinates research into the prevention of various diseases. Since 1995, WHO has published The [*World Health Report*](#), which deals with the current world health situation. WHO publications about Africa are primarily collected on the website [*Library and Documentation Centre*](#). Items worth mentioning are the [*Annual Report of the Regional Director*](#) and [*Atlas of African Health Statistics*](#). All the data and figures in the atlas can be accessed through the [*African Health Observatory*](#). The [*World Health Statistics Report*](#), which includes statistics covering the health and healthcare sector, is available via [*Global Health Observatory \(GHO\)*](#) database, which is WHO's main portal to statistics on health. The website also contains [*country statistics*](#), which gathers together a broad range of health-related subjects, such as mortality, diseases, risk factors and nutrition. More statistics can be found on WHO's website under the heading [*Data and Statistics*](#), organised both according to the name of the database and by subject.

[*United Nations Population Fund*](#) (UNFPA) helps to establish health programmes, concerned with family planning and sexual and reproductive health, and also with questions pertaining to rapid population growth. The publications [*UNFPA Annual Report*](#) and [*State of World Population*](#), are available on the website.

The [*United Nations Development Programme*](#) (UNDP) assists countries in building up the capacity for sustainable development and carries out much of its work in Africa. It is a global network for human development, which works towards the improvement of living conditions, and is active in many different areas. UNDP focuses much of its work on the promotion of democracy, supports initiatives for peace and reconciliation and prevention of crises and fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic. It also supports environmental programmes, as well as working towards building up communications technology in Africa. Since 1990, UNDP has published the [*Human Development Report*](#) (HDR) which is a written collaboration with independent researchers and contains numerous [*statistical data*](#). The organisation collaborates closely with governments all over the world, and gains access to the national statistics of individual countries.

The [*United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*](#) (UNHCR) leads and coordinates international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems. Statistical data is collected on the website [*Statistics & Operational Data*](#). It contains the [*UNHCR Statistical Online Population Database*](#) with information about 180 countries at the national, regional, and global level. Here you can also find the [*UNHCR Statistical Yearbook*](#) and [*The State of the World's Refugees*](#), which gives a detailed and far-reaching analysis of the miserable conditions the world's refugees live under. The publication is irregular, with six editions between 1993 and 2012. Reports and other publications with up-to-date statistics for development and changes in terms of people in flight can be found in the [*Statistics Catalogue*](#).

The [*World Food Programme*](#) (WFP) has the task of handing out food during famine catastrophes, and to help build up communities through the “food-for-work” project. The annual publication [*The Year in Review*](#) together with other reports, is available from the website. Here you can also find the [*Hunger Statistics*](#) database, with figures and facts about world hunger.

The [*United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*](#) (UNESCO) works to facilitate understanding of great changes in the world and to draw up intellectual and ethical guidelines. The website includes the [*UNESCO-DOC Database*](#), which includes downloadable documents. The search function makes it easy to find relevant publications. In 1999, the [*UIS*](#) (UNESCO Institute for Statistics) was formed, and its website publishes comprehensive statistics about education, literacy, culture and communication.

[*United Nations Children's Fund*](#) (UNICEF) defends, promotes and protects children's rights. Every year, UNICEF issues a large number of publications, among them the [*UNICEF Annual Report*](#), [*The State of the World's Children*](#), a report on the well-being of children and [*Progress for Children*](#), reports on the Millennium Goals. The organisation has a comprehensive website and in order to find statistics, look under the headings [*Information by country and programme*](#) or [*What we do*](#). The statistics are presented in conjunction with each country or subject. The website [*Childinfo.org*](#) contains statistical information, including data from the above-mentioned publications.

[*UNAIDS*](#), the [*Joint United National Programme on HIV/AIDS*](#), works to prevent the spread of AIDS, provide care and support to those infected or affected by the disease, and to reduce the vulnerability of individuals and communities against HIV/AIDS. UNAIDS regularly publishes the [*Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*](#). It includes available national information and gives overviews and comments on the epidemic. Reports, fact sheets and other publications, as well as statistical data about HIV/AIDS, are available on the website, in particular under the country profiles.

The [*World Bank*](#) publishes [*World Development Indicators*](#) (WDI), which are the bank group's primary summary of development data. They also publish [*Afri-*](#)

[ca Development Indicators \(ADI\)](#), which is a detailed collection of development data from large parts of Africa. [International Debt Statistics](#) (formerly known as Global Development Finance) is the World Bank's annual study of trends and future prospects for the flow of finance in developing countries. It also contains statistics showing country debts and summarises data for regions and income groups. All three publications are available via the [The World Bank Open Data](#) website. Here, the World Bank offers free access to statistics on subjects such as health, economic growth and human development. Here you can also find the [Country at-a-Glance](#) tables, which provide a quick summary of a country. However, for comparisons between countries, WDI is recommended. In the so-called [Data Catalog](#) you can find further sources. As regards publications, the range is great and can be found on the website listed according to country, region, subject, and so on. One publication worth mentioning is [The World Bank Annual Report](#).

The [International Monetary Fund \(IMF\)](#) publishes statistics about IMF loans, exchange rates and economic conditions primarily in the member countries, and also issues a number of publications freely available in [IMF eLibrary](#). IMF regularly publishes the [World Economic Outlook \(WEO\)](#), which focuses on economic development at global, regional and national level. The [World Economic Outlook \(WEO\) Database](#) includes a selection of macroeconomic data series and also useful information about national accounting, inflation, unemployment figures, balance of payments, trade, etc. On the website [Data and Statistics](#) there are further databases within the subject area, several of which are freely available. One of them is [IMF Financial Data by Country](#), which summarises the member countries' relations with the IMF.

The [United Nations Environment Programme \(UNEP\)](#) coordinates the UN's environmental activities, supports developing countries in introducing environmentally friendly policies and encourages sustainable development. [UNEP Regional Office for Africa \(ROA\)](#) works in the region on all its seven priority areas: climate change, disasters and conflict, ecosystems management, environmental governance, harmful substances and hazardous waste, resource efficiency and environment under review. UNEP's [Global Resource Information Database \(GRID\)](#) together with the Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN) supports the development of [African Population Database Documentation](#). This is a comprehensive database of administrative units with associated population figures in Africa, with a summarised population estimate for the years 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000.

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Web Resources

- Nordic Africa Institute* – <http://www.nai.uu.se/>
- AfricaLit* – <http://africalit.nai.uu.se/F/>
- A Guide to Africa on the Internet* – www.nai.uu.se/library/resources/guidetoafrica/
- Statistics Sweden* – www.scb.se/
- AfDB* – www.afdb.org/
- AFRISTAT* – www.afristat.org/
- AFROBAROMETER* – www.afrobarometer.org/
- The Ibrahim Index of African Governance* – www.moiibrahimfoundation.org/iiag/
- BIS* – www.bis.org/
- FAO* – www.fao.org/
- ILO* – www.ilo.org/
- IMF* – www.imf.org/
- OECD* – www.oecd.org/
- UNSD* – <http://unstats.un.org/>
- UNAIDS* – www.unaids.org/
- UNCTAD* – www.unctad.org/
- UNDP* – www.undp.org/
- UNECA* – www.uneca.org/
- UNEP/GRID* – <http://na.unep.net/>
- UNESCO* – www.unesco.org/
- UNFPA* – www.unfpa.org/
- UNHCR* – www.unhcr.org/
- UNICEF* – www.unicef.org/
- World Bank* – www.worldbank.org/
- WHO* – www.who.org/
- WFP* – <http://www.wfp.org/>

Official publications

António Lourenço

Entirely revised by Mattias Åkesson, March 2014

Official publications comprise all publications produced under the official auspices of legislative bodies, decision-making and judicial organs, civil service departments, courts of law, independent institutions, committees, people in authority, etc. IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) describes official publications as follows:

“An official publication is defined by the status of the issuing source regardless of the subject-matter, content or physical form” (Nurcombe 1997, p. xix).

“Official documents” is the general search term for material of this nature in the Nordic Africa Institute’s online library catalogue, [AfricaLit](#). The library began acquiring official publications in 1962 when the Nordic Africa Institute commenced its activities, since they were considered to constitute fundamental and crucial source material within the field of the social sciences. With time, an acquisition profile came to be established in line with the library’s subject focus and based on the material’s significance, accessibility and demand. Official publications are essential to scholarly social studies on Africa as they are primary information sources for economic, legal, government and political data and are considered to be of lasting value.

An important problem to keep in mind regarding official publications from certain African countries is the question of reliability. The reason being that such publications may be used as mouthpieces by governmental powers in order to further their political goals or to give expression to political values during times of crisis. This mainly concerns countries with small volumes of official documents that tend to limit access to information. Thus, collections of official publications from colonial times should also be read with a critical eye. Political instability and catastrophes that repeatedly befall the African continent sometimes make it impossible to gain access to certain official publications. A connection can be made between conflict and war on the one hand and the number of official documents issued on the other. In addition, the economic crisis affecting many African states has left a mark on the way in which public administrations function in those countries. Other problems arise when certain official publications are difficult to obtain, as few lists are available for checking newer publications and also because, in the absence of a central government printer, it is sometimes necessary for various sectors of the government administration to publish their own material. Library acquisitions are made via agents, from

bookshops, by direct contact with the producers, or through embassies. Today it is possible to procure official publications via email in certain cases, for example from central statistical agencies.

Nowadays, authorities with the important task of disseminating basic decision-making data are choosing with greater frequency to make their official publications available on the Internet. The range, however, is still uneven. Some states offer a rich collection of official publications in full text, many in PDF format; there are other countries that supply only a limited number of official publications in summarised form. Yet it can be anticipated that a basic range of official publications from all of Africa's countries will be available on the Internet before long, in the form of constitutions, censuses, development plans, budgets, economic reports, statistics, and so on. A problem, however, is that this type of material could be removed as soon as it loses its current interest value. Therefore, the Nordic Africa Institute, with its aim of preserving such publications for future research, must continue to purchase them in the form of printed publications or CD-ROMs. Presently under discussion are questions of copyright policy regarding the preservation of important documents only available on the Internet.

On the IFLA's website [Government Information and Official Publications](#), the debate surrounding government information and official publications can be followed.

A large selection of the Nordic Africa Institute library's collection of official publications can be located in the library catalogue, [AfricaLit](#), and in the Swedish union catalogue, [LIBRIS](#). A small number of older publications held by the library are uncatalogued and are kept in storage. It is quite simple to search in [AfricaLit](#). If, for example, one enters "official documents Kenya", the search result will be a list of official documents from Kenya that are available in the library. In recent years the growing number of official publications being catalogued in [LIBRIS](#) has led to an increase in the demand for such material. The library at the Nordic Africa Institute lends out official publications (on a 3-week reading room loan), chiefly to Nordic research libraries.

Heavy, dull and monotonous official publications are now being replaced by monograph-type formats that make for easier reading. It is enough to take a quick look at publications to see that there are not only figures and tables in these publications, but also pictures, colour maps and diagrams, printed on high quality paper. In short, these volumes are easy to handle and pleasant to read.

Main groups of official publications

1. Parliamentary documents, bills and other related documents: annual and audit reports, official reports of investigations commissions, budget proposals and reports, conference papers, policy documents, etc.
2. Parliamentary debates: the Nordic Africa Institute's library holds a particularly comprehensive collection of debates from South Africa's parliament.

3. Constitutions and legislation.
4. Statistics: annual statistics, statistical abstracts, national accounts, economic and financial indicators, as well as statistical data on agriculture, education, housing, health issues, transport, tourism, the environment, gender, labour, migration, trade and industry. Also available are household surveys and statistics concerning household consumption, social conditions, etc.
5. Population censuses: at regional as well as national level. These are probably the most important statistical data.
6. Development plans, both national and local.
7. Policy documents concerning all areas of interest in the field of social sciences.
8. Research reports.
9. Government gazettes: older collections have been kept and are available for studies in the Nordic Africa Institute Library.

Official publications on the Internet

One of the most important websites for official publications on the Internet is [WorldLII](#) (World Legal Information Institute). It is a useful website with many links that also include legislation. In the Nordic Africa Institute's link collection, [A Guide to Africa on the Internet](#), compiled by the library, you find links to both governments and official documents. [The Keele Guide to African Government and Politics on the Internet](#) is another useful link collection.

The World Bank's web page [The World Bank – Countries and Regions](#) includes a comprehensive collection of official publications with documents in full text. Most documents are scanned from the originals. Here you can find various types of statistics, such as household surveys, policy documents, etc. The most interesting collections relate to countries for which it is usually very difficult to find documents, such as Angola, Mali, Benin and São Tomé e Príncipe. [The World Bank – Poverty Reduction and Equity](#) concerns mainly poverty follow-up and assessment. On the website of the [African Development Bank](#) there are collections about subjects such as country strategies, gender profiles, economic reports and poverty reduction and follow-up.

The website of the International Monetary Fund, IMF, holds collections of strategies for poverty reduction [Poverty reduction strategy papers](#) (PRSP). These have been prepared in collaboration with the governments of the individual countries. The documents provide a concrete picture of the macroeconomic prerequisites and various structural and social action programmes to reduce poverty. The database also covers a collection of current statistics within various areas.

The documents are updated every third year. The collections are available for most of the African countries. A similar site is the portal [Planipolis](#) which is maintained by UNESCO and holds education plans and policies from most African countries. You can also find Poverty reduction strategies on this website.

[*Demographic and Health Surveys*](#) is a website produced by the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Here you can find official documents and statistics relating to population, health and nutrition for many African countries. Statistical collections contain unique data and provide information about subjects such as ethnic groups, education, female circumcision, etc.

For the French-speaking African countries, there are some interesting websites. For example, [*Investir en Zone Franc*](#) contains statistics, and [*AFRISTAT*](#) gives economic, social and environmental statistics from its 19 member states in mainly Francophone Africa. The website includes, for example, '[*Bulletin de Données Conjoncturelles*](#)' with statistics and economic indicators for the member countries.

Constitutions can also be found on the Internet. Three websites that may be useful are: [*Constitute*](#), which is developed by the Comparative Constitutions Project at University of Texas in Austin, [*Constitution Finder*](#) (The School of Law, University of Richmond), and [*International Constitutional Law*](#) (Institut für öffentliches Recht, Universität Bern). On [*Law Library of Congress*](#) there are links to various websites. A database that is now online is [*Database of the Constitutions of Sub-Saharan Africa*](#) with a collection of constitutions as well as amendments and constitutional bills. The documents are provided in their original language and, if available, in their English translation. The database was set up with the support of the German Foundation for Peace Research for a research project at the University of Konstanz.

On the Internet, you can also find various parliamentary documents, bills and other documents as well as collections of legislation. On the Inter-Parliamentary Union's website, there is a link collection to practically all parliaments, [*Websites of National Parliaments*](#), and [*PARLINE Database*](#), which contains information on the structure and working methods of most parliaments in the world.

Many African governments have separate websites for each department or ministry. For example, if you are interested in health in Namibia you can go to the website of the [*Namibia Ministry of Health and Social Service*](#) to find health surveys and policy documents in full text.

National statistical agencies

In [*A Guide to Africa on the Internet*](#) you can find links to the central statistics agencies of most African countries under the heading 'Links sorted according to region or country – (Statistics)'. Development is rapid, and new links are continually being added. Many African statistical offices have websites with a lot of publications available in full text. [*Uganda Bureau of Statistics*](#), [*National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda*](#), [*National Bureau of Statistics - Tanzania*](#), and [*Statistics South Africa*](#) are some examples of websites where you can find recent statistic publications, e.g. censuses, statistical yearbooks and surveys. On the United Nations website, there is a collection of almost all [*National Statistical Offices in the world*](#).

National banks

The official publications collection also includes a number of publications from national banks that are of interest. In the link collection *A Guide to Africa on the Internet* you can find links to the national banks of various countries (Banks). Just like the statistical agencies, many websites of the national banks in Africa provides their publications in full text. *Bank of Ghana*, *Central Bank of Kenya* and *Bank of Botswana* all have recent annual reports and bank bulletins available online. Angola also has data collections with economic indicators and other types of statistics – that are not easy to find – under *Banco Nacional de Angola*.

For French-speaking West Africa, there are links to national banks in *Banque Centrale des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (BCEAO). For Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Chad, there are links in *Banque des États de l'Afrique Centrale* (BEAC). For more links, see also the wiki *List of Central Banks* and *Central Bank Websites*.

References

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- IFLA Government Information and Official Publications (GIOPS) Blog. Available on <http://blogs.ifla.org/giops/>
- Nurcombe, Valerie J., ed. *Information Sources in Official Publications*. London: Bowker, Sauer, 1997.
- Westfall, Gloria. *Guide to Official Publications to Foreign Countries*. Washington DC and Chicago: CIS and American Library Association, 1997.

Internet resources

- AFRISTAT* <http://www.afristat.org/>
- Demographic and Health Surveys* <http://www.measuredhs.com/countries/start.cfm>
- Investir en Zone Franc* http://www.izf.net/espace_general/
- The Keele Guide to African Government and Politics on the Internet* <http://www.keele.ac.uk/depts/por/afbase.htm>
- The World Bank (Countries and Regions)* <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country>
- The World Bank (Poverty Reduction and Equity)* <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPOVERTY/EXTPA/0,,contentMDK:20202860-menuPK:435735-pagePK:148956-piPK:216618-theSitePK:430367-isCURL:Y,00.html>
- WorldLII* http://www.worldlii.org/cgi-bin/gen_region.pl?region=250

Alleviation of poverty

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) <http://www.imf.org/external/np/prsp/prsp.asp>

Constitutions

Constitute <https://www.constituteproject.org>

Constitution Finder <http://confinder.richmond.edu/>

Database of The Constitutions of Sub-Saharan Africa

<http://www.polver.uni-konstanz.de/holzinger/forschung/drittmittelprojekte/traditional-institutions-in-sub-saharan-africa/datenbank/>

International Constitutional Law <http://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/>

Law Library of Congress <http://www.loc.gov/law/help/guide/nations.php>

Parliaments

Namibia Ministry of Health and Social Service <http://www.mhss.gov.na/>

PARLINE Database <http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch.asp>

Web Sites of National Parliaments www.ipu.org/english/parlweb.htm

National statistical agencies

National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda <http://www.statistics.gov.rw/>

National Bureau of Statistics – Tanzania <http://www.nbs.go.tz/>

Statistics South Africa <http://beta2.statssa.gov.za/>

Uganda Bureau of Statistics <http://www.ubos.org/>

United Nations (National Statistical Offices)

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/inter-natlinks/sd_natstat.asp

National banks

Banco Nacional de Angola <http://www.bna.ao/>

Bank of Botswana <http://www.bankofbotswana.bw/>

Bank of Ghana <http://www.bog.gov.gh/>

Banque Centrale des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest <http://www.bceao.int>

Banque des États de l'Afrique Centrale <http://www.beac.int>

Central Bank of Kenya <https://www.centralbank.go.ke/>

Central Bank Websites <http://www.bis.org/cbanks.htm>

List of Central Banks http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_central_bank