

*d.l. cohen information services*

Information and Knowledge Management  
Website Architecture and Usability Testing  
Library Development

<http://www.dcoheninfo.com>

Quarterly newsletter of D. L. Cohen Information Services

# INFOSCOPE

News and Tips for Locating and Managing Information

INFOSCOPE is published **quarterly**.  
Feedback is always welcome. [dcohen@dcoheninfo.com](mailto:dcohen@dcoheninfo.com)

***“In the face of doubt, openness prevails.”*** [from the Memorandum 3/19]

The last INFOSCOPE discussed the Memorandum on the Freedom of Information Act [FOIA] which President Obama signed in January. On March 19th, the Attorney General issued another memorandum expanding on this topic, including directing that “agencies should readily and systematically post information online in advance of any public request.”

The Attorney General also explicitly rescinded the FOIA Memorandum of October 12, 2001, the essence of which was to make obtaining government information *more* difficult than it had been. We are now on the right track to supporting citizens’ rights to information.

New Freedom of Information Act Memorandum

<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/news/20090319/foia-memo-march2009.pdf>

***“Show Us the Data: Most Wanted Federal Documents”***

<http://www.openthegovernment.org/otg/TopTenReport.pdf>

Concurrent with the above activities, a report was just issued by the Center for Democracy & Technology and OpenTheGovernment.org. This is an excellent 30-page study of the types of documents most desired by the public and also recommends policy changes to move us in the direction of more open government.

The most highly requested items are Congressional Research Service [CRS] reports. I am pleased to remind my readers that information on access to these reports was included in the Winter, 2009, INFOSCOPE!

***More Help With Obtaining Federal Government Documents***  
**Citizen Journalist's Guide to Open Government**

[http://www.kcnn.org/open\\_government/](http://www.kcnn.org/open_government/)

“...take part in interactive learning activities, watch video clips featuring interviews with experts, and just generally learn about how to secure access to crucial documents, meetings, and court reports.” From the site:

**“You Better Think”, or, The Basics of Getting Government Information**

[http://www.kcnn.org/open\\_government/door\\_2\\_robert\\_freeman/](http://www.kcnn.org/open_government/door_2_robert_freeman/)



Robert Freeman, executive director of New York’s Committee on Open Government, shares his freedom of information “principles”: The Rolling Stones’ Principle, The Tracey Chapman Principle, The Kinks’ Principle, The Aretha Franklin Principle, and the Spike Lee Principle. This is a succinct, incisive and entertaining lesson in the what, where and how of obtaining government information.



URLs are hot-links accurate as of 3/23/2009.

Spring 2009

**THIS ISSUE: MORE ON OPEN GOVERNMENT**

“In the face of doubt, openness prevails.”

“Show Us the Data: Most Wanted Federal Documents”

More Help with Obtaining Government Docs

Tools to Help the Knowledgeable Citizen Keep Up

Think Tanks



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**Information is Power**  
*... if you can find it!*

Spending too much time looking for information

- In Your Office?
- On Your Computer?
- On the Company Network?
- On Your Website?

Are customers getting lost on your website?

**D. L. Cohen Information Services**  
**Customized Solutions**

### ***Tools to Help the Knowledgeable Citizen Keep Up***

#### ***Federal government***

##### **GovTrack**

<http://www.govtrack.us>

GovTrack allows you to follow topics and/or political officials. Developments prompt an email alert. For example, I chose "health care", and my elected officials. I am truly impressed with the results, which include links to:

- The full congressional record of the relevant debate - organized for quick access to any legislator's testimony.
- Video of the same testimony
- Links from the GovTrack congressional testimony page to legislator pages which include background on the legislator, voting history, committee membership, and other useful information.

##### **MegaVote - Congress.orgToGo**

<http://www.congress.org/congressorg/megavote/>

MegaVote, a feature of the Congress.org website [which itself is very useful], is an alert service which focuses on how your elected officials in Congress voted on current legislation and alerts you to upcoming votes on pending legislation. This gives you a great opportunity to give a legislator a thumbs up or down for how he/she voted, and to let legislators know how you want them to vote on upcoming bills.

#### **In this MegaVote for Oregon's 3rd Congressional District:**

##### **Recent Senate Votes**

[Cloture Motion; Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009](#) - Vote **Agreed to** (62-35, 2 Not Voting)

The Senate reached the necessary sixty votes to end debate on this bill funding government programs. The bill was later approved by voice vote.

Sen. Ron Wyden voted **YES**.....send [e-mail](#) or see [bio](#)

Sen. Jeff Merkley voted **YES**.....send [e-mail](#) or see [bio](#)

##### **Recent House Votes**

[Omnibus Public Land Management Act](#) - Vote **Failed** (282-144, 6 Not Voting)

Because this bill required a 2/3 majority vote, the House failed to pass this package of legislation related to public lands, national parks and water development.

Rep. Earl Blumenauer voted **YES**.....send [e-mail](#) or see [bio](#)

**State of Oregon** [Many states have similar resources.]

Healthcare is a strong interest of mine. HB2009 [yes, the name is actually the year] is major legislation that will begin to move us toward a system of universal healthcare in Oregon. Some of the ways I keep tabs on this legislation - applicable to any legislation in the state:

- Legislative Committees

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/comm/commsrvs/home.htm>

- Committee Agendas Online [see what it looks like below]

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/09reg/agenda/webagendas.htm>

- State House Bill Tracking

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/09reg/pubs/hsemh.html>

- State Senate Bill Tracking

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/09reg/pubs/senmh.html>

Committee meeting agendas look like this:

Health Care Office: 453 Phone: 503-986-1286	
<b>Date: Friday-March 6</b>	
<b>Time: 3:00 P.M.</b>	
<b>Room: HR D</b>	
Public Hearing and Possible Work Session	
SB 130	FIRST PUBLIC HEARING - Authorizes Board of Examiners of Licensed Dietitians to prorate dietitian license fees.
SB 131	FIRST PUBLIC HEARING - Changes name of Board of Naturopathic Examiners to Oregon Board of Naturopathic Medicine.
SB 139	FIRST PUBLIC HEARING - Deletes requirement for Oregon State Board of Nursing to issue wallet sized licenses as evidence of current licensure.
SB 155	FIRST PUBLIC HEARING - Allows appointing authority of Oregon State Hospital, Blue Mountain Recovery Center or Eastern Oregon Training Center to contract with person to serve

And, this is very cool: Once you know the date/time/room [see agenda picture above], you can view the meeting in **real time streaming video**:

[http://www.oregon.gov/DAS/OP/tsc\\_pctv.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/DAS/OP/tsc_pctv.shtml)

### **Think Tanks**

“Think tank” is shorthand for an organization which primarily conducts research and publishes reports about public policy. These institutions are sources of in-depth analysis and can be extremely influential in how public policies are crafted. Naturally, they all have their biases.

### **American Policy Directory**

<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/govdocs/apd.html>

The University of Oregon Library’s Document Center recently announced “an improved and expanded edition of its American Policy Directory. The APD is a directory of websites for the most prominent policy voices in US civil society: 400 think tanks, public interest groups, and policy organizations representing a full spectrum of non-governmental groups that examine and influence American public policy.”

[Thanks to Tom Stave, Government Documents Librarian at the University of Oregon for bringing this to my attention.]



## GreyGuide

<http://www.docuticker.com/greyguide/>

Reports from government agencies, think tanks and NGO's are often not readily accessible. Sometimes referred to as "grey literature", Gary Price, a librarian from George Washington University, compiled some of his best sources on "think tanks" in a new "GreyGuide".

Gary has also made a practice of compiling selected documents of current interest for his weekly Docuticker <http://www.docuticker.com/alert>.

## D. L. Cohen Information Services

### Information and Knowledge Management Website Design and Support

- 📁 Document Management and Library Development
- 📁 Computer and Network File Organization
- 📁 Website Information Architecture
- 📁 Website Usability Testing
- 📁 Classification Systems Design
- 📁 Category, Keyword List and Taxonomy Construction
- 📁 Personal Information Management
- 📁 Staff Training on Information Organization

*D. L. Cohen Information Services, established in 1996, is a certified State of Oregon Woman-owned business. Donna Cohen holds a Master of Library and Information Studies degree [M.L.I.S.] and a Master of Education degree and has consulted with government agencies, private corporations and non-profit organizations.*