PolicyArchive: Bringing the World's Policy Research Online

Sound research is critical to public policy in a world that grows more complex every day. American philanthropic foundations recognize this: they spend over $1.5 billion a year on research. Governments, universities, and other institutions around the globe spend even more.

Yet locating and obtaining this research online can be difficult or impossible. Most policy research has no online home outside of the institution that produced it, and sometimes not even there. Research indices are hard to find or non-existent. Studies covering a full range of social issues can be near-invisible even to powerful search engines. A few sites have offered research for free, but only on single issues. Other archives are available only by paying a fee.

PolicyArchive (www.policyarchive.org) is filling the gap. It is the nation’s first comprehensive, searchable, open access, online archive of public policy research. Its goal is to become the largest such repository in the world, spanning a comprehensive range of subject areas. The project is a partnership of the Center for Governmental Studies (CGS), a nonprofit organization in California and the Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) University Library.

PolicyArchive’s benefits extend to researchers and publishers who can upload their own research and make it freely available to legislators, policy makers, foundations, scholars, citizens, and others. PolicyArchive currently offers summaries and full texts of research; a subject index; an internal search engine; research synopses; and a newsletter. The next version will involve the beginnings of an online community, with user ratings and reviews, personalized “bookshelves,” email notification of new research, and information on researchers and funders.

Who will use PolicyArchive?

Institutions that fund research, both private and public, will benefit from using PolicyArchive to help their findings and proposals reach a high-caliber, worldwide audience. Foundations, in particular, will be able to disseminate and publicize their own work and that of their grantees through a single respected and effective new channel. Foundations will also use PolicyArchive to assess research needs, identify organizations in specific fields, and publicize their policy interests.

A unique feature of PolicyArchive that benefits all research funders is the ability to create a special portal page on PolicyArchive called a Special Collection that focuses on selected work from that funder’s portfolio. By having a Special Collection, a foundation can highlight its own projects for certain audiences (for instance, people who are clicking through from the foundation’s main website) while still maintaining direct links to PolicyArchive’s vast store of content.
Over time, elected officials at federal, state, and local levels will use it to improve legislative measures. Public interest organizations will use it to publicize research, disseminate it to target audiences and archive it after distribution. Researchers and academics will use the site to locate, read, and view public interest research that is otherwise not centrally indexed or easily available online. Finally, the news media will use it as the single best resource for credible policy research by institutions with a range of perspectives.

**Who will contribute content to PolicyArchive?**

With help from over 450 national research organizations, PolicyArchive has collected more than 16,000 research documents and aims to house 20,000 by the end of 2008. A partial listing of our content contributors includes the American Enterprise Institute, Aspen Institute, Brookings Institution, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Cato Institute, Center for American Progress, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Common Cause, Economic Policy Institute, Environmental Working Group, Heritage Foundation, Hudson Institute, MDRC, National Bureau of Economic Research, National Center for Policy Analysis, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, New America Foundation, and the Public Policy Institute of California. The MacArthur and Marke Foundations are already building Special Collections of their public policy research on PolicyArchive. The California Endowment and California HealthCare Foundation have offered funding to build out an extensive health policy collection in PolicyArchive. And more institutions will join as they recognize the value of a free, central location for this critical research. Currently, there is no fee for uploading research.

To learn more about PolicyArchive, contact Romulo Rivera, PolicyArchive Project Manager, at (310) 470-6590 Ext. 123 or rrivera@cgs.org. For research uploads, contact Maggie Stamelman, PolicyArchive Content Manager, at (310) 470-6590 Ext. 120 or mstamelman@cgs.org.