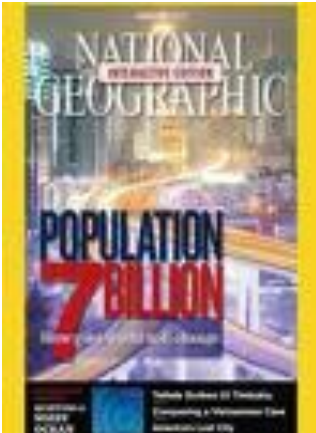


The Infoalert offers abstracts of current articles, mostly from US publications and by US authors, highlighting significant issues in five major areas of international or U. S. domestic affairs. Views expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect U.S. government policies

Infoalert

March 2011

DEMOCRACY AND GLOBAL ISSUES



IA01 Kunzig, Robert. Population 7 Billion (*National Geographic*, vol. 219, no. 1, January 2011, pp. 32//69)

Currently available online at

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2011/01/seven-billion/kunzig-text>

Kunzig notes that the world's population will soon reach seven billion, with more than 95% of that population growth occurring in developing countries. While wealthy nations are currently using the most resources, emerging economies are catching up fast. This is the first in a series of in-depth stories that National Geographic will run in 2011 on population. In this first segment, the author, environment editor for the magazine, sketches out a natural history of population. The challenges associated with population growth seem endless: poverty, food and water supply,

world health, climate change, deforestation, and fertility rates. Kunzig notes that there has been concern about population pressures, since the first papers on demography were written in the 17th century. Over 300 years later, says Kunzig, "we are still grappling with the outcome of *People v. Planet*", but the real problem is not overpopulation but poverty.

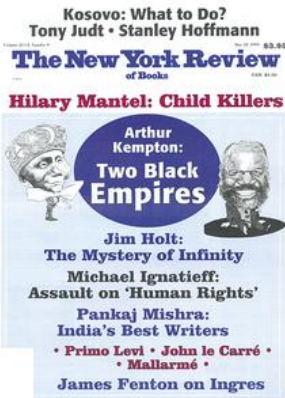


IA02 Adapting To Climate Change: Facing The Consequences (*Economist*, vol. 397, no. 8710, November 27-December 12, 2010, pp. 85-88)

Currently available online at <http://www.economist.com/node/17572735>

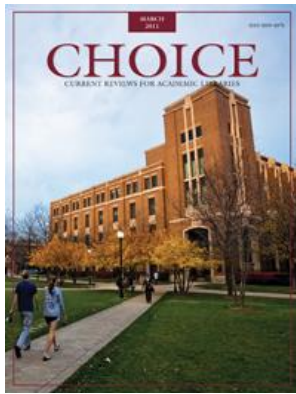
Even with global successes in limiting carbon emissions, the world will still be a significantly warmer place at the end of this century than it was at the start of the industrial revolution. Along with efforts to reduce emissions, the world must also look for ways to live with global warming. Analysts who have long been arguing that more work needs to be done on adapting to climate change "are starting to see their day in the uncomfortably hot sun," note the authors. They say that even if such

measures cannot protect everyone from harm caused by climate change, "it does not mean that they should be ignored -- on the contrary, they are sorely needed." The cost of adaptation will have to be borne by wealthy, industrialized countries, not only because they are better positioned to afford it but also because they have contributed more to the problem. This was recognized in the Copenhagen Accord, which proposed that \$100 billion per year should flow from the rich to the poor for mitigation as well as adaptation.



IA03 Petersen, Charles. Google And Money! (*New York Review of Books, December 9, 2010*) Currently available online at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2010/dec/09/google-and-money/>

In his review of two new books about the impact of the Google search engine, *GOOGLED*, by Ken Auletta, and *THE SHALLOWS*, by Nicholas Carr, the author discusses Google's history, Internet "neutrality" that gives data equal priority, and the threat to individual privacy posed by increasingly sophisticated online advertising techniques that compromise Net neutrality. Remedies suggested to protect users include "Do Not Track" options and an effective wall between data collected to provide services and that for targeted commercial purposes.



IA04 Wohlers, Anton. Digital Governance (*Choice, vol. 48, no. 4, December 2010, pp. 627-635*)

The author, a research director and professor at Cameron University, discusses the Internet as the most visible representative of all the innovations in information and communication technologies (ICTs). Wohlers notes that the Internet has had a profound effect on political practices in most societies, and ICTs have played an increasingly influential role in shaping social relationships, political power, democratic government, and public services sector across the globe. However, given that the Internet continues to give rise to new forms of interaction between citizens and governments, this new field of study remains in flux. The essay first goes into a brief discussion of the governance of the Internet

and society, followed by a second section that focuses on works that address the impact of the Internet and politics on each other, with a special focus on how the Internet affects the democratic process. The final section includes several comparative studies and books that examine the use of the Internet, generally by governments, to provide public services.



IA05 Campo-Flores, Arian. Hiding Behind The Web (*Newsweek, posted online October 1, 2010*)

Currently available online at <http://www.newsweek.com/2010/10/01/the-go-to-blogger-on-mexico-s-drug-wars.html>

The bloody drug wars in Mexico are getting little coverage in mainstream media there, largely because the press doesn't report what the drug cartels don't want people to know. In many parts of Mexico, especially the north, the media effectively have ceased to function; more than 30 journalists have been murdered or have gone missing since 2006, according to a report released last month by the Committee to Protect Journalists. Media offices have been targeted by gunfire, grenades, and bombs; the attackers aren't only cartel hitmen but also law-enforcement officers on their payroll. But citizens can get an idea of what is going on

by logging on to Blog del Narco, the go-to web site for cartel-related news in Mexico. Drawing about 3 million hits per week, Blog del Narco followers include not just ordinary citizens, but also members of the military, police, and trafficking organizations locked in a four-year war that has

cost some 28,000 lives. Described by one observer as a “technological yard sale,” the blog site includes useful inside information about potential perils as well as bravado and graphic gore provided by traffickers who seem to enjoy broadcasting their brutality. A computer-science student at a university in northern Mexico administers the site and posts whatever e-mail, photos or videos he receives. Strict anonymity has protected him so far, along with his agnostic attitude toward the cartels.

ECONOMIC SECURITY

IA06 Following The Money Trail (Unipath, vol. 2, no. 1, 2010, pp. 48-51)

Extremists have learned to use the financial system to their advantage, and are able to exploit businesses and charities to launder money because of a lack of oversight. Money laundering consists of four steps: placement of “dirty” money into a legitimate financial institution; layering of money by circulating it into different forms and amounts, and wiring money transfers; integration, the purchase of luxury goods; and the appearance of “clean” money, which can be accessed by extremist groups. The article describes the various legitimate and criminal sources of cash, and some of the ruses extremist groups use to launder cash. Although officials are better able to track down and thwart terrorist financing schemes, financial institutions must accept their obligation to collect and to share information. Unipath Magazine is a publication of the U.S. Central Command.



IA07 Special Feature: Africa At 50 (Africa Renewal, vol. 24, nos. 2-3, August 2010, pp. 10-36)

Available online at

<http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/vol24no2-3/index.html>

Fifty years ago, seventeen African countries gained their independence; this “Golden Jubilee” has spurred debate across the African continent over what the continent has achieved over the past half century. In this special series, the U.N. publication Africa Renewal examines African hopes and disappointments, as well as ideas for unlocking the continent’s vast potential.



IA08 Would More Education Reduce Unemployment And Income Inequality? (Atlantic Monthly, January 17, 2011)

Currently available online at

<http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2011/01/would-more-education-reduce-unemployment-and-income-inequality/69632/>

Would more education reduce unemployment and income inequality in the United States? The author, associate editor at Atlantic and former investment banker, does not agree; he believes that the unemployment problem is cyclical, not structural. The current situation is simply that there aren’t enough job openings; but most of today’s unemployed will eventually

3

find jobs with their current skills once the economy recovers. As for wage inequality, most of that can be attributed to a small handful of people who have become wealthy, thanks to modern communications, marketing and technology. But for everyone else, incomes have not changed much. Education has little to do with this, as a college degree, or even an advanced degree, does not guarantee a high income.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY



IA09 Bullets To Bytes: Internet Warfare On The Rise (Asia Pacific Defense Forum, vol. 35, no. 2, Second Quarter 2010, pp. 39-41)

Currently available online at [http://forum.apan-info.net/2010-2nd Quarter/PACOM ENG V35N2_042710\[1\].pdf](http://forum.apan-info.net/2010-2nd%20Quarter/PACOM_ENG_V35N2_042710[1].pdf)

Warfare between nations on the Internet ushers in a new age of conflict -- before bullets are fired, war has already erupted in cyberspace. The ability to disrupt a global social networking site has far-reaching implications. The potential for a terrorist attack on the computer systems and data underpinning the U.S. financial sector was acknowledged in late 2009 by the U.S. director of National Intelligence, Mike McConnell, who found that such an attack would be "an order of magnitude greater" than the September 11 terrorist attack. There are three types of cyber threats: Cyber crime, in which individuals or small groups steal identities or drain bank accounts for personal gain; cyber terrorism, in which groups use the Internet to plan or to conduct attacks on a nation's or corporation's Internet infrastructure to further a political agenda; and open cyber warfare, in which nations attack each other's Internet infrastructure.

IA10 Cyber Terrorism: The Medium Is The Message (Unipath, vol. 2, no. 1, 2010, pp. 14-19)

Extremists use the Internet to recruit followers and execute plans; what used to be achieved with a bomb can now be done with only a laptop and affect a much larger target area. Terrorists can now find and train young people through online forums and chat rooms, and monitor web sites likely to have relevance to their cause. While few countries, especially in the Middle East, have introduced laws to regulate online activities, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia have taken the lead. In 2007, the UAE enacted a law that criminalizes certain terrorist-related targets, and Saudi Arabia, in January 2008, implemented sixteen articles of a new law on the use of technology. Unipath is a publication of the U.S. Central Command.

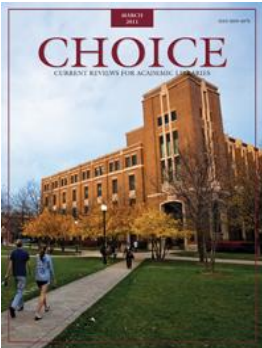


IA11 Clinton, Hillary Rodham Leading Through Civilian Power: Redefining American Diplomacy And Development (Foreign Affairs, vol. 89, no. 6, November-December 2010, pp. 13-24)

Secretary of State Clinton advocates a three-pronged "smart power" approach to facing down daunting global challenges, with diplomacy and development taking their places alongside defense. Citing the U.S. military as a worthy model, Clinton notes that "Foreign Service officers, Civil Service personnel, and local staff at the State Department and USAID form the backbone of our global

engagement. By drawing on the pool of talent that already exists in U.S. federal agencies, the United States can build a global civilian service of the same caliber and flexibility as the U.S. military.” Clinton writes that leveraging the skills and resources of businesses, philanthropists and citizens’ groups would further enhance efforts toward development, which she argues is one of the best tools to enhance international goodwill toward the U.S. and to strengthen fragile or failing states. “With the right balance of civilian and military power, the United States can advance its interests and values, lead and support other nations in solving global problems and force strong diplomatic and development partnerships with traditional allies and newly emerging powers,” Clinton concludes.

US SOCIETY AND VALUES



IA12 Baker, Neal *The Rise Of Digital Game Studies* (*Choice*, vol. 48, no. 1, September 2010, pp. 27-34)

The author, a librarian at Earlham College, notes that digital game studies has been identified as “videogame studies,” “computer game studies” and just plain old “game studies.” A more scholarly definition is the discipline of studying games, their design, their players and the role they play in society and in culture. Studies of digital games, a multi-billion dollar business, is largely a multi- and inter-disciplinary field with researchers and academics from a multitude of other areas such as computer, science, psychology, sociology, anthropology, arts and literature, media studies, and communication. This bibliographical essay explores various aspects of digital game studies, including ontology, single games, single platforms, digital game cultures and society, and digital games on the web.



IA13 Corbett, Sara. *Game Theory* (*New York Times Magazine*, September 19, 2010, pp. 54//70)

Currently available online under a different title at
<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/19/magazine/19video-t.html>

One of the new developments in education is teaching students by having them design and play video games; however, educators question whether keeping children plugged into such games is the best approach to learning. The goal of using video games is to build in repetition to the learning process; one middle school in New York City is teaching its students by this method. Instead of grades, students receive report cards with levels of expertise like “novice” and “master” and faculty include game designers and curriculum specialists. The possibilities of such classes for educators working in a more typically cash-strapped, understaffed school are difficult, according to the author; however, as the federal government focuses more on innovation in education, it may be feasible to implement game-based learning, even modestly, into more schools.



IA14 Ripley, Amanda. *Your Child Left Behind* (Atlantic Monthly, December 2010)

Currently available online at

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2010/12/your-child-left-behind/8310/>

For years, the poor academic performance by American students in comparison to those in other countries has been explained away as a consequence of nationwide diversity. But researchers at Stanford University have found that even relatively privileged American students do not compete favorably with average students in other well-off countries. The real reason for underperformance among American students, the Stanford research found, is poorly trained and poorly qualified teachers.



IA15 Beck, Sophie. *It's A Terrible Idea, Let's Get Started* (Poets & Writers, November/December 2010)

This thumbnail guide to launching a literary magazine and running it on a shoestring recounts the experience of the editors of The Normal School, a magazine based at California State University at Fresno. From the business plan to determining the audience to marketing to staffing, the author chronicles how hard work, networking and volunteers nurtured a seed idea into fruition. Coping with unexpected details and learning from mistakes, the team discovered exciting creative avenues as they offered dynamic, fresh conversation on the "front lines" of literature.



IA16 Foner, Eric. *The American Civil War Still Being Fought* (The Guardian, December 20, 2010)

Currently available online at

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2010/dec/20/american-civil-war-usa>

The author notes that a century and a half after the Civil War, many white Americans, especially in the South, seem to take the idea that slavery caused the war as a personal accusation. He calls for all Americans to face candidly the central role of slavery in U.S. history in order to arrive at a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the past. Foner notes that, 150 years ago, abolitionists were a very small minority, in the North as well as the South. By 1860, however, two distinct societies had emerged within the United States, one resting on slave labor, the other free. This resulted in divergent conceptions of the role of slavery in the nation's future. Regional

differences certainly existed over economic policy, political power and other matters; but in the absence of slavery, it is inconceivable that these differences would have led to war.