

*Ad hoc Committee on
Information
Technology in
Political Science*

Section on Information Technology and Politics*
American Political Science Association

Guidelines on Electronic Scholarship,
Information Technology, and
Computer Support in Political Science

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Revised, January 1, 2000

* Formerly known as the Section on Computers and Multimedia

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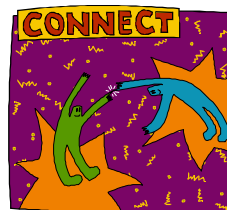
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January 1, 2000

American Political Science Association, Section on Computers and Multimedia
**Guidelines on Electronic Scholarship, Information
Technology, and Computer Support in Political
Science**



Computers and Information Technology (IT), and their ubiquitous extensions, the Internet, the World Wide Web, and Internet 2, are quickly becoming indispensable for teaching, learning, and research in political science. Computers are already essential for the representation, storage, and transmission of knowledge generally, and for knowledge in the discipline of political science specifically.

Computer technologies make possible ways of learning, teaching, writing, and conducting research that have never before been available. Many areas of political science research and analysis will soon rely on computers for searches, statistical analysis, modeling, and access to databases. Computers with speech, voice recognition, and interactive-video capability are increasingly useful for scholarly communication. Classrooms with electronic capabilities such as Microsoft's PowerPoint™ presentation software, laser disks, CD-ROMs and Digital Video Disks, video projection equipment, and other presentation technology, as well as live World Wide Web connectivity, are becoming more common for the teaching of the discipline. With the advent of Internet 2 and its relatively large bandwidth capacity, the possibilities will expand exponentially.

The cost of many scholarly journals delivered in traditional hard copy is becoming prohibitive. Thus, more and more libraries are dropping journal subscriptions and, where available, replacing these with digitally produced journals. Moreover, new, entirely electronic journals are emerging in a variety of areas. Despite the enormous array of new issues that electronic publishing raises, we nonetheless anticipate a rapid growth of electronic scholarship (*e-scholarship*) of many different kinds.

Political science departments should recognize and support these changes, and accelerate the discipline's full entry into the Information Technology Millennium. With this in mind, we offer the following Guidelines to help inform the directions that we believe departments should move.

Recommended Guidelines for Access and Support

1. *Personal computer and printer.* A shared computing facility is usually not an adequate substitute for a personal computer or workstation in the office. Faculty members in political science also require connections to international networks and easy access to nearby printers. Routine maintenance and replacement of outdated equipment in a timely and cost-effective manner are essential.

2. *Choice of hardware and software.* Faculty members should be consulted in the making of decisions about equipment and software purchases. Hardware and software configurations should be in line with the state of the art and appropriate to the specific needs and preferences of individual faculty members or teams engaged in teaching or research projects. It is very important that departments understand the increasingly dedicated nature of information technology equipment. Computers are no longer simply used as word processors.

Generally the tools needed by social scientists, and specifically political science scholars, include computers, scanners, digital and optical storage devices, audio devices, software and hardware suitable for specialized applications including statistical analysis, simulations, and web design. The increasing sophistication of IT applications and their specialization require that department chairs/heads elicit the input of technologically-knowledgeable parties in order to make intelligent and productive IT resource allocation decisions. Faculty who are designing audio or video for streaming on the World Wide Web, for example, may have equipment and software needs that are quite different from faculty who need heavy number crunching capability for statistical analysis of large data bases. (For example, the former may need an audio capture card, video streaming software, a QuickTime 4 or Real server, digital camcorder, digital camera, editing software, web design software, faster processors, huge amounts of memory and disk space for image or video storage, and so forth.)

As on-line testing and distance education become more sophisticated and widespread, we must also develop capabilities for encryption, CGI, real-time video communication and, in the near future, biometric security such as retinal scans, face recognition, voice authentication, and fingerprint recognition. While these may seem far off in their application to political science, the speed with which technology is diffused and applied suggests that we as a discipline should at least prepare for these future technologies and their relevance to our work.

3. *Technical support and training.* Faculty members and students need access to basic training and support in using electronic technologies. Institutional and departmental support should go beyond strictly technical training. The Modern Language Association's standards on computers quotes Brian Hawkins who suggests, "This means providing support by people who understand both the technology and the methodologies and disciplinary content of a given faculty member. This would constitute a new kind of support person in most of our computing organizations."

4. *Computer networks.* All members of the political science departmental community, from undergraduates to senior faculty members, should have access to computer networks, which facilitate use of electronic media repositories, library catalogs and materials, databases, electronic mail, and professional bulletin boards.

5. *Integrating technology into teaching and learning.* Where possible and appropriate, political science departments should begin designing, implementing, and preparing for routine administration of electronic classrooms, including multimedia classrooms, starting with equipment that can be wheeled into a traditional classroom for the teaching of political science courses. Adequate computer laboratories should also be available for more intensive, student hands-on use for political science learning, simulations, and undergraduate student research. Students deserve to be taught using the technologies widely available outside the university. Just as important, student access to the computer facilities necessary to coursework must be made

equitable so that all students enjoy the same level of access.

We also strongly support the construction of classrooms where students are active users of computers and other electronics. Modular pods where teams of students can work on computers in class, the ability to individually project material from these pods for general presentation to the entire classroom, and interactive software which allows students to send each other material while in the classroom, are examples of such currently available technology opportunities.

6. Development of educational materials and tools. Because faculty members are in the best position to know what software tools are appropriate for social science education and research, departments should actively encourage them to participate in the development of computer-based educational and professional materials. Integral to the development process should be a realistic assessment of the human and other resources required.

7. Recognition of contributions by faculty members. Faculty members who develop computer-based educational applications and scholarly works should be recognized for their curricula, pedagogical, and scholarly contributions. As part of the performance review process, whether for annual salary review, tenure, or promotion, experts in IT should evaluate electronic material where appropriate, as other comparable materials would be, through external peer review. Departments of political science should develop a written policy concerning the evaluation of electronic scholarship which includes more than just written material, in the tenure and promotion process so that faculty members can make decisions about appropriate ways to distribute their research. In addition, if faculty members are expected to provide computer support within the department, they should be appropriately recognized and compensated or rewarded.

Political Science departments should develop evaluation procedures that specifically take into account electronic scholarship. It is generally agreed that scholarship is more than the discovery of new knowledge. It is also the application, integration, and dissemination of this new knowledge. This can happen in many different ways including text, web pages, CD-ROM or DVD, videos, and audio. Thus, information technology must become one of the criteria recognized and assessed in promotion and tenure decision, and performance reviews. Electronic modes of scholarly distribution must be considered serious and legitimate.

Reward and recognition for information technology support work merits special attention by political science departments because these activities are more likely to be carried out by junior and untenured faculty. The significant commitment, effort, creativity, knowledge, and energy which goes into design and maintenance of a technology infrastructure justifies special consideration of these IT contributions to the department and discipline.

Written electronic “publication” and scholarship should consider the following criteria:

1. Electronic journals should clearly indicate whether they are peer-reviewed.
2. Digital publications should indicate their rate of manuscript acceptance.
3. Names of those on the editorial board of electronic journals should be readily available.

Authors should be encouraged to include all of the above information with the scholarly material that they submit to their department for performance review and/or promotion and tenure.

While the number of purely electronic published outlets for scholarship in Political Science is still small it should be clearly understood that the rigor with which textual manuscripts and other electronic scholarly output is peer-reviewed can and should be equal to the criteria traditionally applied to scholarship in our discipline. The medium or media do not diminish the standards applied to the work that is presented for dissemination to the discipline.

When political scientists develop electronic material such as CD-ROMs or other digital products, departments should invite the authors to suggest names of expert outside evaluators who can assist the department in judging the nature and quality of the material produced. Departments in evaluating prizes awarded to faculty for creative and scholarly work in IT should, whenever appropriate, examine the assessment processes and awards criteria used by sister disciplines, particularly in the humanities, to evaluate faculty members engaged in “creative” work.

8. *Responsibility for graduate student training.* Graduate students should be trained in the potential uses of electronic technology as an aid to teaching and research, including (as appropriate) desktop publishing, database and spreadsheet programs, computer-assisted or computerized simulations, authoring systems and tools, hypertext, telecommunications, and access to the networks and to databases. Graduate students should also be encouraged to explore the impact of Information Technology, computers, and the World Wide Web on selected aspects or sub-fields of the discipline of Political Science.

Generating, gathering and analyzing texts and data electronically are becoming a necessity for all education including political science. Therefore, while immediate implementation of all these recommendations may not be feasible at small departments at colleges or at schools facing financial difficulties, all political science departments should develop long-term strategic plans for working toward the goals outlined in these recommendations.

9. *Protection of Intellectual Property.* Political Science departments should strive to protect the intellectual property rights associated with scholarly and professional work using information technology. Increasingly, colleges and universities are asserting their claims on the electronic products of scholars and teachers, even when they do not do so for traditional scholarly or teaching materials. We see no basis for discriminating scholarly product based on the medium in which it is stored or conveyed. We encourage all departments to determine what their respective institution’s policies on intellectual property are, to communicate these policies to all members of their departments, and to work within their institutions to protect the intellectual property rights of their members.

10. *Technology and the Profession.* We recommend the creation of a Committee on Information Technology in the Discipline (CIT) at the highest level in the American Political Science Association (APSA) to help the profession develop a continuing improvement strategy for Information Technology. We also recommend that, where feasible, political science departments designate a committee to do the same at their level within their institutions.

The APSA should now move aggressively to become a leader in the social sciences in the use of and facilitation of information technology for its members. This may require a substantial reprogramming of budgets, the creation of new positions – a director of IT may be appropriate in the national office – and a commitment by APSA to help support faculty and departmental initiatives to strengthen IT in their respective programs. Political Science must be able to compete effectively and credibly with other disciplines more likely to be *prima facie* seen as strong and legitimate in the allocation of IT resources.

Moreover, we recommend that APSA take a strong affirmative stand in support of the protection of the intellectual property rights of scholarly and teaching materials produced by political scientists.

We also recommend that the APSA and regional political science associations take responsibility for providing internet connections, LCD projectors, and other technology resources at their respective conferences. Responsibility for providing and paying for access to technology at the national and regional conferences cannot continue to be left to individual scholars or, in the case of APSA, to the individual Organized Sections.

We also suggest that each major professional meeting feature an **Information Technology Center**. This is common at other professional conferences, such as, for example, the annual TESOL/ESL conference, the National Association for Social Studies, and many others. This Center should be open during conference hours and should have an extensive set-up of computers, as well as software and peripherals, for demonstrating technology uses/applications in our discipline. Hardware and software producers, publishers, and others could sponsor such a technology center in joint venture with the APSA and/or regional associations.

The APSA should also provide supportive evidence of the increasing use of computers and technology in Political Science (beyond word processing). This information could be invaluable for political science departments making major equipment requests to central administrations who often do not understand that political science uses technology for an increasing variety of applications.

For More About Information Technology and Political Science

If you would like additional information about Information Technology and Political Science, or about the APSA Section on Information Technology and Politics, contact Michael Gizzi, the Section's President. He may be reached at the Department of Political Science, Mesa State College, Grand Junction, Colorado, 81502.

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Appendix

Examples of electronic scholarship and e-resources:

E-Journal: The Journal of the Association for History and Computing. <http://mcel.pacificu.edu/JAHC/JAHC12.HTML>

The Society for Political Methodology and the Political Methodology Section of the APSA.
<http://polmeth.calpoly.edu/>

The *Technology Source*. The purpose of *The Technology Source* is to provide thoughtful, illuminating articles that will assist educators as they face the challenge of integrating information technology tools in teaching and in managing educational organizations.
<http://horizon.unc.edu/TS>

"Why An Electronic Journal" *Journal of the Association for History and Computing*, by Jeffrey G. Barlow. <http://mcel.pacificu.edu/history/jahc11/Editorials/Edit11.HTML>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit organization established with the assistance of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. It is dedicated to helping the scholarly community take advantage of advances in information technologies.

<http://www.jstor.org/jstor/>

Political Science journals linked through JSTOR:

[http://www.jstor.org/jstor/American Journal of International Law](http://www.jstor.org/jstor/American%20Journal%20of%20International%20Law)

[American Journal of Political Science](#)

[Midwest Journal of Political Science](#)

[American Political Science Review](#)

[International Organization](#)

[Journal of Politics](#)

[Philosophy and Public Affairs](#)

[Political Science Quarterly](#)

[Proceedings of the American Political Science Association](#)

[World Politics](#)

Example of an established e-journal

Social Science Computer Review

“SSCORE is a **peer-reviewed** publication of Sage Publications, Inc. Now in its 15th year of publication, it carries articles and reports, extensive resource listing in its "News and Notes" section, software reviews, and book reviews.”

<http://hcl.chass.ncsu.edu/sscore/sscore.htm>

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