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Wandering the Web — Pop Culture Websites

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Introduction

Although most of us may not recognize it, Pop culture surrounds us. We see it portrayed in television, cyberspace, radio, advertising, toys, art, literature, games, and music. As a source for pop culture information, the Web is a treasure trove; it contains a wealth of information in that area. With that in mind, I invite you to explore a selection of those pop culture Websites, below. They are arranged loosely by topic, but as pop culture is by nature rather free-form and ever-changing, the categories serve as guidelines only. At these Websites, you may find things that surprise, inform, interest, entertain, or even startle you, which is what makes pop culture such a fascinating area.

Trends

PopWatch — <http://popwatch.ew.com> — **Pop Watch** is an *Entertainment Weekly* Website that focuses on celebrities and the latest trends in pop culture.

Digg.com — <http://digg.com/> — **Digg** is a community-driven Website where people submit news, images, or videos to be voted on as popular or not. Once something is submitted, other people see it and “Digg” what they like best. If something receives enough Diggs, it is moved to the front page of the site, which has millions of visitors a day.

PopMatters — <http://www.popmatters.com> — **PopMatters** is an international magazine of cultural criticism. Its scope is broadly cast on all things pop culture, including recent books. This site includes reviews interviews, and in-depth essays on most cultural products and expressions in areas such as music, television, films, books, video games, sports, theatre, the visual arts, travel, and the Internet.

Pop Candy — <http://blogs.usatoday.com/popcandy> — **Whitney Matheson**, a columnist for *USA Today*, offers a daily look at pop culture on the **Pop Candy** blog.

Blog Carnival — <http://blogcarnival.com/bc> — A blog carnival is created when someone takes the time to collect together several good blog posts on a topic, and then puts all those posts together in a blog post called a “carnival.” Use this site to find news and posts that are all related to a particular topic.

BuzzFeed — <http://www.buzzfeed.com> — **BuzzFeed** is useful for tracking trends on the Internet. **BuzzFeed’s** editors track, compile, and promote what bloggers, fans, and journalists, are discussing online at the moment.

Salon — <http://www.salon.com> — **Salon** is an award-winning online news and entertainment Website. Content includes investigative stories, breaking news, essays and criticism along with popular staff-written blogs about politics, technology and culture.

Fark — <http://www.fark.com/> — **Fark** is a news aggregator and an edited social networking news site. It contains news on various unusual topics, as well as what **Drew Curtis**, founder of the site, calls “fark”: “Fark is what fills space when mass media runs out of news.” You can search the whole site or you can select from categories such as “Geek,” “ShowBiz,” “Business” “Sports,” “Politics,” and of course, the “Not News” category. It is useful for finding some of the more unusual stories today, and it back-links to the original source of the story so you can read the original source.

ThisNext — <http://www.thisnext.com/> — **ThisNext** is a social shopping site where people explore, discover and comment on new products. **ThisNext** has a “watch people shop” map feature that lets you see what people are buying around the world, in different categories, like entertainment, gadgets, and fashion.

Music

AllMusic.com — <http://www.allmusic.com> — **AllMusic** is a database of music. Most genres and styles of music are covered here, ranging from the most commercially popular to the obscure. The site also includes a blog of the latest music news.

Billboard — <http://www.billboard.com/> — **Billboard** and its popular music charts are an important source of information on trends and innovation in music.

Pitchfork Media — <http://www.pitchforkmedia.com> — This Website has indie rock reviews.

Lyrics.com — <http://www.lyrics.com/> — This is a searchable database of song lyrics. In addition to the plain text of the lyrics, a link to a **YouTube** video of the song (with lyrics superimposed on video) is also often included.

Books

Book Lust — <http://nancyppearlbooks.wordpress.com/> — Book recommendations are made by **Nancy Pearl**, who is well-known as the librarian who served as the model for the “librarian action figure” and who also authored the book *Book Lust*.

The Elegant Variation — <http://marksarvas.blogs.com/elegvar> — This is another literary blog, this time by author **Mark Sarvas**. **Mark Sarvas’** book reviews and criticism have appeared in *The New York Times Book Review* and the *Los Angeles Review*, and his blog has won several awards.

Bookslut — <http://www.bookslut.com> — **Bookslut** is a monthly Web magazine and daily blog for those who love to read. News, reviews, and commentary on new books can be found here.

Chasing Ray — <http://www.chasingray.com> — **Chasing Ray** is a literary blog by **Colleen Mondor**; it also includes interviews and reviews. **Colleen Mondor** is well-known as a reviewer for *Booklist*, *Bookslut*, *Eclectica Magazine* and the *Voices of New Orleans*.

Review of Books — <http://www.reviewsofbooks.com/> — The **Review of Books** is a free online book review aggregator. It conveniently collects together links to freely accessible reviews related to each book (such as current book reviews from online newspaper review sites, like **NYT Books Section**, etc). Many popular books are included, from mostly 2002-on. Retrieved from http://www.popgoesthelibrary.com/popwiki/index.php?title=Blogs_and_Websites.

Film and Television

Reality TV World — <http://www.realitytvworld.com/> — **Reality TV World** provides coverage of nearly 300 reality television programs.

The Classic TV Database — <http://classic-tv.com/> — **The Classic TV Database** is a searchable resource on popular TV shows from the 1950s onward. In addition to show information, the site includes access to some theme songs, fashions and other TV-related materials.

AllMovie.com — <http://www.allmovie.com> — This wide-ranging database has information about movies, directors, actors and actresses.

The Futon Critic — <http://www.thefutoncritic.com> — This Website has information about television shows, television reviews, and a “breaking news” section for the latest in television happenings.

Internet Movie Database — <http://www.imdb.com> — The **Internet Movie Database** is a searchable database for finding information about television, movies, directors, actors and actresses. It includes a video and episode clips section.

Premiere — <http://www.premiere.com> — **Premiere** is a Website news source for movie news, DVD reviews, and information about films in production.

Rotten Tomatoes — <http://www.rottentomatoes.com> — **Rotten Tomatoes** is a movie reaction site. You can use it as a quick way to measure the overall critical response to movies from the nation’s top print and online film critics, via the “Tomatometer.”

Politics

Slate — <http://www.slate.com> — Founded in 1996, **Slate** is a general-interest Web publication offering analysis and commentary about politics, news, and culture. **Slate** has won many awards, including the National Magazine Award for General Excellence Online. The site is owned by **The Washington Post Company**.

The **Huffington Post** — <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/> — The site offers coverage of political news, as well as media, business, and entertainment news.

Sports

ESPN Sports — <http://espn.go.com> — **ESPN Sports** is a comprehensive sports Website that covers the latest information about most major sports, including football, baseball, basketball, hockey, soccer, tennis, and more.

continued on page 81

Sports Illustrated – Extra Mustard — <http://sportsillustrated.com/extramustard/> — At this site, pop culture meets sports culture. **Sports Illustrated – Extra Mustard** includes humor, celebrity news, sports video of the day, commentary, and daily lists.

Advertising

Advertising Age — <http://adage.com/> — A companion site to the print publication, **Advertising Age** has current advertising industry news, as well as a searchable archive. Also check out **The Advertising Century** at <http://adage.com/century/>, which is the online version of *Advertising Ages*' special edition book of the same name. **The Advertising Century** features an introductory essay, lists of top 100 advertising campaigns, top 100 industry players, and top 10 jingles, slogans, and ad icons from the 20th century, as well as a timeline of the 20th century's most important advertising events.

Ad*Access Project — <http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/adaccess/> — The **Ad*Access Project**, funded by the **Duke Endowment "Library 2000" Fund**, presents images and database information for over 7,000 advertisements printed in U.S. and Canadian newspapers and magazines between 1911 and 1955. **Ad*Access** concentrates on five main subject areas: Radio, Television, Transportation, Beauty and Hygiene, and World War II, providing an interesting look at a number of major campaigns and companies through images preserved in **Duke's** advertising collection.

Emergence of Advertising in America — <http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/ead/> — The **Emergence of Advertising in America: 1850 - 1920 (EAA)** presents over 9,000 images relating to the early history of advertising in the United States. The materials are drawn from the Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library at **Duke University** and provide a significant and informative perspective on the early evolution of advertising in the United States.

Living Room Candidate — <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/> — Provided by the **American Museum of the Moving Image**, this site includes streamed video of historic political ads (1952-2000), with descriptive information included.

Cartoons/Comics

Marvel Universe — <http://marvel.com/> — Find popular **Marvel** characters such as Spider-man, Wolverine, Storm, Captain America, Iron-man, the Hulk, the Silver Surfer here, as well as lesser known characters such as Asbestos Lady.

The Cartoon Library & Museum — <http://cartoons.osu.edu/> — **The Cartoon Library & Museum** is now the largest and most comprehensive academic research facility documenting printed cartoon art. Administratively it is part of **Ohio State University Libraries**. A searchable database of portions of the **Cartoon Library & Museum's** collection of original art is available at the **Cartoon Library & Museum Database** at <http://library.osu.edu/sites/cgaweb/db/>.

Grand Comic-Book Database — <http://www.comics.org/> — The **Grand Comic-Book Database** is a nonprofit, Internet-based organization of international volunteers dedicated to the collection, preservation, and dissemination of information about all comics publications throughout the world. Their online database contains hundreds of images of comic book covers uploaded by volunteers, searchable by keyword.

Graffiti Art

ArtCrimes: The Writing on the Wall — <http://www.artcrimes.org/> — **ArtCrimes: The Writing on the Wall** is a gallery of graffiti art from cities around the world. **Art Crimes** has thousands of images from over 400 cities.

Video Games

GameSpot — <http://www.gamespot.com/> — **GameSpot** reviews and previews various video games, including PC, Wii, Xbox 360, and Nintendo DS versions.



Voodoo Extreme — <http://ve3d.ign.com/> — **Voodoo Extreme** is a news site that covers PC gaming and hardware.

GameSpy Planet Network — <http://www.gamespy.com/network/> — This site includes the latest information about PC and video games; you can find reviews, cheats, screenshots, forums, and developer chats. The network includes over 200 game sites.

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Technology

Gizmodo — <http://gizmodo.com/> — **Gizmodo** is a blog about gadgets and technology. Find the latest, and sometimes strangest new technology gadgets here.

Lifehacker — <http://lifehacker.com/> — **Lifehacker** is a blog that features tips, tricks, shortcuts, and downloads that help you get things done more efficiently. Topics mostly relate to streamlining your life with computers in various ways.

Miscellaneous

The Psychedelic 60's: Literary Tradition and Social Change — <http://www2.lib.virginia.edu/exhibits/sixties/> — This is an online exhibit hosted by the Special Collections Department of the **University of Virginia Library**. It includes primary source documents from the time, with explanatory text. Some items are pop culture oriented, most notably concert posters, rock handbills, book covers, and the like.

Roadside America — <http://www.roadsideamerica.com/> — **Roadside America** is an online guide to offbeat tourist attractions in America, including quirky museums, roadside signs, and oddities of various sorts. You can search by geographical location or by theme. Some themes include "big coffee pots," "smiley water towers," and "mystery spots."

The Smoking Gun — <http://www.thesmokinggun.com/> — **The Smoking Gun** features information drawn from various previously unpublished documents (court transcripts, FBI files, police reports, etc.) that illuminate some of the most important, scandalous, or bizarre news stories of recent years. **The Smoking Gun** is part of the **Turner Sports & Entertainment Digital Network**.

Snopes.com — <http://www.snopes.com/> — **Snopes** is a site where you can investigate whether or not a rumor, urban legend, or suspected factoid is true or false.

Retro Junk — <http://www.retrojunk.com/> — **Retro Junk** is a collection of articles, movie trailers, and pop culture artifacts; mostly from the 1970s - 1990s. It also includes discussion forums, live chat about retro pop culture topics.

Viral Video Chart — <http://viralvideochart.unrulymedia.com/> — **Viral Video Chart** tracks the top twenty most viewed videos (Either in last 24 hours, 7 days, 30 days, 365 days, or all time). Data is collected from the three most influential video sharing sites: **YouTube**, **Google Video** and **MySpace**.