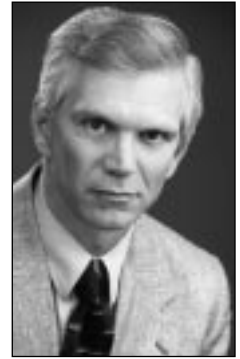




# The Best of the Web

## One Browser's Choices

Hon. Jefferson Lankford is a judge on the Arizona Court of Appeals, Division I.



The Internet encompasses hundreds of millions of Web pages. They range from the Vatican's sublime site ([www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)) to inane personal home pages. For a peek at some of those, see [webworst.about.com/library/blww.htm](http://webworst.about.com/library/blww.htm).

Relatively few sites offer exceptionally useful information in a well-organized, easily accessible format. Listed below—but not in ranked order—are 10 “must-see” sites that qualify as among the best of the Web. Search engines were discussed in a previous Internet Browser column and are excluded from this list.

**1. All Music Guide:** [www.allmusic.com](http://www.allmusic.com). This publisher's site is a huge database of recorded music. It is searchable by

artist, album title, song and label and can be browsed by genre. Recordings are rated on a five-star system, and most artist entries provide extensive discographies and commentaries. Visiting this site takes a lot of the guessing out of buying records. Although it doesn't make the top 10, a related site operated by the same company offers information on films: [www.all-movie.com](http://www.all-movie.com).

**2. Physicians:** [www.searchpointe.com](http://www.searchpointe.com). This site provides information about 600,000 physicians. The site reports on a physician's location, educational background and specialty certification. A report on disciplinary actions is available for a free. A close runner-up was the American

Medical Association's similar physician search service, found at [www.ama-assn.org](http://www.ama-assn.org).

**3 & 4. Health:** [www.nlm.nih.gov/databases/databases\\_medline.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/databases/databases_medline.html). The Medline searchable database is operated by the Library of Medicine of the National Institutes of Health. It is oriented to researchers and offers more than 11 million abstracts and references and full-text articles from hundreds of journals. A cousin site, MedlinePlus, [medlineplus.gov](http://medlineplus.gov), also makes the top ten and is directed at consumers.

**5. News:** *ajr.newslink.org*. This site sponsored by the *American Journalism Review* contains links to 18,000 periodicals, broadcasters and news sources across the globe. You either can use the links to the news sites, arranged by category, or use a search engine for topic searches among U.S. news sources or another search engine of other news sources.

**6. Top links:** *www.toptenlinks.com*. Many sites offer “hot links” lists. This is perhaps the best-organized and most easily navigated, with top-ten sites offered by category. A site search and a Web search engine provide added convenience. You also can try my top links: Go to *members.home.net/sidebar* and click on “links” or the faster-loading “text only links.”

**7 & 8. Reference.** Two sites stand out in this category. The first is Research-It, *www.itools.com/research-it*. This site offers dictionaries, translators, maps, quotations, a biographical dictionary, a currency converter, stock quotes and more—all accessi-

ble from a single page. The other is The Spire Project, *cn.net.au*, an Australian site that covers many U.S. information resources. Included are patent and trademark searches, people finders, country profiles and links to corporate and government information.

**9 & 10. Books:** *www.half.com*. Bibliophiles will flock to this site and a similar site, *www.bibliofind.com*. Used books, including out-of-print and rare editions, are offered for sale. The site *half.com* acts as an intermediary between sellers and buyers. It collects the buyer’s payment, takes a commission and offers a limited guarantee; the seller ships directly to the buyer. The database of nearly 50 million items, including books, CDs, DVDs, videotapes and electronics, is searchable by author and title. A test revealed a wide variety of books, all at least half off retail price.

*Bibliofind* operates differently. It is a network of thousands of booksellers who

have listed their inventory of more than 10 million items. The database is searchable by author, title and keyword and can be targeted to first editions and signed copies. *Bibliofind* was acquired last year by industry giant *Amazon.com*. Unlike *half.com*, *Bibliofind* disclaims all warranties, so the buyer must rely on the bookseller.

Need book reviews to help decide what to buy? Visit *Amazon.com*, which sells new books, CDs and videos. Amazon’s search results include reviews and ratings by customers and from published sources. Although Amazon’s site is not a top-10 choice, it is a good one.

**Your choice:** Send your nomination via e-mail to *sidebar@home.com*. Provide the URL and explain why you think the site should be in the top 10. We will announce the nominees in a future Internet Browser column. ▲

*Questions or tips about the Internet? E-mail them to sidebar@home.com.*