

# DOE

# NEWS

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## **PUBLIC GAINS ACCESS TO DECLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS THROUGH INTERNET**

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### **THE INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY**

The thousands of previously classified documents now available to the public have been listed on a computer database, Secretary of Energy Hazel R. O'Leary announced today. The documents are listed on OpenNet, an Internet database accessed by entering DOE "Home Page."

The on-line index will guide users through documents covering topics such as human radiation experiments, nuclear testing, radiation releases, and historical records. The bibliographic database will contain references for all publicly releasable documents declassified by DOE after October 1, 1994. In addition it gives information on more than 265,000 documents from collections at the DOE facilities at the Hanford Site near Richland, Washington; the Coordination and Information Center, Las Vegas, Nevada; and the Office of Scientific and Technical Information, Oak Ridge, Tennessee. While not a complete listing of all the documents that are currently available to the public, this database will be continuously updated to include other documents as they are released.

OpenNet provides the DOE site location and person to contact to obtain access to the referenced documents. The Internet address for OpenNet through the DOE "Home Page" is:

<http://www.doe.gov>

The establishment of OpenNet is a major step in fulfilling Secretary O'Leary's December 7, 1993, commitment to openness with regard to declassified documents.

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# DOE

# FACTS

## IMPROVING ACCESS TO DECLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS THROUGH OPENNET

In support of the Secretary of Energy's Openness Initiative, and in response to stakeholders' requests for declassified documents, the Department of Energy (DOE) has developed a bibliographic database of publicly releasable, declassified DOE documents. This automated database, known as the DOE OpenNet, will enable stakeholders to identify documents of interest, determine their location, and obtain copies. The database is publicly available on Internet, the Information Superhighway. This project addresses concerns from many stakeholders who have stated a need for improved access to locate declassified documents.

### SPECIFICALLY

- \* A publicly available computer database has been developed to make available bibliographic information on publicly releasable, declassified documents.
- \* This database is a Department of Energy listing of declassified and related documents which were never classified that are available to the public.
- \* The Database provides information allowing the public to order declassified documents and for the government to screen incoming requests for documents which may have already been declassified, thus increasing efficiency and reducing response times.
- \* The Database is known as the DOE OpenNet and will be available through the Internet system, on the DOE "Home Page," on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.doe.gov>. It may also be reached through a direct-dial phone line at (615) 241-3906.

### BACKGROUND

- \* In the past, no database of bibliographic information concerning such document declassification was maintained at the national level.
- \* In the past, requests for documents were addressed on a one-to-one basis. When a document was declassified, that information was generally known only to the requestor and the particular DOE component which declassified the document. Unless the requestor publicized the fact that a specific document was released, other researchers or

# DOE FACTS

## OPENNET PROVIDES ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON MORE THAN 250,000 DOCUMENTS

In support of the Secretary of Energy's Openness Initiative, and in response to stakeholders' requests for declassified documents, the Department of Energy (DOE) has developed a bibliographic database of publicly releasable, declassified DOE documents. This database, known as the DOE OpenNet, will enable interested stakeholders to identify documents of interest, determine their location, and learn how to obtain copies. The database is publicly available on Internet, the Information Superhighway. OpenNet will initially include document collections from several DOE sources. These entries represent over a quarter of a million documents that are immediately available to the public. Some of these documents are declassified; some are sanitized; and some were never classified.

### SPECIFICALLY

One of the full-text documents which is available on OpenNet consists of the handouts from the Secretary's June 27, 1994 Press Conference. These handouts include a great deal of information on newly declassified topics as well as an excellent summary of the declassification actions taken by the Department since 1946.

Major portions of the database come from the Coordination and Information Center (CIC) at Las Vegas, Nevada; the Office of Scientific and Technical Information (OSTI) at Oak Ridge, Tennessee; and the Hanford production facility at Richland, Washington.

\* Examples of information available through the CIC collection include the following:

Fallout detection data from test activities at the Nevada Test Site, the TRINITY event, the Pacific Proving Grounds, and other test locations.

Policy documents dealing with procedures and conduct of tests and public safety considerations and actions.

Published and primary sources describing the development and state-of-knowledge of the health effects of radiation.

Records associated with human radiation experiments.

Documents dealing with public information as disseminated through such media as pamphlets, news releases, and news publications.

- \* Elimination of many duplicate requests and searches for the same documents will reduce the waiting time for new requests.

#### WHO ARE THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- \* FOIA Requesters. These stakeholders will benefit by having access to documents without having to go through the FOIA process. They will have more information available more quickly than with the present process.
- \* Environmentalists, historians, researchers and scientists. These stakeholders will benefit in the ease of access to research information.
- \* The Public. Concerned citizens, who may not be professional researchers, will be able to investigate topics of interest and gain desired information.
- \* Department of Energy and the US Government. DOE will improve its public image by dispelling appearances of hiding information and stonewalling. Both the DOE and the Government in general will benefit from the example of openness in Government.

Unix workstations running X-Windows. The OpenNet Mosaic server can also be accessed in a text-only mode. Some examples of the available OpenNet Mosaic/OpenNet compatible client software, which may be obtained free of charge, are listed below. (See attachment for download locations.)

For Microsoft Windows:

Mosaic for Windows version 2.0A2 (versions 2.0A3 - 2.0A7 are not compatible)  
Netscape for Windows version B0.9

For Macintosh:

MacWeb version 1.00A2.2  
Netscape for the Macintosh version B0.9

For Unix 4.1.x:

Mosaic for X-Windows version 2.5b2  
Netscape for Unix version B0.9.

What You Need:

for a direct Internet connection:

Network Internet access and  
Mosaic client software installed;

for Internet text-only connection:

Dial-up Network Internet access  
Telnet software

for direct dial:

Modem and  
Communication software installed which is capable of emulating VT1xx,  
VT2xx, or VT3xx terminals

How to connect to OpenNet:

With direct Internet access, using a Mosaic client:

1. Start the Mosaic client access software;
2. Select "File," then choose "Open URL" (see Figure 1);
3. In the address blank provided, type:

**http://www.doe.gov**

4. Press "Enter" or click "OK";
5. Mosaic will connect you to the DOE Home Page (see Figure 2);

- Public Input, and
- Public Access.
  
- \* Information that is declassified can be made more readily available to the public.
  
- \* There will be a publicly searchable database of bibliographic information available.
  
- \* Historians, environmentalists, and others will have access to more information in their efforts to educate the public and perform their research.
  
- \* Elimination of many duplicate requests and searches for the same documents will reduce the waiting time for new requests.

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If you have looked at the list of subject terms entered by people into the database as they input records, you have seen many phrases there, phrases such as nuclear weapons, waste disposal, radioactive waste disposal, etc. Remember that to search on one of these phrases, you must insert ADJ between each word.

Note that if you forget to insert ADJ, the WAIS software will automatically assume an OR between the words in your term. This will bring you a much, much larger set of search results than you want.

### **Searching with a natural language query (Tell me about nuclear weapons)**

WAIS is a sophisticated search and retrieval software because it will not balk when asked to accept a natural language sentence. It can recognize that the words "me" and "about" are too common to be of significant; depending on the contents of a database, it may even rule out the word "tell" as significant. Instead, it takes the word nuclear and the word weapon and find all records where either one or both of those words appear somewhere in the full text.

It will bring you a very broad search, however, because it will find all records with nuclear in them, plus all records with weapons in them, and this will include all records where nuclear weapons appears as a phrase. In other words, it is assuming the Boolean operator OR between those two significant words. If you want to narrow your search and limit the number of records retrieved to the most relevant, ask for nuclear ADJ weapon\* (See phrase searching and the paragraph on stemming)

### **Searching with Boolean Logic (AND, OR, NOT, ADJ)**

Boolean Logic will help you narrow and focus your searches in order to limit the number of records you retrieve. Here's how they work.

Use AND (capitalized) between words when you want to retrieve all records that mention both terms, and you don't care if the two terms appear next to each other or not. For example, you search on waste AND disposal. You'll retrieve all records with both words in them, but one of those records (perhaps referencing memo or letter) might have a sentence such as: "The decision was left to the disposal of the site organization, and resulted in little waste of the resources available." Would you like to rule a record such as this out of your results. Be

more specific with the use of ADJ.

ADJ allows you to retrieve only those records where the two or more search terms you input are adjacent to each other somewhere in the full text of the record. This means you can get closer to the meaning you intended. The phrase waste ADJ disposal will retrieve for you only for those records where waste disposal as a multiple-word term is used.

OR is a Boolean operator you should avoid if possible. It will retrieve every record where either one of the words in your search appear separately as well as all the records where the two words both appear. As a result, you will have many more records than you probably wish to handle. The reason you should know about OR is that WAIS automatically inserts it into a multiple-word search if you forget to put some other Boolean operator of your own choice.

For example, if you type in nuclear waste, you'll actually get results based on nuclear OR waste. A better choice for a smaller, more relevant set of search results would be nuclear AND waste. The best choice for the most relevant set of results would be nuclear ADJ waste. Just remember that in multiple-word searching, you have to remember to put AND or OR yourself if you want to avoid the system's automatic OR. NOT is useful if you want to deliberately exclude a set of records that you think might otherwise show up in your search. For example, if you search on waste, you can probably assume you'll get records about nuclear waste as part of the search. But maybe you want everything but that. Simply type waste NOT nuclear.

When forming complex queries, ones that use more than one Boolean operator, it is generally best to use parentheses around pairs or groups of terms that are, in turn, joined by a Boolean operator. For example: (snowstorms OR tornadoes OR hurricanes) AND (safety ADJ procedures).

### **Ensuring you retrieve all spellings of your search term (Stemming with wildcards)**

You can do one search that retrieves all words beginning with a particular stem by adding an asterisk (\*) at the end of the word stem. The asterisk acts as a wildcard. If the term biolog\* is typed in, WAIS will search the full text of all records and retrieve all records with significant words that begin with this alphabetic combination. This will include words such as biology, biological, biologism, and biologic.

**Word Weights:** If a word in a document is found to match a word in the user's query, the word is assigned a weight, and this weight adds to the overall score. The exact weight that a word receives depends on the emphasis given to the word by the author and on where in the record the word was found. For example, a word is weighted highest if it appears at the top of the document (such as a word in a title).

**Term Weights:** Each word in a database is assigned a numeric value called a term weight based on the frequency of the occurrence of that word over all records in the database. Words that occur frequently are not weighted as highly as those that appear less frequently. Very common words are ignored as "stop words" (a, an, the, for example) or diminished in the scoring.

**Proximity Relationships:** Proximity relationships designate that if the words in a natural language query (a query that does not contain Boolean operators between terms) are located close together in a document, they are given a higher weight than those found further apart.

Q. How can I get help in using OpenNet?

A. Within OpenNet, extensive on-line help is available. Figure 5 shows the titles of the OpenNet help sections. If additional help is needed, the following personnel at the Office of Scientific and Technical Information can provide assistance:

Axel Ringe (615) 576-2616  
David Henderson (615) 576-3615

Q. What is the cost to use the OpenNet?

A. DOE does not charge for OpenNet access. However, Internet access or direct dial telephone connect charges may depend on how your computer connects to OpenNet. There are usually charges for accessing InterNet through one of the online service providers, i.e., Delphi or America On-line which currently provide text-only access. Rates vary for both the basic service and connection time based on the transmission time of your equipment.

Q. If I do not have a computer or access to OpenNet, are there central locations where I can access OpenNet?

A. Many public libraries have InterNet connections. Some of the DOE Public Reading Rooms will soon have InterNet Access. The Public Reading Rooms which currently have access to the Internet are shown below:

DOE Chicago:

University of Illinois  
Documents Department  
PO Box 8198  
Chicago, IL 60680

POC: Seth Nasatir (312) 996-2738

DOE Nevada

Coordination and Information Center  
3084 South Highland Drive  
Las Vegas, NV

POC: Martha DeMarre (702) 295-0731

Q. What are the criteria for a document to be included in OpenNet? What documents will be included in OpenNet?

A. The major criteria are that the documents be both declassified after October 1, 1994, and publicly releasable. Other documents and collections of documents may also be included.

OpenNet currently includes all or part of the following collections of documents: Coordination and Information Center, the Office of Scientific and Technical Information, and Richland Operations Office. Other collections will be added from time to time. The initial database contains more than 265,000 bibliographical references.

Future additions to the OpenNet database will provide bibliographic information on other collections of related documents as they are reviewed, declassified (if necessary), and made publicly available. Abstracts may also be added if they are available, and the Secretary's vision is to ultimately provide on-line the complete text of all publicly releasable documents of interest.

Q. Will OpenNet be only for Headquarters documents or will field office documents also be included?

A. Documents placed in OpenNet will come from a wide variety of sources throughout the entire Department of Energy complex, including government facilities, government owned-contractor operated sites, and national laboratories. In essence, if a DOE facility is authorized to declassify documents, it is a potential source of information for OpenNet.

Q. Will all OpenNet DOE documents be formerly classified?

A. No, many of the included documents have never been classified documents, but were part of collections which were classified. Additionally, some of the "never classified" documents have deletions because of privacy or other unreleasable information contained in them.

Q. Will DOE administrative data be available on OpenNet (i.e., contract summaries, research grants, funding priorities, etc.)

A. Contract summaries, research grants, funding priorities, and other documents which encompass the administrative functions of the Department of Energy are generally exempt from public disclosure because of the nature of the information which they contain. Therefore, they will not routinely be included in OpenNet.

information on how to request documents under the Freedom of Information Act, including sample letter formats.

Unfortunately, the large number of requests received has generated an enormous backlog. The current backlog for the Office of Declassification is approximately 18 months. DOE realizes that this is unsatisfactory and is implementing procedures to reduce the backlog to approximately 3 months by October 1996. Some of the steps being implemented are: adding additional staff to handle the requests; addition of automation tools to speed up the review process; involving the public in determining the priorities for reviewing documents; and the creation of the OpenNet database to help get the information to the public on what has already been declassified and is available.

Q. What steps will be taken to guarantee that all DOE documents are made available to the public through OpenNet?

A. Not all documents will be made available - only those which have been declassified after October 1, 1994 and are publicly releasable.

Each DOE facility which is authorized to declassify documents is responsible for determining the documents under their control to be included in OpenNet. A directive has been issued tasking them with assuring the accuracy of their portion of the OpenNet database.

Q. Once a document is entered into OpenNet, will a copy be retained permanently to ensure availability if requested?

A. There are many factors in determining how long documents may be retained. The mere fact that a document has been entered into the OpenNet database is not sufficient justification by itself to cause the document to be permanently retained. The merit of the document's content is the driving factor.

Q. If a document that has been entered into OpenNet is destroyed, will this be reflected in the system?

A. The bibliographical entries for documents which have been destroyed will be removed from the OpenNet database.

Q. Will OpenNet also list the non-DOE originated documents which are reviewed and made publicly available? If not, will other agencies offer a similar service?

A. No, OpenNet is DOE only. DOE has no information on any of the other agencies developing capabilities similar to OpenNet.

Q. What is the procedure for requesting a document? Can I order the document electronically?

A. To order a document you may write (or in some cases, call) the address given in the OpenNet document record location and request the document. The accession number is the most important information to have, but title, author and similar information would be helpful too.

At the present time, there are no provisions for ordering the documents electronically. However, this avenue is being explored as a feature to be added in the future.

Q. If the organization listed as the source for a document is unable to comply with a request (i.e., cannot locate the report), who do I contact to obtain it?

A. If the organization puts an entry into OpenNet, it should have the document. If it does not, please contact the DOE OpenNet Action Officer at the following address:

Fletcher Whitworth, NN-522.2  
U.S. Department of Energy  
Washington DC 20585  
E-Mail: fletcher.whitworth@hq.doe.gov

Q. How often is new information added to OpenNet?

A. All information on documents declassified and publicly releasable after October 1, 1994, must be included in the OpenNet database by March 15, 1995. After this initial period of loading data, new releases should be added to the OpenNet database within 30 to 60 days of the determination that the document meets criteria for inclusion.

Q. Many documents in OpenNet were original classified and are now "sanitized." What exactly is a sanitized document? a "redacted" document?

A. For our purposes, sanitized and redacted mean the same thing. A sanitized document is one that has had all unreleasable information removed.

Q. How can I to make suggestions or report errors?

A. Suggestions for improving the service provided by OpenNet may be sent to the following address:

Fletcher Whitworth, NN-522.2  
U.S. Department of Energy  
Washington, DC 20585 or  
E-Mail: [opennet@hq.doe.gov](mailto:opennet@hq.doe.gov)



Figure 2