



## REVIEW

# Review of Digital Publication: Our World in Data

**Matt Fisher**

*Science Education and Civic Engagement: An International Journal*

Our World in Data is an online publication that will be of interest to many readers of *Science Education and Civic Engagement: An International Journal*. It brings together in one location data about a number of different topics related to how the world is changing. The site is produced at the University of Oxford by a team led by Max Roser, an economist at the university. Amazingly, the entire project is available free of charge as a public good!

Roser began the project in 2011 and for several years was the sole author until grant funding allowed him to add team members. The long-term goal is to create 275 distinct entries in the site. Entries are gathered into thematic sections; as of January 2018, these include

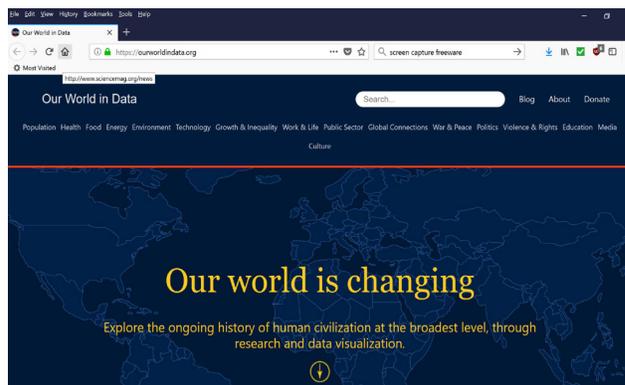
Population, Health, Food, Energy, Environment, Technology, Growth & Inequality, Work & Life, Public Sector, Global Connections, War & Peace, Politics, Violence & Rights, Education, Media, and Culture.

There are several features of the site that make it attractive to educators. The Energy section, for example, is divided into a number of subsections—energy production and changing energy sources, fossil fuels, renewables, carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. The section on energy production and changing energy sources is further divided into sections titled "Empirical View," "Correlates, Determinants, and Consequences," and "Data Sources."

There are numerous visualizations for topics such as energy production by source, energy production over time, energy intensities of the economies in various parts of the world, access to electricity, and per capita energy consumption, among many others. Some visualizations present the data over time and allow one to focus on a particular year. Other visualizations provide the option for changing from a graph to a map or changing the axes on a particular graph. Images can easily be downloaded as .png files for use in presentations or other documents. Data used in a particular visualization can be downloaded as a .CSV file that can be opened in Excel. All data are clearly identified regarding point of origin, and the sources appear to be reliable—academic sites, United Nations agencies, the World Bank, the World Health Organization, and others—and one section of the website explains how the team chooses the data that are presented. The site also contains an essay that explains the rationale for Our World in Data: to support better understanding, involvement, and policy making by presenting an accurate picture of global progress in development. Overall, the site conveys a commitment to transparency that is commendable.

I have used some of the visualizations from the site in three different courses this semester: information on energy consumption (per capita and by source) in General Chemistry II and in a course for nonscience majors focused on sustainability, and information on malaria in my biochemistry class. They added a dimension to the classes that would have been very difficult for me to accomplish otherwise.

For educators who want to bring a global dimension to their incorporation of civic engagement into a course, Our World in Data will be an invaluable resource. I highly recommend it.



<https://ourworldindata.org/>