

## WANT TO COUNT SOMETHING? COUNT THIS...

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### **$P(A \text{ or } B) = P(A) + P(B) - P(A \text{ and } B)$**

Congressional papers and political papers generally contain both **un-mined data** and **data that can be re-purposed** for many political science researchers. A **research agenda** that **crosses disciplines** and **forms partnerships** with other political scientists and institutions has a better chance for outside funding. The opportunity to share limited resources and expand the academic dialogue beyond your specialty cannot be overstated.

If you haven't considered congressional papers as a resource, then consider the contents of a typical congressional collection. Here is a table relating collection contents to potential data or questions that political scientists should find relevant. Keep in mind that these collections usually span many years giving the researcher a window to examine **issues, relationships, and cause and affect phenomena** where the constant or control is the collection material itself. What you do can and should influence how librarians and archivists practice. If **you** begin to think differently about congressional and political papers, then **we** also will think about them differently.

### **Other Suggestions**

Political papers outside congressional collections should also be considered, though they may be harder to find. State archives will hold gubernatorial papers, legislative files, and some political party records. **GOP and Democratic State Party** files are rich sources but hard to find. If you start looking for and requesting access, archivists will be motivated to seek and collect state party material. Labor archives should lend themselves to all kinds of measurement and analyses. A good portal is the **Labor Archives Roundtable**. It not only links you to archives but also to the archivists who are managing these collections.

[http://www.archivists.org/saagroups/labor/Labor\\_Archives\\_Directory.asp](http://www.archivists.org/saagroups/labor/Labor_Archives_Directory.asp)

### **Other Fields of Study**

Your colleagues in the social sciences such as **communications, journalism, and library science** produce their own literature on politics, political papers, and government documents. Do a subject search in one of their databases and compare your methodologies with theirs. Team up with your Gov Docs or Political Science librarians- there may be a paper there for both of you. **Informatics**: "The interdisciplinary study of information content, representation, technology and applications, and the methods and strategies by which information is used in organizations, networks, cultures and societies." (<http://www.archimuse.com/>) This link gives an overview of the archives informatics literature [http://www.archimuse.com/publishing/bearman\\_pub.html](http://www.archimuse.com/publishing/bearman_pub.html) There appears to be only two articles related to government and democracy but if you are interested in information technology, the transparency of government, and the nature of electronic records and web-based information, there is a place for political science informatics along side medicine, nursing, engineering, music, chemistry and business. Check out this link for an analysis of government websites <http://www.insidepolitics.org/egovt03us.html> What questions would political scientists ask and how would they report the data?

<b>SERIES HEADINGS</b>	<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>DATA</b>
<b>Personal &amp; Political</b>	Personal Correspondence (colleagues, department heads, military leaders) Campaigns Boards & Memberships Awards & Certificates Party Leadership Finance Personal interests (hobbies, recreation, causes)	Polls (internal and external) Demographics Special Interest Groups State vs. National Interests State vs. Party Politics Non-elected Individuals and Public Policy Campaign Rhetoric & Finance Election Analyses (impact on state, winners vs. losers, impact on party) Campaign Strategy <b>Follow the Money</b>
<b>Legislative</b>	Committees (hearings, reports, background material) Bills (sponsored and co- sponsored) Gray Literature (CRS issue research, technical reports, committee prints, unpublished white papers) Memos & Correspondence Floor remarks, debates	Assignments & Outcomes Data Supporting legislation (what's used, what's ignored) Outside Consultation (lawyers and law firms, (language, background research, clients) Voting Records and Analysis <b>Follow the Money</b>
<b>Administrative</b>	Constituent Service Constituent Correspondence Issue Mail Office Manuals Administrative Assistant Files Legislative Assistant Files Opinion Surveys Office minutes and memos Schedules State Office Files Grants Special Projects	Scientific Sampling (of mail, grass roots initiatives, local vs. national concerns) Influence of Surveys Schedules (how they relate to campaigns, policy, support groups <b>Follow the Money</b>
<b>Media Files</b>	Speeches (also speech writers, memos, drafts) News Releases & Newsletters Personal Writings (i.e., editorials, articles, books) A/V material Scrapbooks & News clippings Photos and Albums Political Cartoons	Rhetoric (changes over time) Media Campaigns (strategy, analyses, comparisons, outcomes) News releases & events (relation to polls, predictors of election outcomes, influence on voting records) <b>Follow the Money</b>
<b>Artifacts &amp; Memorabilia</b>	Plaques, awards, artwork, campaign material, other three- dimensional objects	Unknown