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## DiRT: Digital Research Tools Wiki

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**DiRT: Digital Research Tools Wiki**, by Lisa Spiro. Internet Resource. Reviewed in 2009sep CHOICE.

This wiki listing of Web-based tools and commercial software is geared to humanities/social sciences researchers. Users can identify tools for specific research tasks. Project organizers are the only editors, but they actively solicit suggestions. The main index is task based: following the phrase "I want to ..." is a list of options like "analyze statistics" or "blog." Second-level pages list links to Web-based tools or to descriptions of purchasable software packages. Some categories are closely related, with overlapping tools, e.g., pages focusing on communicating or networking with colleagues; these might better be merged to a single page with subdivisions. Still, the task-based framework is an effective way to narrow the list of tools.

Page quality and comprehensiveness vary by editor. The page on visual searching offers good brief annotations on search tools' distinguishing features, but annotations on most pages come directly from the resource's "about" page and lack context about a tool's intended audience. Occasional editorial reviews provide detail and a basis for comparison, but most of the several hundred resources lack reviews. Reviews follow a template with bulleted lists/brief paragraphs for highlights, drawbacks, and tips. Resources are listed alphabetically, with software for different platforms interfiled. Since platform often is a limiting factor, a better choice might be sorting the lists with platform-independent options first and software for specific operating systems listed separately by system. Items are noted as free or commercial; unfortunately, the site does not highlight free items or provide pricing links for commercial software. During early 2009, a few users were actively updating this wiki. Most links were functional at the time of review. If the site continues to be updated, with more reviews added, it promises to be useful to researchers/librarians who need to compare tools. **Summing Up:** Recommended. Graduate students; faculty/researchers.

-- *P. Finley, University of Nevada, Las Vegas*