

Value: 20 points

Objective: Texas has developed an extensive presence on the Internet to allow citizens to secure information which was previously very difficult to obtain. This exercise is designed to introduce the student to the various resources currently maintained by the State Government of Texas. Additionally, Internet access is available directly to the Legislature, the state agencies, and the court system of Texas. There is also a significant amount of data available through university websites. We will explore each method of accessing the web pages for the different state agencies.

Instructions:

- 1) Please answer the questions that call for a simple response asked on this form in the spaces provided. I don't want to "hunt" for your answers by digging through pages of "stuff".
- 2) **Attach the appendixes required in the order listed.** There will be a two point deduction of for every appendix missing or incorrect.
- 3) There will be a 5 point deduction if the appendixes are attached out of order and I have to "dig" for the information.
- 4) All of the websites were working at the time of posting. If you run into a website that doesn't work, wait a day or two and retry it. If it still doesn't work, email me and I'll send you instructions on how to work around the problem. Don't just skip it.

I. Index Sites

State of Texas Homepage <http://www.texas.gov/>) There is a wealth of information on this website, but navigating it can be somewhat of a challenge.

A. For this part of the exercise, follow these instructions carefully:

First, click on the above link to take you to www.texas.gov.

Then, click on the agencies tab->more agencies

In the filter box on the right side, type in the word city

Click on the "All" tab on the far upper left side of the screen.

This will bring up a list of the cities in Texas that have websites.

B. Select a city which begins with the same letter as your last name (or first name if there isn't one with the same initial as your last name).

C. Using the information posted on the city website, answer the following questions? (If you can't readily find the information, select a different city)

1. Name of City Selected: _____

2. In which region of the state is the city located? _____ (use the regional names that were covered in Unit 1 of the course)

3. What is the population of the city at the last census?(if available on website) _____

4. What form of city government does the city use? _____ Generally the city charter will outline this information. (If you cannot find this on the webpage, try emailing or calling the city administrator for the information.)

D. Return to the Texas homepage (using the back button on your browser or click again on

<http://www.texas.gov>

Click on the SERVICES tab and list three of the state services that you can perform online.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

(Note: Print out only the first page for any of these homepages. Please do not print the entire section or website)

2) State Agencies' Homepages. Return to the homepage (www.texas.gov) and click on the AGENCIES tab->More Agencies and select one of the state agencies which starts with the same letter as your last name. Complete the information requested below.

Name of the Agency _____

Mission or responsibility of the agencies you selected:

Who is the Chief Executive Officer of the agency? (This is the person who is the person responsible for the day to day operations of the agency. You may have to explore a bit to locate this information. There is no uniformity in the webpage design) Note: It generally will not be the Chairperson of the Board that governs the agency).

Name _____

What is his or her title? _____

Print out the Homepage for the agency you have selected and attach it to this report as **Appendix 1**

3). Regional Councils of Government

- (a) Using the search engine, search for the [Texas Association of Regional Councils](http://www.txregionalcouncil.org) Locate the **About the TARC** button, and then select the "About the Association" option.
- (b) How many regions are there in Texas _____?
- (c) Click on the Regional Councils, then the Maps of the Regions button.
http://www.txregionalcouncil.org/display.php?page=regions_map.php
- (d) If you can, print out the map of the regions and attach as **Appendix 2**.
- (e) Select the region the number of which is closest to your birthday
- (f) . Which one did you select? _____
- (g) Go to that region and print out the homepage for that region and attach it to this report as **Appendix 3**

Texas Executive Branch Sites

1) The Governor's Office. (<http://www.governor.state.tx.us/>)

This will open on the Governor's homepage. Note the self-congratulatory press releases. These tend to be pretty typical for most elected officials. Some useful information tends to be hidden under the hype, but you will have to dig to find it.

Who is the Governor of Texas? _____

Offices in the Governor's Office.. Click on the ORGANIZATION tab and then select one of the divisions listed and answer the question below.

Name one of the divisions listed. _____

What does this division do? Answer in the space provided or attach a separate sheet as **Appendix 4**.

Print out the homepage for this division and attach it to this report as **Appendix 5**.

You may explore the other divisions if you have time.

2. Attorney General (<http://www.oag.state.tx.us/>) Notice the highly political information on the page.

a) Who is the Attorney General of Texas? -

b) Click on the About Ken Paxton tab, then select the tab Outlining the Duties and Responsibilities. What are three main responsibilities listed?

c) Click on the **Around the Agency** tab

After reviewing the major divisions of the office, click on each of the divisions and view their web pages, then, select one of them, print out the description of what it does and attach it to this report as **Appendix 6**.

Again, if you have time, explore the other divisions.

Then, answer the following questions about the division you selected and answer the following questions.

a. Which one did you select?

b. What does the division do?

c) Return to the Around the Agency Tab and find the Opinions tab, select About Attorney General Opinions and answer the following questions.

1. Who may request an AG's opinion? Write your answer in the space provided below.

2. Under the Opinion's tab, select the **Pending Opinion Requests** and select one of the requests. Note that anyone may submit a written brief to the Opinion's Committee on the subject of the opinion request, but only a select group may request an opinion.

Concerning the request you have chosen, what is the number of the request, who requested it, and what do they want to know?

Requestor _____

Number of request _____

Brief description:

1. Other agencies of the Plural Executive. After visiting each of the following, select one of the following

Agriculture <http://www.agr.state.tx.us/>

Comptroller <http://www.window.state.tx.us/>

Land Office <http://www.glo.texas.gov/>

Which agency did you select? _____

What are the duties of that agency? Print out the information and attach it to this report as **Appendix 7a**.

Select one of the divisions of that agency? What does it do? (Attach the information to this report as **Appendix 7b**.)

III. Judicial System <http://www.txcourts.gov/>

The above link will take you to the Homepage for the Court System of Texas.

A) Click on the About Texas Courts tab and then the tab for Court Structure Chart. Print out the chart and attach it as **Appendix 8a**.

(A) Under the Organizations tab, located in the title bar, find the answers to each of the following questions

1) What is the Office of Court Administration and what does it do?

2) What is the Texas Judicial Council? How many members does it have and what are its duties?

3) What is the State Commission on Judicial Conduct, who is on it, and what powers does it have? Print out the sheet with the powers and duties and attach as **Appendix 8b**

(B) Return to the homepage for the Texas Courts . <http://www.txcourts.gov/> Under the courts tab, you may click on the name of the court to take you to the respective court.

a) Click on the Supreme Court link. www.supreme.courts.state.tx.us. Print out the information that describes the function of the Supreme Court and attach it as **Appendix 8c**.

b) Follow the links to the profiles of the Texas Supreme Court Justices [Home](#) [Courts](#) [Supreme Court/About the Court/Justices](#) and select one of the justices. Print out the page with the profile and attach as **Appendix 9**

c) Navigate to the Court of Criminal Appeals webpage. <http://www.txcourts.gov/cca.aspx> Print out the sheet that describes the functions of the courts and attach as **Appendix 10**

d) Select one of the Justices and read about him or her. Who did you select? What is their title? Print out the page with the profile and attach as **Appendix 11**.

e) Return to the homepage and select the court of appeals court that is closest to your birthday. If there isn't one, round off your birthday to the next higher even number, divide your birthday by 2 and use that number. What is the date of your birth? _____. Go to that Court of Appeals website and answer the following questions:

Courts of Appeals # _____

Who is the Chief Justice of this court? _____

How many Associate Justices does this court have? _____

Write a paragraph detailing what these courts do and attach it as **Appendix 12**.

IV. Texas Legislature (<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/>)

The Texas Legislature has an extensive website with major opportunities for research. The assignment only skims the surface. It is possible to spend many hours exploring this site in depth.

1. Using the box on the right entitled Who Represents Me? , answer the following questions. You will have to visit the homepage for each to answer the questions asked. You may have to access the member's personal webpage to answer the committee information.

What zip code did you use? _____

Who is your U.S. Congressman _____

Who is your State Senator _____

What committees does your Senator serve on? Click on the Senator's website to secure this information. If the search engine returns more than one Senator or Representative, you may need to use the address to get an accurate answer.

Committees: _____

Who is your State Representative _____

What committees does your Representative (Texas House of Rep) serve on? You may have to go to the member's homepage to get this information.

Committees: _____

2. Agencies of the Legislature

1. Texas Legislative Council (<http://www.tlc.state.tx.us/>)

What are the main functions of the Legislative Council?

How are the members of the Legislative Council chosen?

Who are the chairs of the Legislative Council?

2. Legislative Budget Board (<http://www.lbb.state.tx.us/>)

Click on the About the LBB. Read the history of the LBB.

Return to the homepage for the LBB. On the left side are links to a series of Performance Reports and Reviews. Select one of these and write a one page summary of what you learned. Attach this summary as **Appendix 13**

3. Reference Library (<http://www.lrl.state.tx.us/>)

Click on the About the Library tab.

Print out the first page of this website and attach as **Appendix 14**.

What is the purpose of the Texas Legislative Reference Library?

Return to the homepage. Under the heading Research Tools, explore the reference options available. You may be able to utilize them at a later time.

V. Texas Media

1. Texas Press Association <http://www.texaspress.com/> currently lists over 200 newspapers that have on-line links. Under the **Members Services** Tab, click on the **Newspaper Search** button. Select three different newspapers.

2.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

B. Television stations

There is no easy access to the URLs of the TV stations.

However, several of the local TV stations have extensive sites. You may visit a few of them.

1. Houston

- Channel 11 <http://www.khou.com/>
- Channel 13 <http://abc13.com/>
- Channel 2 <http://www.click2houston.com/>
- Channel 39 <http://www.foxnews.com/>
- Channel 20 <http://www.mynetworktv.com/>
- Channel 8 <http://www.houstonpbs.org>

Compare three of these six and write a short paragraph telling me what you discovered about the type of coverage and the way they handle political news. Attach your essay as **Appendix 15**.

VI. Data Sources

A. Texas State Data Center <http://txsdc.utsa.edu/>

This is the focal point for population data in Texas. Select one of the topics. Search the topics listed, select one of interest to yourself, and write a short summary of what you have learned. Attach as **Appendix 16**.

B. Texas Map Collection

The University of Texas Perry Castaneda Library maintains an excellent map collection which has been digitalized and made available on the web. <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/> Go to this site and select one of the Texas maps of interest to yourself. Print out the map and attach as **Appendix 17**.

C. Texas Almanac (on line version) <http://www.texasalmanac.com/>

This is an excellent reference source for information about Texas. Select one of the topics listed on the left side of the homepage, find an article of relevance to Texas Government, write a one paragraph summary of what you found, and attach it as **Appendix 18**.

D. Handbook of Texas <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online>

Published by the Texas State Historical Association, an electronic version is available. Go to the website, use the master browse list, and select a topic of interest to you. Write a one paragraph summary of what you found and attach as **Appendix 19**.

Congratulations. You have finished the assignment and now know how to access more data that you will ever have time to utilize under normal conditions.