



# Insider



DrugSense/MAP • 14252 Culver Drive #328 • Irvine, CA 92604-0326 • info@DrugSense.org • 1-800-266-5759

## Lots of Links

Have you ever wished you could locate a concise and complete list of drug policy links and organizations? Doing a Web search for such groups will find varied results with little to indicate who does what. If you seek such a listing, you need to look no further than DrugSense's Media Awareness Project. Our **Drug Policy Links** directory contains links to more than **400 organizations and Websites** that deal somehow with this topic.



Clicking on 'Drug Links' takes you to our Drug Policy Links database at <http://www.mapinc.org/dpr.htm>.

A visit to this site – a mere click away using the block image at the bottom of many MAP pages – will first find a listing of our top recommended sites in alphabetical order.

Our first recommended site is the venerable **Cannabisnews.com**, a wholly owned subsidiary of DrugSense/MAP. Cannabisnews focuses on news stories that relate to marijuana only. These stories appear in date order, most recent first. The symbols beside them depict their topic. For example, sites with the NORML logo indicate that the article relates to that organization. Clicking 'Read More' takes you to the article itself, where it is redisplayed with correct attributions including author, date published, and source contact information. In addition, readers are encouraged to post their own comments and



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## Parsing Propaganda

The daunting task of collecting ALL worldwide drug policy articles has confounded DrugSense staff and volunteers for many years. While volunteers capture and submit the vast majority of clippings, a significant number are still missed because they emanate from foreign countries, less populated areas, or obscure publications. For this reason and to advance his interest in the language of the drug war – propaganda – DrugSense programmer Doug Snead developed a software program called **Bot** that efficiently gathers news from online sources on any given topic.

This system can collect news from any online *html* news source. The software discovers articles by the limited spidering of these sites – following links of interest while ignoring irrelevant ones. Articles are automatically categorized and summarized according to selected concept terms.

Central to the operation of Bot is a **concept dictionary**, which is a type of thesaurus where keywords are grouped together to form “concepts.” Concepts are keyword lists used to categorize and



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opinions, which often transform it from mere news coverage into a political debate. One recent piece authored by Chris Goldstein and Paul Armentano of NORML, which appeared in the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, garnered over 85 separate comments from more than 10 posters in only one week!

The sites of many noted reform organizations are represented among MAP's **Recommended Drug Policy Links**. These include the sites for Common Sense for Drug Policy, the DRCNet Drug Library, the Drug Policy Alliance, Law Enforcement Against Prohibition, the Marijuana Policy Project, NORML, the November Coalition, and Students for Sensible Drug Policy.



Sites in the Drug Policy Links database are also coded to indicate that they are hosted by our Drug Policy Central.

Coding of these sites extends to search capabilities as well. Two search boxes appear on the Links Database page, one at the top and one at the bottom.

All 392 sites can be searched in the top box on a number of features. Viewing the links by **Category** gives results like all sites pertaining to Medical Marijuana (**Cannabis – Medical**), **Gender Issues**, or **Law Enforcement**. Recent headlines from the DrugNews Archive on the searched topic will also appear atop of the results. By using the **Prohibition** category, you can even find sites for 'anti-drug' groups, the DEA, Freevibe, and the Drug Free America Foundation. Note that some reform supporters will appear on this page because they have content pertaining to prohibition.

The **Feature** search tool allows you to look for specific site content such as audio/video, blogs, speakers, forums, and online chatting. The **Area** drop down box does exactly what it says: locates sites geographically.

Category	Cannabis - Medical	Feature	Research	Area	California
Keywords				Found: 4	Search

## Our Recommended Links

### MAP Drug Policy Links Database

(<http://www.mapinc.org/dpr.htm>)

### Cannabisnews.com

Accurate and unbiased news about marijuana, cannabis, and hemp.  
(<http://www.cannabisnews.com/>)

### Common Sense for Drug Policy

Expands the discussion on drug policy and educates the public about alternatives to current policy.  
(<http://www.csdp.org>)

### DRCNet Drug Library

World's largest online drug policy library.  
(<http://www.druglibrary.net/>)

### The Drug Policy Alliance

Advances policies and attitudes that best reduce the harms of both drug misuse and drug prohibition.  
(<http://www.drugpolicy.org>)

### Law Enforcement Against Prohibition

Current and former members of law enforcement who support drug regulation rather than prohibition.  
(<http://leap.cc>)

### Marijuana Policy Project

Develops and promotes policies to minimize the harm associated with marijuana use as well as with its prohibition.  
(<http://www.mpp.org>)

### NORML

Provides a voice to those who oppose marijuana prohibition and favor an end to the practice of arresting marijuana smokers.  
(<http://norml.org>)

### The November Coalition

Educates the public about the destructive increase in the U.S. prison population and the steady erosion of our civil rights and freedoms.  
(<http://www.november.org>)

### Students for Sensible Drug Policy

Works to involve youth in the political process and promotes an open, honest, and rational discussion of alternative drug policy solutions.  
(<http://www.sscp.org>)

Sites can thus be found based on various parameters within them, like, say, all Medical Marijuana sites in California that contain Research information.

The **Google Search Tool** at the bottom of the Links page can help you zero in on your topic by enabling keyword searches of the sites just gleaned from your the top box search. The search results appear in the right drop down box. Into the left box you can type a key word, say, Research. After hitting the 'Search' button, you'll get direct links to all mentions about that topic in the site, saving you precious time and money as you work to promote sensible policies.

## Fabulous Facelift

The sites of two of our clients, LEAP and the Drug Truth Network, recently received major face lifts. Improvements included a new look, functional enhancements, and the addition of blogs, audio video, and social networking capabilities. LEAP Executive Director Jack Cole praised the effort and new look by saying, "Many thanks to Matt Elrod and Deb Harper for the countless hours of programming and tweaking the web pages and to DrugSense our host and the

Media Awareness Project who power the site with their automatic feeds. The new site became active on July 1, 2007. The per-day visits have nearly doubled the number of visits made during the month of June 2007 and more than quadrupled what they were a year ago in August 2006. By just holding this momentum LEAP will have 1.5 million visitors during 2007. We expect to surpass that number by several magnitudes."

Elrod and Harper are still tweaking the Drug Truth Network site, which should go live in a few weeks.



## Demand MORE Media

Don't forget about MCODE – MAP's Media Contact on Demand database of **FREE** contact information for over 30,000 U.S. and Canadian print and broadcast media outlets: TV and radio stations, daily and weekly newspapers, trade and consumer magazines, news syndicates, and AP and UPI bureaus. Searchable on a number of parameters such as by venue or by specific distances from any zip code or city, MCODE can easily output mailing labels or data formats suitable for use in fax or e-mail programs. Get a free walk-through by contacting Philippe Lucas at [phil@drugsense.org](mailto:phil@drugsense.org).

### SPECIAL NOTE:

A generous funder has again agreed to [match all donations](#) dollar for dollar. Give your contribution twice the value. Donate today!

### Media Contact On Demand

**\*\*FREE\*\*** database of media contact information  
[\(http://www.mapinc.org/mcod/\)](http://www.mapinc.org/mcod/)

## Donate Today!

Your tax-deductible donation funds all of these DrugSense services and more. [Help change drug policy now!](#) Please fill out the form below, make your check or money order payable to **DrugSense** and mail to:

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Amount: \$50  \$100  \$250  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

**DrugSense is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your donation is tax deductible to the extent provided by law.**

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rank articles by their relevance to the desired topic. The robot/spider portion of the system uses the concept dictionary to guide the new article discovery process. The technique that the newsbot uses to extract interesting, non-trivial information from unstructured text is called **text mining**.

Articles discovered by this system are cached on the server along with concept lists. Categorizing news articles by a set of concept tags allows for concept-based searches, which can be conducted via a search form that appears on every page of Bot page.

By registering at the newsbot site, you can create concept and interest-based profiles, which, in turn, allow "interesting" articles to be e-mailed to you.

One underutilized feature of Bot involves '**Vanity Feeds.**' Say, you want to know what's being written in the media about your Executive Director. Bot can find these articles for you shortly after they hit the Internet. If you're interested, please contact Doug Snead at [doug@drugsense.org](mailto:doug@drugsense.org).

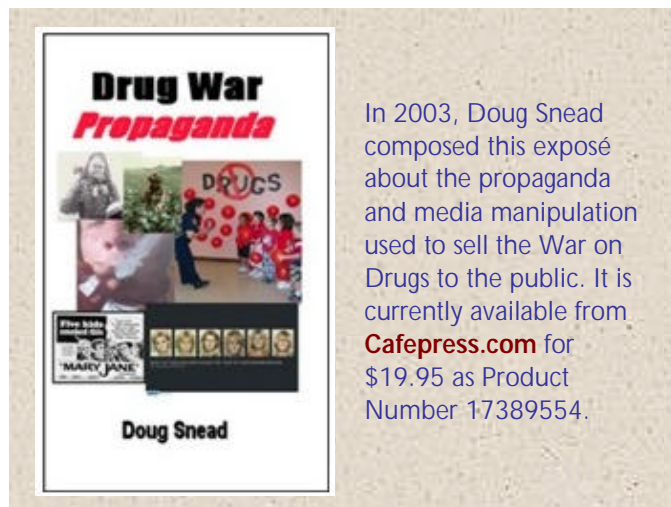
The system also meshes with MAP's DrugNews Archive by alerting users to an article's submission status. Articles already in the archive are not displayed for newshawking; those that are can be hawked by just pressing a couple of buttons.

Bot runs 24/7, gathering and categorizing the latest news. No other site delivers breaking drug policy news faster!



A collection of anti-prohibition cartoons from alcohol prohibition can also be found on Bot.

But that's not all. As mentioned before, one key feature of Bot is its ability to **parse propaganda**. Because it can define articles by concepts, the terms



In 2003, Doug Snead composed this exposé about the propaganda and media manipulation used to sell the War on Drugs to the public. It is currently available from **Cafepress.com** for \$19.95 as Product Number 17389554.

(keywords) that relate to them can be tied to common phrases used in drug war propaganda. To easily identify these phrases, the images tied to them appear on Bot's home page beneath the article's title. A cluster of stars under the title also suggest the degree of propaganda, with the longer the line, the greater the propaganda theme.

If you thought that the use of propaganda had declined in the modern age, Webpages on Bot should show you that media manipulation using words is alive and well.



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## Parsing Propaganda on Bot

### Propaganda News

News clippings broken out by propaganda topic.  
(<http://drugpolicycentral.com/bot/propaganda>)

### Propaganda Concept Dictionary

Listing of propaganda concepts and sub-concepts.  
(<http://drugpolicycentral.com/bot/pg/news/dictionary1.htm>)

### Bot Newsfeeds

Available in RSS, ATOM, XFML, and Javascript.  
(<http://drugpolicycentral.com/bot/pg/news/feedinfo.htm>)

### Bot Podcast

Have Bot 'read' you the latest breaking drug news.  
([http://drugpolicycentral.com/bot/dsbot\\_podcast.mp3](http://drugpolicycentral.com/bot/dsbot_podcast.mp3))

### Marijuana News from Bot

Up-to-the minute news about cannabis.  
(<http://drugpolicycentral.com/bot/pot>)

### Analyze Your Own Drug War Propaganda

Enter a URL and get an analysis of the site's propaganda content.  
(<http://drugpolicycentral.com/bot/scan>)

## More MAP Stats

As noted in previous editions of the *Insider*, we track a number of statistics to measure our impact on drug policy. The main source of our statistics is a free Web server analysis program called **Webalizer**. It produces highly detailed usage reports from server log files (requests for Web pages).

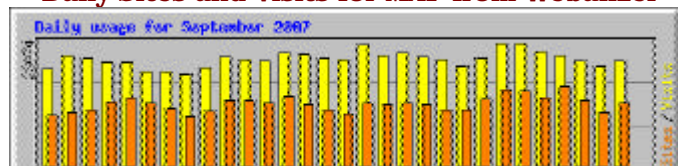
Web statistics are murky and difficult to understand. They can report meaningful insights or garbage depending on how they are configured, who is interpreting them, and what purpose is sought.

Statistics programs like Webalizer **CANNOT** calculate:

- **How long someone spends at a Website.** Since a server only sees requests from another computer's (IP) address, it has no idea what the user is doing between requests. Simply being at a site doesn't mean someone is actually using it.
- **How many people visited and read site content during a certain period of time.** Unfortunately, servers see IP addresses, not people. A site 'visitor' may be a real person, many people at the same IP address, or a 'spider' program there to scour the site for data and links.

<b>Website Usage Statistics</b>			
<b>3-month moving averages</b>			
	Pages	Sites	Visits
<b>MAP (DrugNews Archive, media activism resources)</b>			
Sept 2007	1,695,301	238,126	774,217
Sept 2006	1,428,483	241,435	552,018
<i>Percent Chg</i>	<i>+18.7%</i>	<i>-1.4%</i>	<i>+40.3%</i>
<b>DrugSense (DrugSense Weekly, collateral materials)</b>			
Sept 2007	281,881	115,788	135,930
Sept 2006	169,452	77,040	78,391
<i>Percent Chg</i>	<i>+66.3%</i>	<i>+50.3%</i>	<i>+73.4%</i>
<b>Drug Policy Central (Bot &amp; client sites)</b>			
Sept 2007	662,065	71,458	324,048
Sept 2006	420,963	102,790	180,705
<i>Percent Chg</i>	<i>+57.3%</i>	<i>-30.5%</i>	<i>+79.3%</i>

### Daily Sites and Visits for MAP from Webalizer



## More MAP Stats

### MAP Overview Statistics

<http://drugsense.org/html/modules.php?name=Overview>

### Alexa

An independent organization that tracks Website statistics and ranks millions of top-level domain names.

<http://www.alexa.com>

### Alexa on DrugSense

<http://drugsense.org/stats/alexa.htm>

### Simpletons Guide to Web Server Analysis

Brief overview on how to analyze Website statistics.

<http://www.mrunix.net/webalizer/simpleton.html>

### Webalizer Quick Help

Definitions of the most common Webalizer terms

[http://www.mrunix.net/webalizer/webalizer\\_help.html](http://www.mrunix.net/webalizer/webalizer_help.html)

## Website Usage Statistics

### 3-month moving averages

	MAP	DrugSense	DPC
<b>Pages per Visit (Pages divided by Visits)</b>			
Sept 2007	6.7	3.4	8.7
Sept 2006	5.3	2.1	4.9
<i>Percent Chg</i>	<i>+25.1%</i>	<i>+66.3%</i>	<i>+106.4%</i>

As noted in earlier *Insiders*, we have settled on three main statistics as providing the most meaningful measurements of our usage. These are:

- **Pages** are those URLs considered to be the actual requested page, and not all of the individual items that make it up (such as graphics and audio clips). Note that Pages for September 2007 are up for all three of our major domain names.
- **Sites** is the number of unique IP addresses that made requests to the server. Remember, many users can appear to come from a single site or many sites. Still, this is the best gauge of visitor counts. Compared to September last year, site values are dramatically up for DrugSense, but down for both MAP and DrugSense.
- **Visits** occur when a remote site makes a request for a page on the server for the first time. If the length of time since the last request is greater than the specified timeout period (default is 30 minutes), a new Visit is started and counted, and the sequence repeats. Visits for all three of our Websites have increased at remarkable rates compared to last year.



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[www.MAPinc.org](http://www.MAPinc.org)

[www.DrugSense.org](http://www.DrugSense.org)

[www.DrugPolicyCentral.com](http://www.DrugPolicyCentral.com)

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[info@DrugSense.org](mailto:info@DrugSense.org)

When the news breaks, MAP fixes it!

## Inside the Insider:

**Lots of Links** DrugSense Links Database helps locate local information

**Parsing Propaganda** Automatic article archive analyzes the language of our issue

**Fabulous Facelift** Cool redo of the LEAP Website

And more....



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