

Recycling Online



Getting out there – Part 2

by Roger Guttentag

In last month's column (June 2011), I started my discussion of export-related Web resources by focusing on those sites that provided a good introduction to the many, often complex and technical, aspects of exporting as a business activity. I will continue my survey of Web-based content on exporting by looking at a recommended sampling of sites that provide further information on exporting that should appeal to the more experienced exporter.

Export Programs and Policies

It would probably not be understatement to say that the expansion of exporting by American businesses is on the mind of every member of Congress as well as the White House. This is because national trade policies – ours and everyone else's – matter, for better or worse. The following sites can help you at least get oriented to the major policies affecting exporting here in the U.S. and globally.

American Scrap Coalition (ASC)

The ACS is a coalition of business associations, such as the Steel Manufacturers Association, which claims to represent over 1,500 ferrous scrap-consuming companies. Their contention is that there is an impending crisis developing over the global availability and pricing of ferrous scrap due to policies of other countries that either discourage or prohibit ferrous scrap exporting. This includes a link to a recent Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (a 34-nation organization based in Paris) report that provides some support for this claim. The ACS's mission is to convince the U.S. Congress to take action to eliminate these barriers to the free international trade in ferrous scrap.

International Trade Administration (ITA)

The mission of the ITA, which is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, is to ensure compliance with U.S. trade laws and agreements, promote free and fair international trade practices, and to assist U.S. businesses

in becoming or remaining globally competitive. The ITA site has a listing, as a series of links, of key export and trade issues it seeks to address such as market access, tariffs and trade barriers. Each link brings you to a separate page where the trade topic is briefly explained along with links to other resources such as reports or specific sources of assistance. It is also worth exploring the rest of the ITA site for its content on available services, programs and trade data.

World Trade Organization (WTO)

The WTO is a global organization, formed in 1995, consisting of over 150 countries that have approved their participation in the trade agreements governing goods, services and intellectual property that form the core of the WTO's structure. The WHO serves as the administrative tool for administering these agreements as well as providing a forum for trade discussions and dispute resolution. The WTO agreements, which are discussed in detail on the WHO site, cover a wide range of issues such as agriculture, textiles, trade subsidies, tariffs and shipping.

Web Address Directory

American Scrap Coalition	http://scrapcoalition.com/
Federation of International Trade Associations	http://www.fita.org/
International Trade Administration	http://www.trade.gov/
NationMaster	http://www.nationmaster.com/
U.S. Census Bureau – Foreign Trade	http://tinyurl.com/CensusFT
U.S. Geological Survey – Iron and Steel Scrap Statistics	http://tinyurl.com/USG5Scrap
U.S. International Trade Commission – DataWeb	http://dataweb.usitc.gov/
World Trade Organization	http://www.wto.org/

Statistical Data

Exporting, like any other business function, is a data-driven activity. The more valid data you have, the better the quality of your business decisions. Listed below are some examples of the Web-accessible export data sources that can be found.

NationMaster (NM)

NM is one of those sites that, once you've seen it, can easily become one of your core Web references. It covers all countries and territories on the globe including ones I

am sure you've never heard of like Akrotiri (go to NM if you want to know where it is). You can search for data by browsing or keyword terms with respect to country or statistical topic such as Carbon Efficiency. Furthermore, you can verify the data yourself, since NM provides links to the sources it uses.

U.S. Census Bureau – Foreign Trade (USCB)

If plowing through pages and pages of data is your passion then consulting the Foreign Trade statistics compiled by the USCB is a must visit for you. The USCB has trade data that is analyzed with respect to year, country and NAICS (North American Industry Classifications System) and is available in various document formats.

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)

The USGS has reports and statistical summaries on U.S. iron and steel scrap production and utilization starting from the mid-1990. In addition, it also posts monthly summaries of scrap production and consumption for 2010 and 2011 as well as special research reports on this topic that can be downloaded.

U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC)

The USITC describes itself as an independent, quasi-judicial Federal agency (meaning it has powers similar to a court of law with respect to imposing penalties or remedies) with respect to important trade matters like trade dumping allegations. In addition, it collects trade data for use by all members of the U.S. government. The USITC has a number of prepared trade reports that can be easily accessed from its site with regard to specific filters such as country, country group or sector. You can also query its tariff database and the USITC provides the tools for determining what codes you need to input into the database as part of your search.

More Useful Links

Federation of International Trade Associations (FITA)

FITA describes itself as a global association of trade organizations that operate at all levels of government. The site claims to have over 8,000 international trade related site links organized within 30 categories such as Business Publications, Legal Resources and

Product Licensing. You can do key word searches or manually browse their directory. It is certainly worth consulting though I did find instances where the link that was given was not valid.

Final Thoughts

There is no doubt that, as I mentioned last month, this survey is just a tiny sample of the vast amount of information on international exporting that is available on the Web. The two forces stimulating the prolific generation of this information flow is the massive boost it can provide to national economies (I only need mention “China” to prove this) and, for this reason, the adoption of policies by advanced and developing countries to grow their share of world trade. The challenge is here is to successfully sift the wheat from the chaff so to speak and hopefully this survey will have helped accomplish this purpose.

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