

ReviewWWs

CyberDoc examines Internet answers to the 6 billion person question

6 billion people - a cause for celebration or commiseration? The Population Research Bureau site makes no secret of its views. Medical abortion is advocated as an answer to this crisis on its front page. Although there seem to be pages of information I cannot bring myself to hang around for long. Time to surf elsewhere!



The Paris-based [Musée de l'homme](#) has a rather interesting interactive presentation which uses some of the best in web technology. It is well worth a visit and a good place to start. It makes some interesting points about resource allocation and the fact that famine has reduced in the last 200 years despite population growth.

There are three editorials and several papers on population growth from the [9th Oct 1999 edition of the BMJ](#) available online and they prove quite balanced in their treatment of the subject. They address well the issues of resource consumption and almost the whole edition is devoted to the 6 billion person question.



[BBC Online](#) is very clearly on the side of the overpopulation view. They do however make some interesting points - for example that the state of Texas is big enough for a house for everyone in the world today, and that standing up they could all fit on the Isle of Wight.

An American [campaign for zero population growth](#) has some interesting but very one-sided pages about the subject and even request online donations to their campaign. According to them the growing population is responsible for extinction of flowers, overcrowded schools, global warming and traffic jams.



The [United Nations population division](#) have a very helpful page full of statistics and figures describing the world population in terms of its growth and the way it is changing in its age distribution. The relative decline in the numbers of children is shown graphically by a pyramid graph. There is also a fascinating page which updates the estimated world population every second.

The [population research institute](#) has a rather different view of the 6 billion people question. They point out that there

is more than enough food in the world to feed every mouth, that world wealth is growing, that life expectancy even in developing countries is rising and that, far from overpopulation in Europe, the threat is a loss of half the population by 2100. The site is refreshing in its celebration of human life and achievements.



One of the pitfalls of searching the internet is that it is easy to throw up apparently irrelevant sites. In researching this article I was using the keywords '6 billion' to search. Imagine my surprise to find a story about Clinton cancelling [6 Billion dollars of third world debt](#). The page spoke of the poor realising that there is a God who has caused this act of generosity. The announcement occurred only days before the birth of the 6 billionth child. I couldn't help but wonder if this was God's birthday present to one who was likely to have been a poor child.

CyberDoc is Adrian Warnock, an SHO in psychiatry and a leader of a small group in his local church. Links for today's websites can be found at <http://xtn.org/cyberdoc/6billion>