

**IRE/NICAR Computer Conference  
San Jose, California October 6-9, 1994**

**How to Get Federal Campaign Data**

Jackie Duobinis  
National Library on Money & Politics  
1320 19th Street, NW Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20003  
202-857-0318  
e-mail: DUOBINIS@CLARK.NET

Richard Mullins  
76 Gannett Hall  
UMC-Journalism  
Columbia, MO 65211  
314-882-2127  
JOURRAM@MUCCMAIL.MISSOURI.EDU

**Where to get Data:**

- 1) **The Campaigns** – The majority of campaigns for federal office use computers to keep track of fundraising and to file their disclosure reports. Some are willing to give you a disk. If you get one to give it to you, then you can use that fact to get the others.
- 2) **Federal Election Commission** – All disclosure reports from federal campaigns are filed here. The staff is **extremely** helpful. Data can be obtained on-line (You must contact them for account information. Costs \$20 per hour, prepaid.); nine-track tape (available through FOIA requests); computer generated indexes, disclosure reports as filed (available in the Public Records Office), and some summary numbers over the phone (through the Press Office). Completed enforcement actions (called MURs or Matters Under Review) and Advisory Opinions (requests for information from campaigns and others about what is permissible under the law) are available in the Public Records Office. See FEC handouts. 1-800-424-9530 or 202-219-4155.
- 3) **National Library on Money & Politics** – The Library's main database contains records derived from Federal Election Commission (FEC) computer tapes. The database contains every campaign contribution keyed by the FEC from individuals, Political Action Committees (PACs) or parties to every candidate for federal office from January 1, 1979 through the most recent (June 30, 1994). The Library's computer system allows for flexibility in the extraction and arrangement of data. The data has been enhanced by applying a unique coding system identifying both individuals and PAC contributions by industry and interest group categories. This coding system is derived from the U.S. government's Standard Industrial Codes used by the Bureau of Labor and Statistics. The coding also takes into account the committee jurisdictions of Congress. 202-857-0318
- 4) **NICAR** – The NICAR Data Library includes FEC Data. See NICAR handout. 314-882-0684
- 5) **State Elections Offices** – All campaigns for House & Senate are required to file their disclosure reports with the state elections office. How this data is available to reporters varies greatly from state to state.

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6) **Watch Dog Groups** - FEC Watch, a project of the Center for Responsive Politics, at 202-857-0044. Common Cause, national office, at 202-833-1200.

7) **Books** - *Best Congress Money Can Buy* - Phil Stern;  
*Honest Graft* - Brooks Jackson;  
*Handbook of Campaign Spending* - Dwight Morris & Sara Fritz (1st Ed), Morris & Murielle Gamache (2nd Ed);  
*Open Secrets* - Larry Makinson (1st & 2nd Ed), Makinson & Josh Goldstein (3rd Ed);  
*Money Talks* - Dan Clawson, Alan Neustadt & Denise Scott;  
*Capital Corruption* - Amitai Etzioni;  
*Politics and Money* - Elizabeth Drew;  
*Right Turn* - Thomas Ferguson & Joel Rogers;  
*Who Will Tell the People* - William Greider.

8) **Other Related Data** -

**Personal Financial Disclosure** - Every member of Congress must file a list of personal assets, liabilities, gifts and travel (not paid for by them or the government). These are available at the Clerk of the House or the Secretary of the Senate. *(You should look for names of individuals and companies which also show up on campaign disclosure reports.)*

**Legal Defense Funds** - Some voluntarily file with the Clerk of the House and Secretary of the Senate. *(Some donors may be individuals or companies that contribute regularly to the campaign)*