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Web Offers Vast Repository of Watergate Data

By LISA NAPOLI [E 10](#)

How might Watergate have been different had it happened in the digital age? If the files of the Democratic National Committee had been held by a network of PCs instead of in file cabinets, would Nixon's bumbling burglars have been a single untraceable hacker?

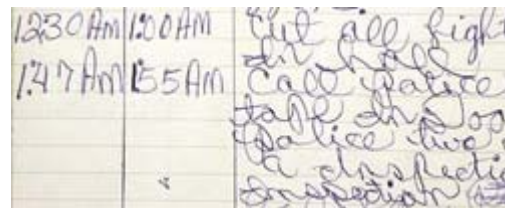
And what of the infamous tapes and meetings notes? If digital recording devices and e-mail had existed in 1972, might the course of history been altered by a delete key or an accidentally reformatted hard drive?

Today, 25 years after the break-in and arrests at the Watergate hotel that ultimately led to President Richard M. Nixon's demise, it's interesting to hypothesize (but impossible to know) about how digital technology might have made this a different sort of scandal -- or even an undetectable crime.

What we do know today, though, is that the ultimate digital network, the Web, makes the complexities of Watergate infinitely more comprehensible to the average person than print and television and movies were able to do at the time. That's because the Web can act as a simple interface to an enormous database of facts and details about this chapter of United States history.

In addition to raw facts, a number of sites give context to this anniversary, enabling us to revisit the crimes of the mighty and the humble alike and to reflect on the impact that the scandal known as Watergate has had on our culture and national psyche over the past quarter century.

Although at least one recent survey indicated that most Americans would have a hard time today explaining just what Watergate was all about, it's not for a lack of information; the Web is a vast and still-growing repository of facts on the subject. Here are a few of the more compelling sites:



Security officer's log of the Watergate complex, showing entry for June 17, 1972.
From the National Archives.

Related Audio

[Introduction to Nixon's Farewell Speech](#)
from The Richard Nixon Audio Archives
(.au format, 106K, 15 Secs.)



Credit: The Associated Press

Richard Nixon says goodbye outside the White House as he boards a helicopter for Andrews Air Force Base after resigning on Aug. 9, 1974.

Related Audio

[Close of Nixon's Farewell Speech](#)

from The Richard Nixon Audio Archives
(.au format, 90K, 12 Secs.)

[The Watergate Site](#) -- Curiously, the most comprehensive historical perspective on the Web comes from a 41-year-old high school teacher named Malcolm Farnsworth, who lives in Melbourne, Australia. Farnsworth, who says he became intrigued by American politics when Watergate was unfolding and still has original newspaper clippings, offers a handy bullet-point review of the scandal and its highlights. Full texts of Nixon's speeches from his election to his resignation are available, as are links to a variety of other Watergate sources and a review of the United States political system. Most intriguing is the context offered for how Watergate has become part of the vernacular. (Example: the term "gate" tagged on to any scandal.)

[The Richard Nixon Audio and Video Archives](#)

-- The tremor in Richard Nixon's voice during his resignation speech is one of the most haunting memories of the Watergate era. But if that wavering speech isn't stuck indelibly in your mind, or if you

aren't old enough to have experienced it, this site offers the entire speech and includes video clips from various other important speeches as well. For history buffs, the entire resignation speech is available in a 7 megabyte download; for the modern media consumer, the site's creators have cut this and other speeches into sound bites. (This archive was posted by a Web design firm in New York that invented the Political Babble Generator, which bears no intended resemblance to this more scholarly arrangement of audio clips.)

[Norman Nithman's The Nixon Links](#) -- This site categorizes dozens of links of interest about all things Watergate, including Nixon Usenet groups, exhibits like that of the [National Archives](#), which displays the resignation letter, and Nixon trivia, like NIXCO, the Web home of a group of Nixon memorabilia collectors. You can read the text of Gerald R. Ford's pardon here, too. (One of the most interesting links is to Nithman's own Wild World of Spiro Agnew pages.)

[Illusion and Delusion: The Watergate Decade](#) -- A photo essay of the Nixon White House years.

[The Official G. Gordon Liddy Pages](#) -- Reincarnated as a talk show host and pundit after his imprisonment, the man who planned the break-in shows his clever touch with a Web site, using it to sell subscriptions to his newsletter and copies of a calendar featuring buxom women and guns. You can also e-mail Liddy or join a newsgroup discussion. One of the more sensational comebacks by a convicted felon -- and no doubt an inspiration to children everywhere.

[The Watergate Hotel](#) -- With not a trace of irony, this promotional site

proclaims: "For over 25 years, The Watergate Hotel has been the scene of the most important social affairs, the most productive executive conferences and the highest-level political gatherings. As you make your plans, we invite you to consider how The Watergate can make your event a memorable success."

To complete the tour of Web things Watergate take a look at [The Last Will and Testament of Richard M. Nixon](#) or at the quirkier [Nixon's Stations of the Cross](#), which sums up the President's service --and his foibles -- succinctly, albeit with a distinct editorial bent.

The world is a very different place than it was 25 years ago, and on this anniversary of the day that brought down a President, the Web offers an intriguing way to reflect on an era that forever changed politics and the image of politicians in the United States.

Related Sites

Following are links to the external Web sites mentioned in this article. These sites are not part of The New York Times on the Web, and The Times has no control over their content or availability. When you have finished visiting any of these sites, you will be able to return to this page by clicking on your Web browser's "Back" button or icon until this page reappears.

- [Watergate](#)
- [The Richard Nixon Audio Archives](#)
- [Norman Nithman's The Nixon Links](#)
- [National Archives' Watergate Exhibit](#)
- [Illusion and Delusion: The Watergate Decade](#)
- [The Official G. Gordon Liddy Pages](#)
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