involved in contributing content to an intranet have
this role reflected in their job description.

I have thought for some time that UKeIG would be
the ideal organisation to provide a platform for an
exchange of ideas on intranets. Clair Pillar of the
North Cumbria NHS Trust and I have come up with
the idea of running some end-of-the-day discussion
forums on intranets at various places around the
country. The format would be to persuade a UKeIG
member to host a small meeting of local intranet
managers from perhaps 4pm to 6pm. Ideally it would
be useful if the host organisation could demonstrate
their intranet, but the main aim is just to provide an
occasion for intranet managers to come in out of the
cold.

We are looking for just a few volunteers in some of
the larger cities to test out the idea, perhaps in
London, Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester, Liverpool,
Newcastle, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Belfast. If you
would be in a position to host such an event and
would like to explore the idea in more detail please
e-mail me at martin.white@intranetfocus.com, with
no commitment at this stage. I will then work
with Shaida Dorabjee (who organises the UKeIG
meetings programme) to discuss the comments I
have received and hopefully the offers of assistance,
and see if we can move the idea forward.

You might be interested in a new publication on
intranet design and management from James
Robertson, who runs Step Two Designs in Sydney
and is one of the leaders in intranet management
and content management. You can find details of his
new Intranet Roadmap publication at
.html The Intranet Roadmap covers activities in five
key streams: strategy, design, content, change and
communications and technology. The publication is
a A5-size 54 page book that is very clearly written
and full of practical advice. There is also a wall-chart
that summarises the approach set out in the book.
The price is US$120, and for any organisation
moving out of the ad hoc phase of intranet
development into something that is effective and
scalable this is a small investment to make. James
is keynoting the Intranets session at Online

Finally if you will forgive some self-promotion, early
in 2005 Facet Publishing will be publishing a Content
Management Handbook that I have written, which to
a large extent is the text of the Content Management
seminars I have been running for UKeIG for several
years. It takes a project management approach to
CMS implementation and in no way seeks to
compete with the Content Management Bible

authored by Bob Boiko, the second edition of which
is due to be released early next year as well.

Public Sector News

Column Editor: Jane Inman, Warwickshire
County Council and Chair of the Affiliation of
Local Government Information Specialists
(ALGIS in LARIA). E-mail:
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What is happening in the public sector?

E-government

Business

Working with Business Your business made easy,
Survey of English local authority websites from a
business perspective, 2004 was conducted by
SOCITM (Society of IT Management) on behalf of
the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. It looked at
the information provided by local authorities for
businesses and scored councils against 12 key
areas. The overall results were deemed to be poor
but the report highlights some good practice and
gives some advice on how to make improvements.

Transport

Work continues to meet the Priority Service
Outcomes identified by the Office of the Deputy
Prime Minister in June. One of those is the need for
all authorities to display road works information on
their web site using GIS. In investigating how we are
going to achieve that requirement I came across the
new pilot site http://www.transportdirect.info/ which
claims to bring together road and public transport
information to give you choices when planning
journeys anywhere in Britain.

Planning

The Pendleton review of planning on local authority
web sites was first conducted in 2003 and based on
21 criteria for the delivery of planning services
online. The review was repeated in September and
results have just been published on the web site
http://www.pendleton-assoc.com/. In Warwickshire
we were delighted to come top of the county
councils!

Directgov, launched in April to replace UK Online is
now the 8th most popular government site according
to a response to a Parliamentary question (Hansard
19.10.04 Written Answers col. 614w) There were
419,916 visits in May rising to 768,149 in
September. HMSO claims to receive in excess of 8
Freedom of Information

Preparation for Freedom of Information is really hotting up with courses on offer from all sorts of bodies. It is encouraging that librarians are involved as much as they are and records management staff have suddenly become very popular people! Training is on offer on both sides of the fence with the Campaign for Freedom of Information and the National Union of Journalists offering courses for journalists and the NUJ web site carries information on how to use the Act.

ALGIS held a joint seminar with the Government Libraries Group on 14th October and many people said they found it a useful day. Our opening speaker was Maurice Frankel of the Campaign for Freedom of Information who challenged us not to take the approach of trying to identify an exemption to cover as much of the material we hold as possible and dispose of the rest under our newly developed retention and disposal policy. He suggested that our survival depends on our attitude and that if we communicate openly with requesters we will win support whilst an obstructive approach will encourage requesters to ask for more and more!

Alex Ganotis from the Office of the Information Commissioner talked us through much of the detail of the act and helped us unravel some case studies. At last there is news on what charges will be permitted. The Constitutional Affairs secretary, Lord Falconer has announced that ‘The Government will lay fees regulations before Parliament in November. There will be no charge for information that costs public bodies less than £450 to produce. And for central government, the cost ceiling will be set at £600.’ He made this statement at the Society of Editor’s Annual Conference on 18th October. We produced a bibliography and resource list for the ALGIS/GLG seminar and would be happy to forward a copy to anyone who is interested. It includes a reference to a new journal called Freedom of Information and more details and sample copies are available at http://www.foij.com/

British Library

The National Audit Office conducted a review of the British Library and its report called Providing services beyond the reading rooms (Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General HC 879 Session 2003-2004:28th July 2004) was published in July. It takes a look at the document delivery aspects of the Library’s work and the challenges it faces from other suppliers and calls for a simpler pricing structure and for greater user friendliness in its online services.

The report is available on the Nation Audit Office website at http://www.nao.org.uk/

The British Library is taking the lead in a new project designed to take a snap shot of the web. UKWAC pronounced uckwack is a partnership involving BL, the National Libraries of Scotland and Wales, Wellcome Trust, JISC and National Archives. It aims to collect and archive sites with a UK domain and which reflect the cultural heritage of the country. For more information visit their web site http://www.webarchive.org.uk/

Official Publishing

If you buy government publications you may have noticed that the Scottish Parliament is now using Astron instead of TSO to publish their material and Blackwells to distribute publications, although this does not include the Acts and Statutory Instruments. Astron produces a Scottish Official Daily List and to register to receive this you need to e mail registerdetails@astron.co.uk . You may also have noticed that National Statistics material is to be handled by Palgrave Macmillan and not TSO from 1st January 2005. TSO will try to make the transitions as painless as possible and continue to supply publications from these organisations on standing order and through TSO Select.

If you have any concerns about access to these publications once the new contacts are in place do let me know so that I can raise it at the Standing Committee on Official Publishing (SCOOP).

People’s Network

The next stage of the ambitious People’s Network project is an online enquiry service managed by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and funded from the lottery. It will provide a 24/7 enquiry service and has already attracted 22 library services. Free seminars are being run to promote the service to library staff under the neat title of ‘The Mortal in the Portal’. The service will use chat and e mail technology to deliver ‘live’ access to library and information professionals.

Last but not least …

The Times covered librarianship in its series called ‘Get a job as a…’ and the first skill for a successful librarian is considered to be a degree of flexibility! I am sure we can all relate to that. How many of us who have been in libraries for any length of time are doing the job they expected to be doing?