but disappeared, apart from Ask Jeeves. Weblogs are covered in depth, including how to search for them.

Given Google's ascendancy, Phil provides extensive coverage of Google and its features, including the Google toolbar, "the quickest and easiest installation of any software that I have ever done." Other search engine toolbars and their features are listed in a useful table on p. 218.

This book will give you all the information you need to use the internet as an information source with confidence. I was amused by his suggestion that you take a reality check by timing your searches – set your alarm clock, and stop wasting time. And although he says it quietly, it should always be remembered that "the internet is not always the best place to go first." Having said that he does outline resources where the internet has the edge. I will be trying out his chapter of tips and hints for better and quicker searching as well as trying some of the utilities he recommends for advanced searchers.

Claire Pillar
Web Coordinator
North Cumbria NHS

Website Indexing: enhancing access to information within websites 2nd ed
Glenda Browne and Jonathan Jermey. Auslib Press. 2004 ISBN 1 875145 56 7

Website Indexing covers what the authors term 'back-of-the-book indexing' – the kind of index you are familiar with at the end of books. That's indicative of the challenge faced by this title. Websites don't have a back, and the 'givens' for creating a website index may be utterly different to those for a book index, starting from just where you put the website index. It is easy for indexers to fall into the trap of trying to shoehorn traditional book indexing skills for Web use, rather than starting with websites and identifying how best they can be accessed and indexed, but to the authors' credit, the book is an admirably open-minded tour of the many innovative ways in which websites provide navigation tools to their content. And, to its credit, the book uses innovative methods of presenting information in the body of the text. Technical terms are boxed and glossed at the point they are first used. If, like me, you like glossaries, you will find the in situ definitions very helpful. All the glossary terms and definitions are repeated at the back of the book.

The second edition of Website Indexing addresses the growing book / online divergence in indexing and navigation styles. The book is really two books in one: the first part an overview of book-style indexes for Web use, and the second a wide-ranging overview on information access on the Web in general. This two-part distinction emerges from the Preface, but is not clearly distinguished in the contents list. En route the authors provide an invaluable whistle-stop tour of index usability research. The first part is very specific, while the second struggles valiantly to cover a huge range. The ideal, of course, would be to combine the best of both approaches.

There is a brief round-up of indexing software, covering the UK, US, and Australia, but I would expect a cookbook approach to give clear critical recommendations on the packages, such as which ones the authors have found useful. For example, they state that Word is cumbersome for creating indexes while the book is being written – I'd love to know more. Further information on the benefits and disadvantages of each of the other major programs would have been helpful.

Of course, it's all very well having a wonderful index if the users don't know how to use it. I remember from working as a lexicographer how dictionary users never read the 'How to use this book' section. As a result, much of the hard work that lexicographers put into a dictionary is never noticed by the reader. I would be surprised (and the usability studies confirm this) if many readers understand the full book index entry: for example, the authors describe, in the index reference 'cats 1,15-27,26,94', that '15-27'is the principal index reference. In my experience of indexes it frequently isn't the main reference. Browne and Jermey suggest that even a simple 'see also' reference is frequently misunderstood by readers, and that it might be better to rename these references 'search using'. The authors quote from several usability reports, which have very useful implications for online indexes – for example, Web indexes usually have less of a space problem in online indexes, and so such techniques as one line per link, which users find more intelligible, can be employed.

Some of the more recent developments in providing screen-based information are mentioned only briefly. We are familiar with Google indexing sites on the basis of links to them from other sites; other visualisation tools include different sized blobs, based on the popularity of the resource. I would have liked more on automated indexing methods, which are used in examples, but not described in detail (for example, the permuted or keyword-in-context index, which has been used with great success for software manuals for many years). There is mention of content management systems creating indexes, but no mention of the invaluable way many of these systems can check all hyperlinks automatically and identify errors, thereby enabling

you to keep your index up to date.

My conclusion: Website Indexing is a cookbook, and none the worse for that. It provides many useful recipes and tips, with lots of links to fascinating examples of indexing that will give you plenty to think about for your site. Indeed, one way to approach the book (which, not surprisingly, has a very detailed index, of over 600 terms) is to use it as a training course in Web indexes. I'd like to see a third edition of this excellent title with more on indexing software and more of the authors' invaluable comments on the emerging world of website indexing.

Michael Upshall
Consultant advising publishers on electronic publishing

Books waiting for review

The following book from Facet Publishing is waiting a reviewer - please contact Peter Chapman if you would like to do it.
Cornish **copyright** 4th ed.

Press Releases

Single Search Environment to join up NHS Library Services across England

A press release from
http://www.theansweruk.com/ with amendments by Claire Pillar

The NHS has begun a project to deliver a single search environment that will integrate the 'national' and 'local' information resources of NHS library services across England. The single search environment will be one of the first outputs of the emerging National Library for Health (http://www.library.nhs.uk/), an NHS-wide initiative that is designed to deliver the goal of an integrated English health library. The single search environment is a national service that is the result of collaboration between NHS library services, National electronic Library for Health (NeLH) and the National Core Content Group.

The first phase of the single search environment will be launched in November 2004, as part of Health Libraries Week, with further developments being made available from April 2005 onwards.

The single search environment will be powered by FDI's ZPORTAL solution, which will integrate NHS resources alongside published data and deliver the resource search engine. North Bristol NHS Trust uses the ZPORTAL solution for its Knowledge4health portal, at http://www.k4h.northbristol.nhs.uk/zportal/

The North West Health Care Libraries Unit has pioneered this new initiative as Colin Davies, Deputy Director of Health Libraries North West, and leader of the project team, outlines, "The North West, like a number of other regions in England, had recognised the need to join up the library collections and information resources within their areas and had begun projects to look at making this possible. The national single search environment solution will provide a framework that each area can use to join up its local resources, plus it will put our local resources in the same place as national resources provided by the NeLH and National Core Content programmes."

The 500+ NHS Libraries in England will use the single search environment to improve information delivery to their clinical staff, including consultants, doctors and nurses - a user population of more than 680 000 clinicians and managers. Current usage figures for existing information services, that will become components of the single search environment, show usage levels already in excess of 300 000 regular users per year. As a result the project team for the single search environment are predicting very high levels of usage for the new, integrated service.

The new information service will provide clinicians with one place to go to search popular resources such as BMJ's Clinical Evidence, The Cochrane Library, Proquest full-text journals, and bibliographic databases from Dialog and EBSCO. Clinicians will access the new service using one, national website, and the system will display local resources that are relevant to where in England they are located. By incorporating the ability to localise the service each region, or NHS Library service, can select the services most appropriate for their audience and package the resources to suit the needs of their user community. The initial remit of the single search environment is to the needs of clinical staff, however the service is highly scaleable and incorporating the needs of students of the NHSU, whose target is largely non-clinical staff, is already a goal for the project team.

The new Single Search Environment for the National Library for Health was due to have its pilot launch for librarians on 11th October. From this date NHS librarians were to have the opportunity to participate in usability testing and feedback.