

Online

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British Library

The British Library have developed an online learning package (http://www.bl.uk/training_package/introduction.html), aimed specifically at public library staff in the UK, demonstrating the services the Library has to offer. The package consists of an online tour, using video, images, text and web links, with a downloadable workbook, guiding you through the full range of services available. The aim of the package is to educate Public Library staff so they can help their users fully exploit the resources of the British Library. The whole package takes about three hours to follow in full but to help staff who are unlikely to be able to find a spare three hour stretch to work on it, users can logout and resume the tour later from wherever they left off. The British Library plan to develop the tour so that it can be used as a quick reference tool and so that it is relevant to library staff in other sectors including academia and business.

Literature Online (<http://lion.chadwyck.co.uk/>)

Chadwyck-Healey, in partnership with the Modern Language Association of America (MLA), have launched the MLA International Bibliography (MLAIB). This is an annual index of books and articles on modern languages and literatures, linguistics, and folklore, which has been published in print form since 1921. The electronic version covers volumes from 1963 to the present, and comprises more than 1.7 million fully searchable records, covering literature from all over the world, history and theory of linguistics, semantics, stylistics, translation, literary theory and criticism, dramatic arts (film, radio, television, and theatre), the teaching of language and literature, rhetoric and composition and the history of printing and publishing. Also included is the MLA Directory of Periodicals, which gives extensive editorial, contact and submission information on more than 7,100 titles. From early 2005 MLAIB will be available as a premium add-on module to Literature Online.

Google (<http://www.google.com>)

Google have announced plans to create a global virtual library. Michigan, Harvard, Stanford, New York Public Library and the Bodleian Library in Oxford have signed a deal with Google to digitise millions of books and make them available free of charge on the web. Michigan and Stanford will digitise their entire collections, Harvard and New York Public Library will digitise part of their collection

and the Bodleian will contribute about one million books published before 1900. The project will make available to users unique publications and out of print titles irrespective of location and will allow increased access to these works while preserving the originals. Books which are out of copyright will be available complete although newer titles will only appear with the publishers' permission.

.....and more on the google front - for anyone who hates struggling around the shops and who has any money left after Christmas – you can now shop online with Google <http://froogle.google.co.uk>. The site allows you to perform one search across multiple online stores and auction sites – including ebay – for whatever you need.

patientINFORM (<http://www.patientinform.org>)
Scientific publishers, medical societies and the US's leading voluntary health organizations are piloting an initiative to give patients and caregivers direct access to original medical research. The scheme, called patientINFORM will be launched in Spring 2005 and will be a free, online service providing accessible, up-to-date, reliable research for specific diseases. patientINFORM will initially focus on three diseases: cancer, diabetes, and heart disease and users will be able to access free full text research articles via the voluntary health organisations websites.

Internet News

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I thought that this first column of the New Year might be an opportunity to offer a few mental challenges to revive those tired and jaded brain cells after the Christmas and New Years festivities. My interest in puzzles other than crossword puzzles has been piqued over recent times by the Puzzle Panel programme on Radio 4, which incidentally is due to make a welcome return to the airwaves in January; and also by the Su Doku puzzles in The Times.

Su Doku puzzle

The aim of the Su Doku puzzles is deceptively simple, there is a grid of 9x9 small boxes, with the instructions – “Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9”. They have nothing to do with maths but everything to do with applying logic and deduction. The puzzles get progressively more challenging during the week. I enjoy the challenge of these puzzles as information work can be very word and text based that this seems to use another part of the brain. The puzzles are published in The Times, and