



Figure 4: Yahoo Desktop

What next?

Who knows! Google will continue to be the search engine that many people go to first but Yahoo is a offers strong competition. Both continue to add features but it is a question of how relevant these are to us. For example the most recent Google launch was a weather search, but Google decided that only people in the US were interested in conditions outside! New tools will continue to be launched. Many of these will disappear without trace. Others will fail to live up to expectations, and features that promise to be “coming soon” will never materialise.

If I had to pick one to watch, it would have to be *Exalead*. It is a comparative lightweight in terms of database size but has some seriously good search options. If it continues to develop new features and launches its promised Desktop Search it could be a serious contender for Google’s crown.

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Short Notes

Study shows online citations don't age well

A study conducted by two academics at Iowa State University has shown a remarkably high rate of "decay" for online citations.

Michael Bugeja, professor of journalism and communication, and Daniela Dimitrova, assistant professor of communication, looked at five prestigious communication-studies journals from 2000 to 2003 and found 1,126 footnotes that cite online resources. Of those, 373 did not work at all, a decay rate of 33 percent; of those that worked, only 424 took users to information relevant to the citation. In one of the journals in the study, 167 of 265 citations did not work.

Bugeja compared the current situation to that of

Shakespearean plays in the early days of printing, when many copies of plays were fraught with errors due to the instability of the printing medium.

Anthony T. Grafton, a professor of history at Princeton University and author of a book on footnotes, agreed that citation decay is a real and growing problem, describing the situation as "a world in which documentation and verification melt into air."

Abstract taken from [Edupage 14 March 2005](#); the article is at [Chronicle of Higher Education, 14 March 2005 \(sub. req'd\)](#). See also [Oxford Technology Book Predicts Growing Citation Problem](#)

ESRC Society Today

The UK's largest funding agency for research and postgraduate training on social and economic issues - the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) - is soon to launch a major new website in the UK.

ESRC Society Today will offer academics, students and researchers unrivalled, free access to high quality social and economic research available, planned and in progress.

As well as bringing together all ESRC-funded research, the website will allow users to cross search material from other key online resources such as SOSIG, the UK Data Archive, the Office of National Statistics and Europa among others.

It will include early findings, full-texts and original datasets and allow users to establish online discussion fora, track down researchers in particular subject fields or find details on ESRC funding and training opportunities. The emphasis will be on accessibility and ease of use and visitors will be able to register for regular news bulletins and email alerts on their areas of interest.

ESRC Society Today -

<http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk> - is scheduled to go live for a test period in April 2005 before being publicly launched in Summer 2005, replacing the current <http://www.esrc.ac.uk> and <http://www.regard.ac.uk> sites.

Librarians are invited to register for further information by emailing societytoday@esrc.ac.uk

Farewell

This is my final issue as Editor of *eLucidate*. Gary Horrocks (gary.horrocks@kcl.ac.uk) will be looking after the Journal whilst the Committee seeks to appoint a new Editor.

Peter Chapman