

Regular Columns

Online

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Please send your submissions for the next edition to jrc@aber.ac.uk

British Library <http://www.bl.uk/treasures/festivalbooks/homepage.html>

A new, searchable database of rare Renaissance festival books, selected from a collection of over 2,000 held by the British Library, is now available online. The Festival Books Digitisation Project, funded by the AHRC, presents the content of 253 books with preliminary material, title pages, illustrations and dedications, and includes more than 14,000 pages detailing European public festival entertainment from the late 15th to the 18th century. The festivals described include births, christenings, marriages and deaths, coronations and religious events such as saints' days, and accompanying performances.

Croner <http://www.hspublishing.com>

Aimed at managers responsible for compliance, Croner-*i* Environment is a new online environmental compliance service. Features include step-by-step guides, model policies and forms to assist implementation, and "industry specific legislation trackers" to ensure that subscribers stay updated with changes to environmental compliance legislation affecting their operations. Areas covered include air, chemicals, noise, waste and water. Croner-*i* Environment is one of a family of Croner-*i* online compliance guidance services including Health & Safety and Human Resources.

Environment Agency for England and Wales <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk>

A new database has been launched to provide flood data and related information to assist professionals in the prediction of flooding in the UK. The Environment Agency, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Northern Ireland Rivers Agency have set up the online service, called HiFlows-UK. Further data and background information have been supplied by the National River Flow Archive, held at CEH Wallingford, and the University of Dundee. Archived hydrometric data collected from different river stations (for which maps are provided) around

the UK is used in conjunction with more recent readings to help flood hydrologists estimate localised peak flood flows.

H W Wilson <http://www.hwwilson.com>

H W Wilson have released the new Education Index Retrospective 1929-1983, which indexes an international range of nearly 600 English-language education journals and yearbooks. Subject headings have been updated to reflect modern terminology; the original headings are also retained to indicate trends of the times. Topics covered include literacy standards, distance learning, adult education and government funding.

Institution of Electrical Engineers <http://ieedl.org>

Following the launch of the UK's Institution of Electrical Engineers Digital Library on the American institute of Physics' Scitation platform, the IEE is now looking to extend journal archive coverage. Currently the service provides online access to IEE journals from 1994 onwards and contains more than 50,000 technical papers. A new project, due for launch in 2006, will digitise back issues from 1872, when the first IEE journal was published following the Institution's formation a year previously under the name 'Society of Telegraph Engineers', to 1993. Journals published by Institution of Electronic and Radio Engineers and the Institution of Manufacturing Engineers will be included as they both merged with the IEE in the 1980s.

OCLC PICA <http://oclpica.org/>

NHS Scotland Knowledge Services has chosen OCLC's NetLibrary ebook service to provide 5000 health-related ebooks, following an invitation to tender. The collection will be available to NHS Scotland staff and students via their e-library portal and will cover a variety of health topics. Access is extended via the NHS patient journey system to voluntary health associations amongst others.

ProQuest Information and Learning <http://www.il.proquest.com>

The UK's Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium (SUPC) have chosen the Safari Tech Books Online e-reference service, distributed by ProQuest Information and Learning, to provide e-books in a four-year deal covering the complete text and online collections. Expected features include individual or multiple institutional subscriptions for member institutions, and libraries being able to change online titles every 30 days. The consortium consists of 46 higher education and 28 further education institutions in the UK.

QinetiQ <http://www.qinetiq.com>

QinetiQ, the defence technology and security company, has sold the 1901 England and Wales Census website to Friends Reunited for just over £3.3 million. This key online resource for genealogists was built by digitising and indexing original census documents in a PFI project between QinetiQ and the National Archives, and achieved over 120 million hits and processed over 12 million paid downloads from users researching their family trees since its launch in January 2002 on the National Archives website. The census will enhance Genes Reunited, the genealogy arm of the highly successful Friends Reunited online service that helps people contact people they went to school with.

Internet

Podcasting and Libraries

Susan Miles (S.Miles@kingston.ac.uk)

Podcasting has definitely been one of the hot topics since the Spring, so I thought I'd take a further look into it – what potential does it have for library services?

There was a spell when practically every programme on Radio 4 was broadcasting a piece about the wonders of podcasting – so what is it exactly? The simplest definition is that it is an audio broadcast that is made available over the Internet, usually on a regular basis, primarily as MP3 files. These 'streams' are available by subscription and are then downloaded onto a MP3 player, such as an iPod. For a comprehensive definition of podcasting look in wikipedia³. Podcasting is also known as 'syndicated audio content'; 'audio blogging' is its cousin.

While podcasting was a relatively new phenomenon it initially attracted attention from bloggers, but latterly its potential is being explored in different contexts. Perhaps the reason the BBC reports on podcasting so frequently is that it is running a download and podcast trial⁴ from May to December 2005 that allows listeners to download individual programmes and/or to subscribe to particular programme feeds as podcasts. Figures

³ *Podcasting* [Online] (2005) Florida: Wikipedia. Available at:
<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcasting>>
[Accessed 24 August 2005]

⁴ *BBC Radio: download and podcast trail* [Online] (2005) London: BBC. Available at:
<<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio/downloadtrial/>>
[Accessed 24 August 2005]