

eLucidate

Vol. 1 Issue 3, May/June 2004

ISSN: 1742-5921

Statements and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the various authors and should not be taken as being endorsed by CILIP or UKOLUG.

eLucidate is edited by Peter Chapman, tel/fax: 01295 250816,
email: p.chapman@which.net, 89 Oxford Road, Banbury, OX16 9AJ

eLucidate is published by UKOLUG !! The UK electronic information Group
Membership and newsletter subscriptions are handled by the UKOLUG Administrator:
Christine Baker, The Old Chapel, Walden, West Burton, Leyburn, N Yorkshire, DL8 4LE,
tel/fax: 01969 663749, email: cabaker@ukolug.org.uk

UKOLUG is a Special Interest Group of CILIP: the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals. CILIP Registered Office: 7 Ridgmount Street, London, WC1E 7AE, Registered Charity No. 313014

Contents

Ex Cathedra	1
A View from New Zealand on Electronic Resources, 2004	2
UK Adoption Agencies: Preliminary Study of Data in Two Official Directories	4
Online	7
Internet News	8
Intranets and Content Management	8
Reference Management	9
Reference Management Guest article: BIBLIOSERVER - the next step in bibliographical software	11
Public Sector News	12
Current Awareness	14
Meetings Report - Current Issues in Information Work	22
Books waiting review	23

Ex Cathedra

The CILIP daily news briefing recently highlighted two versions of a news story. "Blair and Blunkett plan to make ID cards compulsory by 2008" (Independent 5 April, page 1) and "Blair gets backing of his MPs for ID cards in two years" (The Times, 3 April, page 14). Some quick research added the facts that, "The Home Secretary plans to bring in legislation in the Parliamentary session beginning in November 2005. This would set up a voluntary scheme for hi-tech cards storing people's unique "biometric" details, such as iris images or fingerprints from 2007-08" (again the Independent) and, from BBC News, "Mr Blunkett said a National Identity Register would hold details of 60m people in the UK".

I personally, and an apparent 80% of the population (MORI, reported in the press 22 April 2004), have no objection to an identity card scheme – logically, over time it should be able to take the place of a passport, a driving licence, workplace ID, vehicle registration and probably several other bits of necessary documentation as well. It should be able to carry my medical record and my dental record as well as those biometric details; and then of course there's my criminal record and credit rating... and all of a sudden it begins to seem not such a good idea, a bit 1984 and 'Big Brother', a little too convenient. Most of the 11% in the MORI poll who opposed the scheme had concerns over the 'Big Brother State'. Not that any part of the above list has been suggested (to my knowledge), but once we have a 'hi-tech' ID card, who knows what could be stored on it. And I can remember a UKOLUG Lecture back in 1987 by the journalist, Duncan Campbell, when concerns were aired about privacy and online access to data – this was the early years of the Data Protection Act (DPA) – and all he was talking about was Textline, World Reporter, CCN and Infolink. Mr Campbell drew the audience's attention to credit rating systems and the possible long-term implications of links between those systems and other databases with personal information. And, *inter alia*, did you know that if someone runs a credit rating check on a person who recently lived with you (a son or a daughter taking out a mobile phone contract, for example), your credit ratings and address will also be displayed in the report?

At the recent Lord Chancellor's Department/Department for Constitutional Affairs consultation on the way the public sector handles personal details much was made of the advantages of sharing information between

departments (with or without consent) and of the necessary checks that should be put in place to guard our rights and to ensure accuracy. The consultation invited both comments on how best to let people know what they can expect from public sector organisations that process personal details, and a reaction to a document setting out the standards to which these should adhere. In the briefing, we were told that Government believes that high quality public services, better-targeted policies and more efficient and effective central and local government require more sharing of information. Discussion centred on three issues: The rights of the individual to maintain some degree of control – consent to what happens to the data? Right to opt out?

The need to know – who needs the information to do a particular job – only those who need it should have access. The public right/need to know what data is held, who has access to it, how long it is kept for. We were told that our views would be listened to, but not necessarily acted upon.

So now I ask you: will the information on ID cards and/or the information in the National Identity Register be governed by the Data Protection Act 1998? Or the Freedom of Information Act 2000? Or both? Or neither?

And so to my annoying habit of quoting. "Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?" (Juvenal, Satires, VI. 347), which is generally translated as 'Who is to guard the guards (or, in this case, the custodians of the law) themselves?'

The National Identity Register is to be held by government and, presumably, subject to both Freedom of Information Act (FOI) and DPA. "Certain personal information is exempt from FOI" according to the December 2003 Report of the CILIP Freedom of Information Panel; phraseology which only leaves me wondering what kinds of personal data are, and are not, exempt. Obviously, all personal data processed in any way are the subject of the DPA. But the onus is on individuals who suspect that erroneous data are held on them to question the data processor. Many of the members of the public at the consultation that I attended on public sector handling of personal details wanted access – automatically, as a right, and without cost – to data held on them so that the accuracy and extent of the data could be checked. I think this should be a fundamental right. However, it seemed that the best we could hope for might be a series of statements that detail in general terms what is to be done with particular elements of data. For example, 'entries on the National Identity Register will be linked to personal

data held by the police authorities' (I do not know if this is to be the case – I simply use it as an example). More likely is that we shall simply see a guarantee of good practice that confirms, for example, that personal information will never be collected without information about why it is needed and how it will be used, as well as our right to question what data are held on us and how and with whom they are shared.

But apparently no one else is worried – my note on LIS-CILIP using the quotations in the first paragraph of this Ex Cathedra, asking whether ID cards would be governed by the Data Protection Act drew no more than a quip from Bruce Royan ("Hmm, he'll have to find them first. The 2001 Census could only find 58,789,194" [of the 60m Mr Blunkett said were in the UK]) and a response about them all hiding in Plymouth. And as noted above, four out of every five people supported the idea of ID cards – although 58% had little confidence in the government's ability to introduce the scheme efficiently.

So my second question is this. Do we, as the information profession or as a part of CILIP, as the supposed experts in the appropriate organisation of information, need to take some action in this area? Should we be lobbying for safeguards on governmental data processing and on their application of the first data protection principle: personal data shall be processed fairly and lawfully? (What combining of all the data held on us is fair or legal?) Should we be demanding complete transparency in data processing as a fundamental right?

And so to a case in point – "Familial DNA Sampling" hit the news while I was writing this piece. This is the case whereby someone can be identified because the DNA of a relative is on the database and this is a close enough match to arrest and prosecute on. We know that national security and crime mean exemption from the DPA, but DNA matching is not an exact science: we're told that the chance of a wrong DNA match is one in several million, I wonder what it is down to now. Would you want to be the 'one'?

This being my last Ex Cathedra – the Chair of UKOLUG being under new management – I leave you free (presumably) from quotations, and from my maundering. It has been an interesting few years as we have established UKOLUG securely as a part of CILIP and worked to ensure that it has emerged as a stronger group, more properly focussed on all aspects of information delivered electronically. I mentioned at last year's AGM that the committee feels that the term 'online' does not

mean very much in this day and age, when 'electronic' is used almost universally to indicate non-paper resources: 'e-journal', 'e-book', etc. UKOLUG has evolved over some 25 years from working with databases and telecommunications, to take in interests that include CD-ROMs, networking, the Internet and the World Wide Web, reference management, content management and information architecture. Hopefully – if our proposal at the AGM is accepted – we shall have a new name to match this focus: UKeIG: the UK eInformation Group.

The AGM is on Tuesday, June 8th at CILIP, London. It is surrounded by what promises to be an excellent meeting: our own spin on information overload – I'm an information professional ... get me out of here. As with all our meetings, we now offer certificates of attendance for your CPD portfolio, so there are at least three reasons why you should be there! Follow the links and be there!

Chris Armstrong
Chair, UKOLUG

A View from New Zealand on Electronic Resources, 2004

There is no doubt Kiwis love technology! Give them a couple of rusty nails and a length of No 8 fencing wire and they will make something or get something going! New Zealand in the 1970's appeared quaint and about 40 years behind the times! This was until you looked below the surface. Electricity and phone (installation of which was considered essential before moving into your home!) were connected by overhead wires; a definite Kiwi icon, and thirty years on, still the method in a few areas (including the road in which I live, although broadband access to the internet is delivered by a separate landline)

Looking at where we are today and from whence we came; it is fair to conclude that technologically New Zealand has not only joined the world, but is technologically literate. Telecom our largest service provider offers broadband connection nationwide. Their nationwide mobile service has just reached an agreement with InphoMatch to enable two-way mobile SMS texting to the majority of US mobile networks. Our young population use text messaging as a matter of course and have it seem developed a language that is

incomprehensible to we more mature members of society. Telecom is also heavily involved in sponsoring and upgrading computers in schools and in the operation of Senior Net which provides training for those over the age of 55.

Xtra (Telecom internet) has announced with Nokia the launch of a new High Speed Camera Phone expected to be available in the fourth quarter of the year, which makes interesting conjecture on what these young folk will make of this! It also announced that the Capital Coast Health Board, having completed a successful trial of a new computer application will soon be able to offer patients the option of checking appointment times over the internet. The system will also allow doctors to access information about where their patients are in priority queues. Statistics New Zealand offers a wealth of information on the use of technology. Looking at the graphs one has to be impressed by the figures which show a high percentage of computers and mobile phones in homes.

Lord of the Rings has put New Zealand firmly on the world stage and the technology supplied by Weta Workshop has earned it a Technology New Zealand grant for further development of advanced business technologies.

Hard on the heels of this success has come the purchase by the BBC of WeatherscapeXT an innovative television weather package developed by MetService of New Zealand Ltd. Other users include Nine Network in Australia and CNBC stations in Europe, Dubai, Turkey, and television stations in Beirut and Saudi Arabia. What Weatherscape does is apply technological advances in 3D graphics and animation techniques.

I am writing this from my home base in Havelock North; a small township in Hawkes Bay where a horticultural research consulting company is located and making use of the latest technology. Under accreditation for the OECD Principles of Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) all trials must be archived - hence my involvement as Archivist.

Geelen Research is a horticultural research consulting company based in Havelock North, New Zealand and has been established for almost 20 years. Its focus is on the field evaluation of agrichemical performance on a wide range of fruit and vegetable crops and has recently been accredited under the OECD Principles of Good Laboratory Practice. In the time it has been in operation there have been many changes and a steady increase in the use and sophistication of technology; the most recent being the purchase of

Palm Top computers for direct use in the field. These machines handle XL spreadsheets, making it possible to enter data directly in the field resulting in a saving not only of time, but also automatic averaging of data and verification of the information. There is an in-built warning when the battery is low and needs to be re-charged. Previous data loggers required pre-programming prior to going into the field so that subsequent field changes were not possible, the problem of information having to be put in a set order (which had to be remembered by the assessor), and the programmes used were different from those needed for statistical analysis. In the process information was lost or incorrectly entered or lost when transmitted from the field to the PC in the office. Now these difficulties have all been overcome. Prior to this and the coming of the laptop good old Kiwi sheep counters were the favoured technology! Remarkably effective and used in a wide variety of ways, it is an icon that survives on such things as school and tour outings to make sure you have the right number getting on the bus!

The next step forward will most likely evolve from the desire of large multinational businesses wanting the information from these field trials entered into their specific company research database so that their staff can peruse results even as they are being collected in some other part of the world. They could even download accompanying photographs to highlight product effectiveness or any adverse side effects. However, the problem of individual company requirements, the restriction of access and also confidentiality means that this is still a little way off. Something for the future.

Pat Money MCLIP.;DipBst.;ANZLA

Pat Money Information Service
P O Box 8466
Havelock North
New Zealand
Phone/Fax: 64 6 8775531

UK Adoption Agencies: Preliminary Study of Data in Two Official Directories

Introduction

The Adoption and Children Act 2002 and its accompanying orders and standards represent a landmark change in the law and practice of adoption in England and Wales. At the same time the UK government is committed to the provision of government information and services via the World Wide Web by 2005 at both local and national levels (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2003). This paper reports the result of a preliminary study in mid-2003 of the information presented by 50 UK adoption agencies in the two online directories of agencies in the UK. It is co-published with permission of CIQM and the original publication may be found, as one of the CIQM Website Quality Surveys, at http://www.i-a-l.co.uk/ciqm_greport2.html The study was followed up by a comprehensive study of 30 of the agencies' own Websites; this is available at http://www.i-a-l.co.uk/Print_Resources/Adoption_websites_2.doc.

Methodology

As a starting point, the government-sponsored British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) list of local authority and voluntary adoption agencies was taken, downloading the entries in their Find Your Agency pages, at http://www.baaf.org.uk/agency_db/intro.html.

There were 143 entries, of which four were eliminated as not being appropriate. A random sample of 50 was then selected, using the random.org random number generator. For this exercise, the 50 agencies' entries in the BAAF list were evaluated against a set of 12 basic criteria. The 32 English agencies from among those 50 which also appeared in the Department of Health's (DoH) lists Voluntary Adoption Agencies or Local Councils were further evaluated against the same criteria for their entries there (no equivalent lists were available for Welsh or Scottish agencies). (These URLs will probably change again in the near future, as responsibility for adoption and other children's social services has been transferred from the DoH to the Department for Education and Skills.) Results of the evaluations were entered into an MS Excel spreadsheet and SPSS for analysis.

Characteristics of the samples

The 50 agencies included 39 local authorities and 11 voluntary agencies. Thirty-four were located in England, four in Wales, 11 in Scotland, and one elsewhere. In terms of the origins of the children placed, seven served London boroughs, 17 served other urban centres (populations of 100,000 or more or officially designated as metropolitan borough councils), 19 served less populated districts, and seven draw their children from a wide geographical area and multiple local authorities, including both urban and non-urban districts.

Results From the BAAF Website

The most common information given by agencies on the BAAF Website was contact details. All 50 provided a street address or PO box number; 33 gave telephone numbers, 20 gave e-mail addresses, 18 fax numbers, and 16 gave their Website URLs. Half gave no information at all other than basic contact details, often not even including a telephone number. Six provided the name of the director or an individual to act as first contact. Just four gave any indication of the numbers of children they place per year or have waiting for a placement, and 18 gave some indication of the kinds of children they place. Sixteen gave an idea of the kinds of people they were looking for as adopters. Eight gave information about their process of assessment.

Only three said anything about what adoption is, but 22 gave some other information about themselves and their services or about adoption itself: information about or promises of post-adoption support : 9 agencies reporting specific information about their catchment areas for prospective adopters : 7 explicit undertakings to assess prospective adopters within a specific time period, or a statement of the average time taken : 3 more detail about pre-placement training for adopters : 2

mention of the availability of financial assistance for adopters : 2 information about open adoption : 1
information about services to birth families : 1 their policy on fertility treatment ending before adoption
assessment can begin : 1 the provision of birth-records counselling for adult adoptees : 1 referral to
other agencies or photo-listing publications after assessment : 1

Scoring one point for each of the 12 data elements (including 'other' information), no department scored zero or more than 10 points. The modal score was 1 (for nothing more than a mailing address), with 15 agencies. The next most frequent scores were 2 and 8, with 10 agencies scoring each. The results resemble a catenary curve, with agencies either scoring very low or high. The average score was 4.3. The typical entry (there were 26 such) in the BAAF directory sample consisted of nothing more than the agency name and contact details, sometimes including their Website URL, with nothing whatever about their services, the children they have available or the types of families they are looking for. But almost half the entries were much fuller, providing a reasonable basis for a prospective adopter to make a preliminary decision about whether or not to approach the agency.

From the DoH Website

The DoH (England) also provided a list of adoption agencies, also with self-provided data and narrative descriptions. Unlike the BAAF agencies list, the DoH lists (there were separate local authority and voluntary agency lists) only included agencies based in England and were not accessible by county or postcodes served, so in addition to the features analysed for BAAF entries, the DoH entries were rated for information about their catchment areas for prospective adopters. Thirty-two agencies of the 50 in the main sample had entries in the DoH lists. Four of the 34 English agency profiles in the BAAF list were for branches of two nation-wide voluntary agencies which in the DoH voluntary agency list had single entries.

None of the agencies provided information about the number of children placed, only one gave the name of a contact person. All gave addresses and all but one provided a telephone number. Nineteen gave fax numbers and 16 gave email addresses. Twelve provided a URL for their Website. Just three gave any general information about adoption. Only five gave any information about the kinds of children they place and only six any indication of the kinds of families they are looking for. Considering that unlike the BAAF Website entries, the DoH lists were not accessed by area, only six gave any indication of what their catchment area is for assessing families. Seven gave a short description of their assessment process. Thirteen agencies gave other information: membership of regional placement consortia to match waiting children with prospective parents : 5 agencies reporting the agency does assessments for international adoptions : 4 the agency provides birth records counselling : 3 a list of specific post-adoption services : 2 the availability of preparation for adoption in different community languages : 1 services available to birth families : 1

Scoring one point for each of the 13 data elements, no agency scored zero or higher than 9 (scored by only one agency). The modal score was 2 (for address and telephone number), achieved by 8 agencies. The curve was flatter than the BAAF score curve, indicating perhaps that the DoH had been more specific in its request for data from the agencies than was BAAF. The average score was 4.7, typically representing the address, phone and fax numbers, email address, and some other item of information.

Comparing the BAAF and DoH lists

Table 1 compares the BAAF and DoH entries for adoption agencies. On six measures the same agencies' information given in the DoH Website was the same or less complete than in the BAAF list, and on six measures the DoH entries gave the data more often.

Manual comparison of the BAAF and DoH entries for the 32 agencies appearing in both lists found that there was great variation. Table 2 compares the results. Instead of the 32 agencies submitting identical or virtually identical profiles to both, which would have been quite possible, there were only two cases where this seems to have happened. In a third case each entry contained substantial information not contained in the other. In the other 29 cases one entry was clearly more informative than the other, with DoH entries on balance being poorer in content.

Table 1

Data element	BAAF list (n=50) %	DoH list (n=32) %
Number of children placed	8	0
Named contact person	12	3.1
Address	100	100
Telephone number	66	96.9
Fax number	36	59.4
Email address	40	50
Website URL	32*	37.5**
General information about adoption	6	9.4
Types of children placed	36	15.6
Types of family sought	32	18.8
Family assessment catchment area	Not evaluated	18.8
Assessment process described	16	21.9
Any other information	44	40.6

* 2 of the 50 agencies have no Website, thus n = 48.

** 1 of the 32 agencies has no Website, thus n = 31.

Table 2

DoH profile is the BAAF profile (n=32)
Much fuller than	... 3
Fuller than	... 11
Nearly identical in scope to	... 3
Less full than	... 3
Much less full than	... 12

Discussion

It should be remembered when considering the results of the survey that the BAAF and DoH Websites, as much as the Websites of individual agencies, are intended as shop windows. These agency directories have no statutory purpose: their reason for being is to alert prospective adopters to agencies where they might be assessed for the placement of a child. A public service which is actively seeking custom, as adoption agencies must do if they are to fulfil their statutory duties, needs to do more than just put its name and address on a directory Website, particularly when the government is currently mandating a large increase in the number of placements. In addition, local authority agencies do not have an internal monopoly: prospective adopters are free to apply to agencies anywhere in the country, and an agency which provides more information and presents itself as welcoming and professional is likely to be able to attract applicants where others will not attract, quite possibly "poaching" from other local authorities, near or farther away.

The information provided by most agencies to both the BAAF and DoH lists is clearly far from adequate for its purpose. At the very minimum each entry should contain the following data: mailing and street address email address Website URL telephone number fax number minicom or other telephone number catchment area for prospective adopters whether or not they provide assessment for international adoptions the average number of placements they made in the past five years, or some other indicator of their level of placement activity the kinds of children they place the kinds of families they are looking for roughly the length of time an average assessment takes (with cautions about being flexible) the process of assessment post-adoption services available services provided to adult adoptees services provided to birth families

Reference Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2003). Framework for the Future: Libraries, Learning and Information in the Next Decade. Online. Retrieved from the World Wide Web: http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_2003/framework_future.htm . Accessed 20 February 2004.

Roger Fenton

Centre for Information Quality Management, Information Automation Limited

Online

Column Editor: Joy Cadwallader
Information Officer
University of Wales, Aberystwyth

BRITISH LIBRARY

The British Library has launched a website of digital images of the Gutenberg Bible, consisting of the entire text of the two copies currently owned by the Library. Only 16 complete copies still exist of Europe's oldest surviving printed text produced by Johann Gutenberg in the 1450s, who devised the printing technique he used. This important collection of images have been produced collaboratively with Keio University, Japan and NTT Inc. using new digital technology for rare books, and the site is designed by the consultancy Oyster Partners. The website also contains background information on Gutenberg and his life and times.

CSA

Cambridge Scientific Abstracts are providing a new online bibliographic index service by subscription, the Design and Applied Arts Index (DAAI). It consists of more than 130,000 full bibliographic references with brief abstracts for articles drawn from over 500 journals and newspapers from 1973 onwards, covering topics as diverse as architecture, design for the elderly and disabled, multimedia, textiles, jewellery and vehicle design. The index is updated monthly. There are also two additional databases included in the product: "Education Directory" which is a set of course information and contact details for over 2,800 educational institutions world-wide offering courses in the Design and Applied Arts field, and "Periodicals Directory" which is an international directory of over 450 journals with content information and publishers' contact details.

FORBES.COM

The Internet media company for corporate information and analysis Forbes.com now lists the world's 2000 biggest companies based on sales, profits, assets and market value. The list can be sorted on these categories, as well as by the 51 countries and 27 industries it currently contains.

GETTY IMAGES

Getty Images has acquired two further collections: the Hulton Archive and Time Life Pictures. The Hulton Archive contains over 40 million stills photographs taken in the 19th and 20th century of historical and sociological interest, and the Time Life Pictures collection contains many world famous images such as the celebrated Alfred Eisenstaedt image of a sailor and

nurse kissing in Times Square on VJ Day at the end of WWII. Images can be searched for using keywords, concepts and image numbers, viewed as thumbnails and purchased online according to their respective license agreements.

NHS DIRECT AND THE BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL

Information about common health problems, including advice on surgery and aftercare, and some chronic conditions such as asthma and diabetes, is now available from the "Self-Help" area of the NHS Direct website. Intended for UK residents, the link to the Journal's "Best Treatments" website has resulted from consultation with the Department of Health and provides information for doctors and patients alike with an emphasis on plain English and raising patient awareness to help them make decisions about their treatment with health professionals.

OCLC PICA / NETLIBRARY

A collection of 15,000 netLibrary ebook titles have been purchased in a deal unprecedented in Europe. NoWAL, the North West Academic Libraries consortium, and Keele University will have access to the ebooks until June 2006 under an agreement aided by OCLC PICA. The ebooks will be available to a HE user population of over 165,000. Titles will be available on and off campus, and the Consortium will be able to add titles to the existing collection.

RDN

The JISC-funded Resource Discovery Network have enhanced the "World Guide" service in GEsources, their hub devoted to "Geography & Environment". The Guide contains collections of satellite images, interactive maps, articles and other information, including a "Country Comparison Tool" which provides an online comparison based on demographic, geographic and economic data of two countries chosen by the user.

THOMSON DERWENT

Thomson Derwent have announce the launch of their new patent alerting service. Derwent World Patents Index First View provides subscribed users with previews of the latest published patent documents before they reach the existing main database Derwent World Patents Index. DWPI First View is available through Dialog and STN International, and it contains bibliographic data for all new patent documents including abstracts and images plus English language abstracts for patents from some Far East countries and Russia.

Joy Cadwallader is Secretary of AberOLUG, and can be contacted by E-mail: Joy.Cadwallader@aber.ac.uk

Internet News

Column Editor: Kevin Bell;
e-mail: kevin14@ntlworld.com

Internet Governance

Stephen Bell (no relation!), writing in Computerworld New Zealand, discusses a recent UN ICT forum on governance of the internet. In particular he quotes Vin Cerf, one of the 'fathers of the internet', who addressed the forum describing how the internet had developed openly and freely due to the openness of the technical rules and their voluntary adoption by designers. Unavoidably, as the internet developed it began to incorporate functions that had been subject to considerable regulation offline. Cerf's view is that governance should, "be thought of as the steps taken collectively to facilitate the spread, development and collective use of the internet". As an example, he says that e-commerce could be promoted by the adoption of procedures for the use of signatures, mechanisms to settle disputes in international electronic transactions and the treatment of international transaction taxes, together with protection of intellectual property.

Certainly, if there is no voluntary governance of the internet, there will be compulsory external government control.

Internet Really Flies

After 3 years of testing, [!] SAS, the Swedish airline, seems to be going ahead with in-flight internet connection <http://www.internetnews.com/bus-news/article.php/568691>. Up until two weeks ago I would have thought that very unnecessary. Then my home computer crashed fatally and I have been without access until very recently. I can't believe how much I missed not being able to logon whenever I wanted. As an active member of an online motorcycle club, <http://www.bikersoracle.com/vfr>, I felt really cut-off. Maybe I won't be so hasty to judge others in future!

Directgov

The Office of the e-Envoy announced a new electronic access point to government at the beginning of March this year. Directgov, <http://ukonline.direct.gov.uk/Homepage/fs/en>, is expected to develop into the first point of contact with government for the public, bringing all of the various government departments into one website. Initial impressions of the site are very good. The homepage is clean and ordered, and the 'citrus' colour scheme is very refreshing! It only took me seconds to navigate to information on driving licences for motorcyclists. Previously it took much longer trying to get through via the DVLA site.

If the site can retain its simple, uncluttered, interface it should be a valuable resource for many people. However, it will need to be promoted much more vigorously to potential users so that they automatically think of it when they need governmental information.

Lifesaver

The internet is to be used to co-ordinate research and knowledge in order to assist governments and relief agencies cope with drought in Asia. The International Water Management Institute (IWMI), a non-profit making organisation, has launched a website, <http://www.iwmi.cgiar.org/droughtassessment/index.asp> created as a "meeting place" for scientists, managers and policy makers dealing with drought.

It is hoped that the website will bring together the people, data and knowledge that will help to alleviate the devastating effects of drought throughout Asia. There is an acknowledged pool of knowledge and experience in the area but it requires a co-ordinated effort to make the best use of these resources. The internet is seen as the ideal way of bringing this about.

Intranets and Content Management

Column Editor: Martin White, Intranet Focus Ltd;
e-mail: Martin.white@intranetfocus.com

I know that you should not judge a book by its cover, but the minute I look at the home page of an intranet I start to get a very strong impression of what may lie beneath. One intranet I came across recently had white type on a black background, and at quite a small font size at that. It was unreadable at almost any distance. All the other pages on the intranet used the same reversed-out appearance and all were equally unreadable. On asking why this had been adopted the answer given was that this was the format that had been used for the annual report a year or so back, and the Chairman liked it so much that he decided that it should be the basis for the intranet 'so that there was a strong brand identity'. Need I report that intranet usage was in terminal decline?

For a web site creating a strong brand identity is an important objective of the home page, because you are trying to get some instant 'stickiness' that will persuade a first-time visitor that this is a site worth visiting and remembering. Intranets are different, and yet the same. There should be a strong link with corporate objectives, but more in terms of organisational culture. When I see an intranet home page where the organisation is by department, and presupposes that users know which department is responsible for certain information it tells me a lot

about the silo management approach of the company.

Navigation versus information

The usual format that I come across is a home page which has some navigation in the LH column and perhaps more on the RH side, but the centre is taken up with a picture of the office and news about the organisation. A few years ago I was working for an international organisation that had a graphics team whose sole task was to create a new image for the central section of the intranet every day. Where there is a news component it is often a mixture of news about the organisation from an external perspective and news about the activities of individuals and departments that in the past would have appeared in the staff newsletter, and been ignored. People are very selective about news, and are only interested in it when it has some impact on them. If it does not then it can be a total turnoff, and so a waste of valuable space.

One of the pieces of web design folklore is Peter Cochrane's 'three clicks' rule. With the current scale of web sites and intranets trying to get every piece of content just three clicks away from the home page is insanity. My version of the three clicks 'rule' is that within three clicks of the home page a user should be confident that they are heading in the right direction. This argues for navigation-rich home pages.

A very good home page design I saw a couple of years was on the intranet of Software Spectrum, a US-owned software company. This had three columns headed Our Clients, Our People and Communications. Each subheading had enough third-level headings to illustrate what content was likely to be found there. This was complemented by selected departmental links and very clear global navigation. Another feature of the home page was that the current times in the international offices were presented, which served both to emphasise the global basis of the company and also assist in working out when staff would be in the office. I recall there was also an indication alongside the time to show if the office was closed for a public holiday. All very simple things to do, but the overall effect was to reinforce the corporate culture of having a focus on meeting the needs of customers.

Home pages and organisation culture

Not only do the home pages have to provide a high usability information architecture but they also set the culture of the organisation. I remember not so long ago being in a company where there was quite a large voluntary redundancy programme being put into operation. On the home page details of the programme could indeed be found on the employee information pages, but were listed after links to the cafeteria, sports clubs and theatre trips. The reason was of

course that this list was organised alphabetically, but staff concerned felt that they were being seen as second-class citizens.

The case is sometimes made that employees do not use the home page to find content on the intranet, but the reality is that they do, or at the very least open the intranet up at the home page before tunnelling into specific content.

Top down and bottom up

Home page development needs to be managed with more care than is evident in many organisations. A top-down view that reflects corporate objectives and business processes is a good start, but then as the intranet develops in complexity and size there will be a need to look back at the home page and see if it still works. All too often changes in lower levels are force-fitted into the home page, and the first level below the home page. In my view the home page and first level down should be kept under continuous review. It can be quite instructive to ask users to describe the top level structure of your intranet without the aid of the PC! This is where usability testing becomes so important, not only to identify enhancements but also to make the business case for making the changes.

Unfortunately usability testing is usually regarded as an expensive luxury in many organisations, on the basis that 'employees will soon find ways of locating the information that they want, and in any case there is a search engine'. Search engines are important in an intranet, but only in conjunction with other elements that support the findability of content.

Going back to my initial metaphor, would you buy the third edition of a book if the publishers had used the book jacket from the 1st edition, and taped it in place because the current edition was now twice the size of the original, and that in addition neither the contents page or the index had been updated?

Reference Management

Column Editor: Tracy Kent;
email: t.k.kent@bham.ac.uk

Following promotion of reference software (see my column in the last issue of eLucidate) and familiarity of the basics of the software (do come to my course on June 23rd) the next steps tend to be making appropriate use of the references.

Posting references more widely

Posting references onto the web seems to be a fairly difficult area to locate adequate software. There are

very few commercial tools available which can be used to post reference management databases (such as endnote or reference manager) onto the web, especially since the demise (??) of Reference Web Poster (did anyone ever get it to work satisfactorily?!). On trawling the web to find some examples UKOLUG members might wish to pursue I came across Biblioserver. This new web service provides a mix of services and support operations for loading bibliographic data onto the web. Follow this link to a guest column on this service.

Another example is the Shaare Zedek Cancer Pain and Palliative Medicine Reference Database which is a searchable database of endnote references, using some inhouse technical expertise and putting references into the public domain. A very good example of how databases can be posted. Details found at <http://www.chernydatabase.org/>

ISI have launched Reference Manager 11 which allows posting of up to 15 different databases onto the web or an Intranet. Usernames and passwords can be added for security as well as other permissions. Further details from <http://www.adeptscience.co.uk/>

RefWorks is actually a web based reference software tool, supported by Cambridge Scientific Abstracts, which allows you to create a database and cite within word processed documents, from downloaded references. It supports a range of language data as well including Japanese. Several academic organisations in particular have recently subscribed to RefWorks including Loughborough University. Further details from <http://www.refworks.com/>

Seeing references more widely

Reference visualisation is the "new black" in the reference management world with a number of companies offering visualisation capabilities to display interconnections between key terms and keywords between references. From the ISI stable comes RefViz. RefViz is used with Reference Manager and Endnote to explore references visually for major themes and topics. RefViz can be used to analyse sets of references downloaded from many standard bibliographic databases such as Web of Science or Medline or, just as usefully, with the Endnote libraries or Reference Manager databases. Provided abstracts are put against each reference (something not everyone does....) and you configure the software appropriately the references can be displayed in a range of styles.

The galaxy mode organises references according to how they are related conceptually by showing small document icons to identify the groups created by the software, and small squares to indicate individual documents. Below this is the Reference Viewer, which

shows selected details of the selected group, or document. Click on any reference and the full record pops up. Although RefViz is a separate package to Endnote and Reference Manager if you are trying to get a handle on references already held it is an important development in the reference process. RefViz is also available for Mac machines Further details from

<http://www.adeptscience.co.uk/products/refman/refviz/>

Xrefer Research Mapper is another information visualisation tool which displays records based on search terms and topics. This enables similar visualisation to RefViz above but is based on the content within xrefer, an online ready reference service that provides full-text, aggregated content to academic, public, and corporate libraries. A sample webpage can be found at <http://www.xrefer.com/research/index.jsp>

Linking references more widely

Endnote and Reference Manager both now support OpenURLs links to locate the full text of listed articles. This will development will certainly provide added value to the reference databases. Such developments are supported by the National Federation of Science Abstracting and Indexing Services (NFAIS) which has issued guidelines with regard to reference linking and its role in enhancing scholarly communication. These principles include

- * Linking between electronic resources owned or licensed by a single entity should be strongly encouraged and widely permitted.
- * Full-text publishers, information aggregators, and abstracting & information services should pro-actively engage in collaborative efforts to link their resources as long as a secure information environment is in place.
- * Information purchasers and users should expect and request broad-based linking capabilities from their information and technology providers in order to maximize the return on their investment in those resources.

For further information check the NFAIS website at http://www.nfais.org/2003_Guiding_Princ_Ref_Linking.htm

Adhering to these guidelines places reference management at the core of the information profession.

Reference Management

Column Editor: Tracy Kent;
e-mail: t.k.kent@bham.ac.uk

Guest article: BIBLIOSERVER – the next step in bibliographical software

In cooperation with Estonian libraries OÜ Tarkvarastudio has developed the BIBLIOSERVER website for publishing bibliographical databases on the Internet. On the BIBLIOSERVER website <http://www.biblioserver.com> users can create personal accounts, allowing them to upload and publish bibliographical databases on the Internet. In order to provide improved data browsing and navigation functionality BIBLIOSERVER automatically creates indexes of authors, keywords and sources for the uploaded material. Record search options include search by author, title, source or complex search on all data fields. Several databases can be searched simultaneously. Records are stored using Unicode format to ensure the correct interpretation of mixed alphabetical material. For complete description of BIBLIOSERVER's functionality please read the following overview:
<http://www.biblioserver.com/index.php?m=features> .

Currently the BIBLIOSERVER service is provided only for viewing bibliographic material. Our partner libraries in Estonia are using customized version of this software, which allows the input of bibliographic records and direct data management via Internet. This kind of solution grants the following benefits:

- improved teamwork
- no need for additional software for data input;
- no technical complexities concerning export/import of databases;
- one software solution for bibliographers and readers.

DEA (Digitized Estonian Newspapers)

DEA, <http://dea.nlib.ee> , is an ongoing project in cooperation with National Library of Estonia, <http://www.nlib.ee/inglise/indexi.html> . The aim of the project is to digitize historical newspapers and publish them on the Internet. As a result around 1 million pages of 14 different newspapers published between 1857 and 1920 will be available on DEA website. Until now this material was available for public usage only on microfilms. The application employs calendar-based material browsing and several image viewing tools such as image zoom and rotation. At the moment the user interface is in the Estonian language.

Online links:

BIBLIOSERVER
Sample Biblioserver database
<http://www.biblioserver.com/sample>

Databases of Academic Library of Tallinn
http://digi.ear.ee/biblioserver/index.php?lan_to_set=eng

Databases of Estonian Literary Museum
<http://www.tarkvarastudio.ee/kirmus/index.php?>

DEA (interface is in Estonian language):
Sample of calendar based interface
<http://dea.nlib.ee/index.php?get=1&lid=1&byea=1900>

Sample of image browsing interface
<http://dea.nlib.ee/fullview.php?pid=s111508&nid=7305&frameset=1>

GRAFO (interface is in Estonian language)
Photo album "Estland"
<http://www.tarkvarastudio.ee/grafu/index.php?ID=209>

Sample list of digitized books
<http://www.tarkvarastudio.ee/grafu/>

Books about Tartu city history
<http://www.tartu.ee/grafu/>

Additional information:
Unicode
<http://www.unicode.org/standard/WhatIsUnicode.html>

GRAFO (website solution for digitized books)
GRAFO, <http://www.tarkvarastudio.ee/grafu> , is a website solution for browsing digitized books online. Around 200 books, i. e. 18 000 pages taking ca 10 Gb of disk space have been processed so far. Old and rare books from collections of several libraries and museums have been published on GRAFO website.

OÜ TARKVARASTUUDIO
Company has 10 years of experience in software developing. Clientele consists of ca 60 government institutions, local governments and libraries.
Contact us:
phone/fax: +372 7 300 590
general email: info@tarkvarastudio.ee
mail address:
OÜ Tarkvarastudio
Vanemuise 65
Tartu 50410
Estonia

Public Sector News

Column Editor: Penny Garrod, Public Library Networking Focus, UKOLN.

p.garrod@ukoln.ac.uk

WiFi hotspots in public libraries

MLA (the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, previously Resource) has teamed up with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and The Countryside Agency to provide WiFi 'hotspots' (Wireless Fidelity) in ten public libraries serving rural communities. The £60,000 pilot project will enable local people to log on to the Internet in their local public library, using their own wireless-enabled laptops or there will be WiFi equipment for loan from the library.

The 10 public libraries taking part in the pilot are: Ayton, North Yorkshire; Barnard Castle, County Durham; Belper, Derbyshire; Brewood, Staffordshire; Chatburn, Lancashire; Launceston, Cornwall; Lyndhurst, Hampshire; Potton, Bedfordshire; Princetown, Devon and Sandwich, Kent.

Brian Wilson, Programme Director at the Countryside Agency, is quoted as saying: "fast broadband access to the internet is not yet an option for many rural businesses and communities. These pilots will provide access at public libraries, with 24/7 access in five cases. We want to see how rural communities use this innovative facility and what benefits it brings." For the full press release see:

<http://www.peoplesnetwork.gov.uk/news/pressrelease/article.asp?id=313>

The BBC also covered this development, see "Wireless internet for bookworms":

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/3565603.stm>
(BBC News. 27 March 2004)

Inspiring Learning for All (ILA)

ILA is an online toolkit designed to guide museums, libraries and archives through the process of cultural change as learning becomes a core function. The ILA toolkit took three years to develop, and it includes an assessment framework which focuses on 4 key principles: People, Places, Partnerships, and Policies, Plans and Performance. The ILA has been piloted in a number of library services including Essex and Warwickshire. For full details see:

<http://www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk>

An article called Inspiring learning for all by Jonathan Douglas was published in the April edition of the CILIP Update. [Update, Vol. 3 (4), April 2004. pp.36-37.

Culture Online - new projects

Four new projects for the 'Culture Online' project were announced in March 2004. 'Culture Online' is a £13m project which aims to utilise ICT to bring arts and culture to people who do not normally participate in these areas.

The new projects are:

SoundWorlds: which will enable young people to explore and experiment with a range of musical sounds, styles and genres.

City Heritage Guides: which will create 10 online City Guides featuring highlights of local culture

Artisan Cam: which will enable people to watch professional artists and craftspeople at work in their studios creating work, and take part in online master classes;

World War Two Remembered: which will help older people create an online archive of their wartime memories.

Ten projects have now been agreed. See:

<http://www.cultureonline.gov.uk>

E-government: Directgov replaces UK Online

'Directgov' < <http://ukonline.direct.gov.uk> > has now replaced the 'UK Online' government information portal set up by the Office of the e-Envoy in 1999. 'UK Online' used a 'life episode' approach to organise and present information to the general public. However, this proved unpopular and information on the new portal is arranged by topic or theme e.g. 'the over 50s', 'parents' and 'motoring'.

Andrew Pinder, the e-Envoy (until May 2004), is reported as using a 'daring analogy' at the launch of Directgov in March 2004, when he compared Directgov to Disneyland. Both offer all you could possibly need in a single site – whether this be government information or a family holiday.

The Office of the e-Envoy wants 'Directgov' to become a strong brand name. The site is aimed at the 'casual user' and will have a strong customer-focus, and be easy to use. Content is gradually being added including local government information as councils deliver about 80 % of services to the public.

[Sources: e-Government Bulletin, Issue 156, 5 March 2004 and 'The direct route' newsfeature in Government Computing magazine (published by Kablet: April 2004, p.13.)

'Better Connected' – survey of council web sites

'Better Connected' is an annual survey of local authority web sites from the Society of IT Management (Socitm - <http://www.socitm.gov.uk>). Socitm describe the council website as "a core strategic tool... offering the public a wide range of self-service options and enabling front-line staff in contact centres and one stop shops to increase dramatically the service offered to the public. For local authorities, which handle some 80% of government to citizen transactions, it has never been more important".

The survey is of considerable interest to councils as it enables them to benchmark their progress in implementing local e-government, and to compare their sites with those of other local authorities. This year the survey found that a third of sites had moved up a rank in status, and 23 sites achieved transactional or 'T' status. Achieving a transactional website is the ultimate goal, as this indicates that the authority is on target to make all public services available electronically by the end of 2005 in line with the Government's e-Government objectives.

However, website accessibility remains an issue. Many sites cannot be accessed by blind and visually impaired users using screen reading software. The Government is urging local authorities to work towards 'AA' compliance (World Wide Web Consortium/Web Accessibility Initiative (W3C/WAI) guidelines). Socitm found only 18 councils were compliant with level 'A' of guidelines, with many failing as a result of failing to provide meaningful 'alt' text tags for images. 'Text-only' alternative sites did not fare much better – of the 143 web sites with a text-only alternative, only seven achieved level 'A' standard overall.

[Source: SPIN Bulletin No. 81: 5 March 2004. Published by the Society of Public Information Networks: < <http://www.spin.org.uk> > email: bulletin@spin.org.uk and < <http://www.socitm.gov.uk/> >]

Adaptive Technology paper

An issue paper entitled: Adaptive Technologies in Public Libraries has been published by the Networked Services Policy Task Group (NSPTG) – an expert forum on policy for the People's Network programme < <http://www.peoplesnetwork.gov.uk> >. The paper is available on the UKOLN website at: < <http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/public/nsptg/adaptive-technologies/> >

Online training from the National Library for the Blind (NLB)

The National Library for the Blind (NLB) has developed a series of free online training courses called the 'Access technology primer'. The courses are aimed at library staff and support workers, and they cover the basics of access technology < <http://atp.nlb-online.org/> > Initial sections are: Introduction to access technology; Training visually impaired people to use computers; Changes you can make to your computer without access technology; Windows keyboard commands; JAWS; Supernova; and Zoomtext (screen reader/screen magnification software).

[source: e-Access Bulletin. Issue 51. March 2004 . A free monthly email newsletter. Editor - Dan Jellinek. Website: < <http://www.headstar.com/eab> > and personal email communication from David Owen, Executive Director, Share The Vision, National Library for the Blind. 23 March 2004.]

Current Awareness

Column editor: Jane Grogan;

e-mail: Jane.Grogan@gchq.gsi.gov.uk

This column contains summaries of articles (print and electronic) about online services, CD-ROMs, networked information, electronic publishing, multimedia etc. including, with permission, abstracts identified with an * next to the author initials, drawn from Current Cites, the monthly publication distributed electronically by the Library, University of California at Berkeley:

<http://sunsite.Berkeley.edu/CurrentCites/> .

The Current Cites database of citations now numbers over 1,000 and is searchable at <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/CurrentCites/bibondemand.cgi> . This service is called "Bibliography on Demand" because it can be easily used to create printable or linkable bibliographies on information technology topics. Another service offered is full-text searching of all cited articles that are freely available in full-text. You can try it out at <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/CurrentCites/articlesearch.html>.

ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING

Crawford, Walt. "Library Access to Scholarship" Cites & Insights: Crawford at Large 4(4) (March 2004): 1-5. (<http://cites.boisestate.edu/civ4i4.pdf>) . - One of the many library and/or technology issues that commentator Walt Crawford tracks has become the "open access" movement in scholarly communication. This is all to the good, since he has a keen eye and a span of sources that surely is only achievable through lack of sleep and nothing better to do. I won't recount all of the developments he notes in this ongoing section of Cites & Insights, but suffice it to say that if you are interested in scholarly communication, and the changes it is undergoing, you could do much worse than tracking what Crawford and Suber (cited elsewhere in this issue of Current Cites) have to say about it. – [*RT]

Nature Web Focus: Access to the Literature: The Debate Continues (2004) - Nature is offering a new series of freely available commissioned papers by noted authors on open access and other innovative publishing business models. Current contributions include "Open Access and Learned Societies"; "Open Access and Not-for-Profit Publishers"; "Open Access: Yes, No, Maybe"; "Universities' Own Electronic Repositories Yet to Impact on Open Access"; "Why Electronic Publishing Means People Will Pay Different Prices"; and other papers. There are also useful links to related articles and resources. Like prior Nature debates on electronic publishing issues, this one is lively and very interesting. – [*CB]

Suber, Peter. "Open Access Builds Momentum" ARL: A Bimonthly Report on Research Library Issues and Actions from ARL, CNI, and SPARC (232) (February 2004) (<http://www.arl.org/newsltr/232/openaccess.html>) . - The Open Access movement had a big year in 2003, and, in this article, Peter Suber, author of the SPARC Open Access Newsletter, provides a concise overview of the highlights, including the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities, the Bethesda Statement on Open Access Publishing, the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action by the U.N. World Summit on the Information Society, the Directory of Open Access Journals, PLoS Biology (published by the Public Library of Science), Scientific Publishing: A Position Statement by the Wellcome Trust in Support of Open Access Publishing, and more. Miss any of that? This is a good way to quickly catch up on major events related to this rapidly changing and increasingly important movement. – [*CB]

GENERAL

"A Dozen Primers on Standards" Computers in Libraries 24(2) (February 2004) (<http://www.infotoday.com/cilmag/feb04/primers.shtml>) . - Ever been stumped by the frequent use of information acronyms, and needed a quick reference? What's a DOI? This feature article is a handy overview of current standards applied to information management. Each standard is presented under the following subheadings: Acronym, What it stands for, What is its purpose? Groups behind it, Does it replace or update a previous standard? What stage of development is it at? Pros and Cons. Included are: ARK, DOI, METS, MODS, NCIP, OAI-PMH, ONIX, OpenURL, RDF, RSS, Shibboleth, and SRW/SRU. Each standard is well defined, with examples of usage given. Additionally each norm

description is presented by an expert on the subject. As well, the author's affiliation is included. This article is worth retaining for future reference, to be consulted when one encounters those ubiquitous standards in our professional reading. – [*MG]

Boutin, Paul. "Webmonkey, RIP: 1996 - 2004" *Wired* (Online) (17 February 2004) (<http://www.wired.com/news/infostructure/0,1377,62300,00.html>). - Chances are, if you needed to bone up on something technical during the latter half of the 1990's, you might have looked for a tutorial on Webmonkey. Things like figuring out the basics of Javascript, how to embed media or the finer points of tables and frames: if that's what you needed, Webmonkey had a tutorial for you. The quirky site, so nonchalant and earnest, inspired by the "with it" culture of its parent, *Wired Magazine*, fell victim to corporate restructuring this month courtesy of owner Terra Lycos. – [*LRK]

Chudnov, Dan. "Library Groupware for Bibliographic Lifecycle Management" (28 January 2004) (<http://curtis.med.yale.edu/dchud/writings/blm.html>). - Those familiar with Dan know him as charming guy with more good ideas in a good day than many of us have all year. Some of those ideas have spawned production services (e.g., *Jake*), while others may have been a bit too far ahead of their time (e.g., *Docster*). But whether his ideas ever result in running code or not, they are almost always provocative. The stated purpose of this piece is to propose "that libraries could merge the functions of weblogging, reference management, and link resolution into a new library groupware infrastructure, helping users to better manage the entire lifecycle of the bibliographic research process." Wow. Why couldn't I have thought of that? – [*RT]

Computers in Libraries 2004 Medford, NJ: Information Today, 2004. (<http://www.infotoday.com/cil2004/presentations/>). - Many of the presentations from this conference, held March 10-12, 2004 in Washington DC are available in either PowerPoint or Adobe Acrobat format, or both. Handouts are also often available, as well as the occasional Perl script. The topics range widely from strategies for keeping up to blogs to dead and emerging technologies. There is, in other words, something here for just about anyone. – [*RT]

Ebare, Sean. "Digital Music and Subculture: Sharing Files, Sharing Styles" *First Monday* 9(2) (2 February 2004) http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue9_2/ebare/index.html - The author takes a fresh look at online music sharing communities, applying theories from popular music studies and cyberethnography. He explores how identity and difference, subculture and genre lifespans, and the political economy of technology and music production combine to influence the use of music on the Internet. Identity is more fluid, and anonymity more prevalent, making the music sharing community somewhat unique. He argues that the subculture of music sharing user-driven and that the ability to forecast how this community behaves will be invaluable for both music publishers and social scientists. He offers his own forecast on the future marketplace for music sharing, arguing that it will depend upon an understanding of the diversity of the members, their need for self-determination, and the mandate to allow these communities to exercise a substantial degree of independence within their online experience. – [*TH]

Kurlantzick, Joshua. "Dictatorship.com: The Web Won't Topple Tyranny" *The New Republic* (25 March 2004) (<http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?pt=oGG%2BvQEIJRNjHGIOJiX4X%3D%3D>). - As a tool to disseminate popular culture, the Internet has had spectacular success, even in "authoritarian nations" such as Laos, China, Singapore and Saudi Arabia. But, the author points out, its political impact has been negligible and, in some cases, "the Internet actually may be helping dictatorships remain in power." This in spite of the fact that pundits have been touting the political potential of the Net since it became more or less a mass medium in the mid-90s. Although "Internet usage has surged in many authoritarian nations," it has had little impact on "the political climate." Why? Because, the author says, it is not particularly useful "for expressing and organizing dissent," and -- technologically -- "it has proved surprisingly easy for authoritarian regimes to stifle, control, and co-opt." The author points out that the Internet is mainly used for individual rather than group activities. As one Laotian researcher quoted here observes, the Internet "is about people sitting in front of a terminal, barely interacting." Also, using the Net requires a relatively high level of literacy. The author provides examples of how different nations have attempted to control access to and content on the Internet, particularly China -- "Despite President Clinton's prediction, Beijing has proved that it can, in fact, nail Jell-O to the wall." And Western companies have proven only too eager "to sell the latest censorship technology" to any oppressive regime willing to ante up. Some dissidents claim the Internet actually facilitates monitoring of individuals by the government. Fascinating read; a don't-

miss. – [*SK]

Prosser, Carolyn. "Project of the month: managing electronic services". *Managing Information*, 11 (3) (April 2004): 44- 45. Tips article by an information manager in a chemical company that outlines the steps she takes in selecting and implementing electronic services in her organisation. The author suggests observing the "six Cs" in the selection process - cost, contract, currency, coverage, convenience and contacts. Tips for implementation include getting the IT department firmly on your side and taking advantage of any in-house training offered by the service provider. – [LR]

Royle, Pamela and Waugh, Norman. "Should systematic reviews include searches for published errata?" *Health Information and Libraries Journal* 21 (1) (2004): 14-20. Describes a pilot project to estimate the proportion of published errata, linked to randomized controlled trials (RCTs), that are worthwhile obtaining, when doing a systematic review. 100 RCTs, from four journals, plus their errata, were examined both by an information specialist and a public health consultant. From the information specialist perspective, 74% of the errata were worth obtaining as they concerned errors in tables or figures. The public health consultant deemed that 5% of the errata would affect a meta-analysis, and 10% would have errors that would affect interpretation of the individual RCT. Discusses the implications of these findings for the systematic review process, suggesting that checking is advisable although only around 5% are likely to change the conclusions of a systematic review. - [CJU]

Seebach, Peter. "The Cranky User: Businesses Behaving Badly : Put Customers First Or Risk Losing Them" *developerWorks* (4 March 2004) (<http://www-106.ibm.com/developerworks/web/library/wa-cranky38.html>). - The "Cranky User" is an occasional column on IBM's extremely helpful DeveloperWorks site (the Ease of Use section is wonderful). In this missive, the Cranky User complains about poor customer service. Poor customer service is a kind of action on the part of a company that produces a reaction in the customer, namely, a negative reaction. While I don't particularly agree with his example near the end of the column where he complains about contact email addresses being replaced by web forms, the notion that bad institutional practices have negative consequences is important to keep in mind. – [*LRK]

Sunner, Mark. "Worms with your spam?" *Managing Information*, 11 (3) (April 2004): 10-11. Examines the threat to e-mail security posed by the convergence of virus and spam techniques. Predicts that this threat is going to get worse and may reach the point where it compromises the effectiveness of e-mail as a communications medium. This "new generation" of viruses are spread by spam use infected computers to propagate more spam and spread the viruses even further. Looks at how spammers are becoming more sophisticated in their attempts to get around spam filters and anti-virus software. Concludes that traditional reactive security arrangements are no longer enough and that a managed approach is needed that picks up on trends and proactively seeks to identify and stop dangerous e-mails. – [LR]

INFORMATION ACCESS/RETRIEVAL

Beehner, Lionel. "Lies, Damned Lies, and Google" *mediabistro.com* (15 February 2004) (<http://www.mediabistro.com/articles/cache/a1217.asp>). - Google has morphed, among other things, into a tool for lazy journalists, who have come to consider the number of results from a simple keyword search to be an indicator of popularity. Surely you've read examples of great investigative reporting like..."When I typed the word ____ into Google, I got more than 10,000 hits!" The author indicates that Los Angeles Times reporters seem to be the worse offenders, although staff writers for the upscale New Yorker have also used this cheap trick. The article is rich in actual examples. Google's data, the author reminds us, "can be faulty, fleeting, and, as any doctoral student or fact checker knows, terribly inaccurate." It has reached the point, he notes, where "plugging Google in a story has become almost a telltale sign of sloppy reporting, a hack's version of a Rolodex." – [*SK]

Dilevko, Juris, and Lisa Gottlieb. "Selection and Cataloging of Adult Pornography Web Sites for Academic Libraries" *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 30(1) (January 2004): 36-50. - The authors argue that as interest in adult porn studies proliferates on campus, librarians are challenged to provide support material. The authors delineate various criteria for selecting subject-specific Web sites, reminding us that while the sites themselves may not be scholarly, they may still "represent a type of cultural artefact worthy of (and currently the subject of) scholarly inquiry." Catalogers will

appreciate the extensive discussion on subject access in this area. The inclusion of material like this in the academic library's catalog would, we are told, "facilitate scholarly research in this area and fill a prominent gap in the library's collection." (Available through ScienceDirect.) – [*LRK]

Feldman, Susan. "The High Cost of Not Finding Information" *KMWorld Magazine* 13(3) (March 2004)

http://www.kmworld.com/publications/magazine/index.cfm?action=readarticle&Article_ID=1725&Publication_ID=108. - "There are all kinds of information disasters. Some are caused by wrong information. Some are caused by outdated information.... Missing or incomplete information plagues many projects..... Finally, there is the increasing problem of too much information." Some interesting statistics here: -- "(R)oughly 50% of most Web searches are abandoned." -- "Knowledge workers spend from 15% to 35% of their time searching for information." -- "Searchers are successful in finding what they seek 50% of the time or less...." -- "40% of corporate users reported that they can not find the information they need to do their jobs on their intranets." -- "Not locating and retrieving information has an opportunity cost of more than \$15 million annually." -- "Some studies suggest that 90% of the time that knowledge workers spend in creating new reports or other products is spent in recreating information that already exists." – [*SK]

Fiehn, Barbara. "Federated Searching: A Viable Alternative to Web Surfing" *MultiMedia & Internet@Schools* 11(2) March/April 2004. - You'll be hearing lots more about federated search. Simple definition -- searching a variety of resources (databases, OPACs, the Web) from a single interface. This article focuses on school library media centers and the products available for that market. But it is worth reading by all information professionals since it presents a good overview of the topic and explains some of the pros and cons. The biggest advantage is the most obvious -- no need for the end user to hop from resource to resource in order to access all that an institution has available online. Some vendors' products will group results by source which, in essence, can show the user which resources are likely to be most useful for his/her particular information need. And the user only has to learn one search interface. But single-interface searching also has some downsides. Federated search technology is not quite "there" yet as far as relevance and de-duping are concerned. Also, the single interface may not permit the end user to take advantage of whatever sophisticated search features are offered by the individual resources. And this relatively new technology may prove challenging for librarians and IT people alike. If you don't have adequate in-house resources, hosting solutions may be available. – [*SK (amended)]

Grant, Maria. "How does your searching grow? A survey of search preferences and the use of optimal search strategies in the identification of qualitative research." *Health Information and Libraries Journal* 21 (1) (2004): 21-32. Examined the possible benefits of optimal searching strategies for qualitative research. Explored the perceptions of such strategies held by experienced qualitative researchers among the Cochrane Qualitative Methods Network (response rate to the questionnaire survey 30/40). Most respondents preferred to search independently, and searched a wide range of databases. Some had searched for specific methodologies, and had found problems in locating particular research designs, although often the actual topic is more important than a particular research design. The respondents had some reservations about the use of optimal search strategies, mainly the possibility that some important research studies might be missed. Concludes that optimal searching strategies to promote sensitivity, or specificity, would be necessary. - [CJU]

Jackson, Joab. "Taxonomy's Not Just Design, It's an Art" *Government Computer News* 23(3) (9 February 2004) (http://www.gcn.com/23_3/interview/24814-1.html). - This is an interview with Michael C. Daconta, director of Web and technology services for systems integrator APG McDonald Bradley Inc. in McLean, VA. He is "chief architect of the Defense Intelligence Agency's Virtual Knowledge Base, a project to compile a directory of Defense Department data through Extensible Markup Language ontologies." Previously, he created "a set of electronic mortgage standards for Fannie Mae" and, while in the Army, worked as a programmer on "combat and intelligence simulation software." He is a co-author of *The Semantic Web*, published last year. In the interview, Daconta explains the concept of the semantic Web and the role XML will play in nudging the Web from its current human-readable nature to a machine-readable information network. He also discusses the right way and the wrong way to create a taxonomy, mainly that it cannot be done informally. And he talks about the Defence Intelligence Agency's use of the Virtual Knowledge Base, and how it may evolve in the future. – [*SK]

Jacso, P. Savvy searching: natural language searching. *Online Information Review* Vol 28 (1) 75-79
The author claims that few users make use of the controlled vocabulary terms when formulating search queries tending to prefer natural language. Jacso provides an example of the differing approaches likely to be taken by an information professional in formulating and running a search strategy, defining and selecting terms, use of Boolean and so forth and that of the end user. Both have their inherent problems with the potentially time consuming breakdown of the query into manageable blocks by the information professional to the use of the vernacular by the end user, neither approach necessarily resulting in any relevant hits. A potential solution is that of using a natural language handling software package, KnowledgeFinder or PubMed. Through MEDLINE he illustrates the impact and potential of such software. This article is difficult to explain in an abstract and requires careful reading but it does illustrate the potential of such search software packages. – [SM]

Jenkins, Michelle and Johnson, Frances. "Awareness, use and opinions of methodological search filters used for retrieval of evidence-based medical literature – a questionnaire survey." *Health Information and Libraries Journal* 21(1) (2004): 33-43. Assessed the level of awareness of such search filters among health librarians in the NHS and Ireland, and academic health specialist librarians. A telephone questionnaire was used as the basis of the survey, and 194 health librarians, and 30 academic librarians targeted, with an overall response rate of 88%. Results indicated that awareness of search filters was greater than use, fewer than half of the respondents using them. Respondents seemed unclear about the way methodological filters are constructed and were uncertain about the benefits. - [CJU]

Nicholas, David, Huntington, Paul, Williams, Peter, and Dobrowolski, Tom. "Re-appraising information seeking behaviour in a digital environment: bouncers, checkers, returnees and the like." *Journal of Documentation* 60 (1) (2004): 24-43. Collation of data from transaction log studies and questionnaire surveys of consumer health information platforms (Web sites, digital TV) provided a categorisation of information seeking behaviours. Emphasises that for many visits, visits were brief and shallow (bouncers). Analysis of the data suggests that as the number of sites proliferate, users are being 'spoilt for choice' and trust may decline as the number of health Web sites visited increases. Web site users are checking by moving horizontally across sites, and the checkers are assessing quickly by across site comparisons. It was difficult to find evidence of repeat visit behaviour, and while there may be return visits from loyal customers attracted to the brand of a particular site, these are outnumbered by the number of first time or occasional visitors. - [CJU]

Nisonger, E., Thomas. "Citation Autobiography: An investigation of ISI Database Coverage in Determining Author Citedness". *College & Research Libraries* Vol 65 (2) March 2004: 152 – 163. This article describes a case study within the Library & Information Science subject area investigating the completeness of the Institute of Scientific Information's citation data for the author. The methodology includes the author searching for his lifetime citation record through the ISI databases and Web search engines over a period of nearly 15 years. Whilst many are aware that the ISI databases should not be relied upon exclusively for a complete record of author citations, it is interesting to see the dimensions of the problem. The ISI databases located approximately 30 percent of the author's total citations and approximately 40 percent of his print citations. The databases were at their least useful when it came to demonstrating the international impact of the author's research, finding approximately 20 percent of his citations from outside the United States, and approximately 2 percent of items in languages other than English. - [AS]

Ronan, Jana, Patrick Reakes, and Gary Cornwell. "Evaluating Online Real-Time Reference in an Academic Library: Obstacles and Recommendations" *The Reference Librarian* 78/79 (2002/2003): 225-240. - It's about time we started developing ways to assess chat reference. That's the argument the authors present here. Chat reference systems are relatively wide-spread and there is growing comfort with the technology. The authors present a broad overview of the current state of assessment, going over both problems and possible solutions. Among their recommendations is using traditional methods of measuring reference performance where possible and treating user feedback and usage statistics with a grain of salt. I'd only add, that the guidelines ought to incorporate some mechanism for assessing the technology as well as the humans involved. In other words, whether the tools and options are truly living up to expectations. This is completely appropriate (though often overlooked) given the tech-driven nature of the service. Note, this article is only one of several on chat reference in this issue. Other articles include broad overviews of the service, case

studies and even tips. – [*LRK]

Somers, M. and Nieuwenhuysen, P. Finding bibliographic information about books on the WWW: an evaluation of available sources. *Online Information Review* Vol 28 (1) 33-42 The authors take a quantitative, (what is available in various bibliographic databases), and a qualitative, (what services do these databases provide), approach to evaluating bibliographic information provided by a range of online products including online catalogues of some libraries, a fee-based online book database and some Internet based bookshops. A detailed outline of the approach taken plus a detailed set of results is provided for each product evaluated. In conclusion they provide us with a list of search criteria, for example, title search and the most effective source found. Overall National Libraries were found to be outstanding resources for local publications (as one would hope) although the Library of Congress and the British Library catalogues were acclaimed for their local and International language coverage. The author's also suggest that with access to the Internet it is hard to justify paying for bibliographic information via subscription databases and that access to a mixture of National Library catalogues and commercial online bookstores would offer the same service. – [SM]

Spink, Amanda, Yang, Yin, Janse, Jim, Nykanen, Pirrko, Lorenc, Daniel P, Ozmutlu, Seda and Ozmutlu, H. Cenk. "A study of medical and health queries to web search engines." *Health Information and Libraries Journal* 21 (1) (2004): 44-51. Examines historical trends in the proportion of general web queries devoted to health queries. Data sets from Excite (May 2001, 10,000 queries) and AlltheWeb.com (February 2001, 10, 257 queries) were analysed, together with 'should' queries from an AskJeeves query log of 20 December 1999 (1792 'advice' queries in total). In comparison to earlier analyses of Excite queries in 1997 and 1999, the proportion of health related queries appears to be declining (9.5% of Excite queries in 1997, 7.5% in 2001). Possible reasons include an increase in the proportion of e-commerce type transactions, and an increase in the provision of more specialist health sites. - [CJU]

Spink, Amanda and Sollenberger, Michelle. "Elicitation purposes and tasks during mediated information search." *Journal of Documentation* 59 (6) (2004): 77-91. Develops a characterisation of elicitation purposes for search tasks during mediated information retrieval. Examined and coded elicitations during searches done by an experienced professional searchers for 30 information seekers at an US university. Each conversation (typically 2 hours long) was taped and transcribed for later coding and analysis. Examined the frequency of particular types of elicitation purpose, and compared the patterns of purpose for both the professional and the information seeker at various stages in the search. The major tasks were: 1) information problem modelling (and consequent search subtasks; 2) search system task; 3) interactive task and 4) social task. Each task featured a set of elicitation purposes. Discusses implications for information retrieval, and notes the benefits of mediated search services. - [CJU]

INTERNET USE

Gurstein, Michael. "Effective Use: A Community Informatics Strategy Beyond the Digital Divide" *First Monday* 8(12) (1 December 2003) (http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue8_12/gurstein/). - The author assesses the huge industries, both intellectual and cultural, that have sprung up to comment on the "digital divide". He evaluates the various concepts underlying the idea of this schism and its effect on the populace, and argues that it is mostly a marketing vehicle for technology firms and Internet service providers. He presents an alternative approach, which is to focus on "effective use." This idea is based in community informatics theory, which defines the Internet as a new force in culture and society that is not easily measured by conventional means. He argues that instead subsidizing technology providers, it would be more effective to tie the debate about the digital divide to real-world issues like health care delivery, the environment and concrete economic injustices. – [*TH]

Huffaker, David. "Spinning Yarns Around the Digital Fire: Storytelling and Dialogue Among Youth On the Internet" *First Monday* 9(1) (5 January 2004) (http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue9_1/huffaker/). - Leaping into the cultural-meme business from the cusp of a decidedly McLuhan-esque metaphor, the author argues that the practice of storytelling -- a key factor in early child development -- enjoys new life with digital media. He hypothesizes that online forums and virtual communities, including message boards, Weblogs and

instant messaging software, create important spaces for youth to express ideas and feelings, discuss issues and projects, and develop their social skills. Along the way, he invokes Paolo Friere's work on the nature of student-teacher relationships. He goes on to examine the importance of dialogue and storytelling children's learning, matching standard teaching practices with scenarios that utilize digital technologies. He concludes this interesting exploration with examples of Weblogs and instant message forums that illustrate the potential of the Internet as a community builder. – [*TH]

McIver, Jr., William, William F. Birdsall, and Merrilee Rasmussen. "The Internet and the Right to Communicate" *First Monday* 8(12) (1 December 2003) (http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue8_12/mciver/). - The authors assert that the emergence of the Internet challenges traditional conceptions of information rights, because it opens new territory that does not fit easily into the parameters that govern traditional media outlets. But the debate about information rights on the new medium tends to happen in a piecemeal fashion, governed by various stakeholders or professions with an interest in the process. They see a need to craft a more holistic framework that encompasses the entire spectrum of information rights, and the right to communicate in particular. To explore this concept, they define and differentiate between 'hard' and 'soft' laws. Hard laws are statutory and legislative, while soft laws are less binding, and exist in the form of charters, declarations and guiding principles. They examine how the right to communicate can be implemented in realistic terms, arguing that a grass roots movement is necessary to push society to create a process for defining information rights. – [*TH]

PRESERVATION

Christiansen, Donald. "Ephemera for Engineers and Scientists" *Today's Engineer (IEEE)* (February 2004) (<http://www.todaysengineer.org/feb04/backscatter.asp>). - It's not news to those of us in the information profession -- the fact that when it comes to Web-based resources, it's too often a case of here today, gone tomorrow. How many times have you spotted an interesting article while out surfing and, when you wanted to go back to it later on, you could no longer find it? Even if you saved the link, the link no longer works. While this is an annoyance when it comes to our everyday web browsing, it can be a disaster for research and scholarship. "Many technical articles now include references to Internet addresses, as opposed to hard-copy resources," the author correctly points out. But when authors or readers attempt to access these URLs at a later time, they have effectively vanished into cyberspace. The author cites a study done at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center in which researchers checked articles that appeared in *Science*, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and the *New England Journal of Medicine*. They found "that 3.8 percent of Internet references were inactive three months after journal publication, 10 percent after 15 months and 13 percent after 27 months." While there are ways of tracking these things down after the fact -- the author gives some suggestions, most would agree that this is a tremendous waste of time and energy. A solution, he says, may come in the form of "Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs), the Uniform Resource Name (URN) syntax or the Persistent Uniform Resource Locator (PURL)." – [*SK]

Museums and the Web 2004 Toronto, ON: Archives and Museums Informatics, 2004. (<http://www.archimuse.com/mw2004/sessions/>). - A number of the presentations at this conference are online in HTML as contributed papers. Although many of the topics are perhaps of interest mostly to museums or archives, there are other topics (e.g., building accessible web sites) that cross those boundaries. – [*RT]

VIRTUAL LIBRARIES

Cullen, Rowena. "Evaluating digital libraries in the health sector. Part 2: measuring impacts and outcomes." *Health Information and Libraries Journal* 21 (1) (2004): 3-13. Examines some of the evaluation models used for digital libraries in the health sector, such as the NeLH (UK), and CIAP (Australia). Discusses the advantages and disadvantages of the randomised controlled trial model, and concludes that a mixed model, combining quantitative and qualitative methods is more valuable. Relates some of the discussions for the MLA (US) model, which is based on the balanced scorecard. Evaluation of digital health information systems needs to take into account the way the systems fit into the users' world, and this may mean that the evaluation takes into account timeliness, sufficiency, technical performance dimensions, benefits (and user effort). - [CJU]

Thinking Beyond Digital Libraries - Designing the Information Strategy for the Next Decade: Proceedings of the 7th International Bielefeld Conference Bielefeld, Germany: Bielefeld University Library, February 2004. (<http://conference.ub.uni-bielefeld.de/proceedings/>). - The presentations from this conference are available in PowerPoint format. A few also have the speakers' remarks available in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format. Speakers include university professors, academic library directors, and high-level managers of library-related non-profits and commercial companies (e.g., Jay Jordan, President and CEO of OCLC). - [*RT]

WEB DESIGN

METS Opening Day Washington, DC: Library of Congress, October 2003. (http://www.loc.gov/standards/mets/od1_ppts.html). - A number of the PowerPoint presentations from the first "METS Opening Day" for the emerging standard Metadata Encoding and Transmission Standard (METS) are available. Topics include an introduction to METS, building METS by hand, METS profiles, METS repositories, and METS case studies. A second METS Opening Day will be occurring on April 8 and 9 at Stanford University, with those presentations likely to be available shortly thereafter at the METS web site. - [*RT]

Novljan, Silva and Žumer, Maja. "Web pages of Slovenian public libraries: evaluation and guidelines." *Journal of Documentation* 60 (1) (2004): 62-76. Evaluates the content and quality of 28 Slovenian public library Web pages. The work was done by students of the Department of Library and Information Science and Book Studies (University of Ljubljana). Results indicate that improvements could generally be made in presentation of the mission and general information (shorter and more up-to-date); information about collections (better description, particularly of the electronic resources); communication with the library (particularly online reference, reservation and feedback services). Presents guidelines on the content and organisation of public library Web pages. - [CJU]

Quinn, Laura S. "Designing for Limited Resources" *Boxes and Arrows* (12 January 2004) (http://www.boxesandarrows.com/archives/designing_for_limited_resources.php). - *Boxes and Arrows* is an online journal. The stated mission is "the definitive source for the complex task of bringing architecture and design to the digital landscape." In the January 2004 issue, Laura Quinn, a technology strategy and information architecture consultant has developed an article that brings the web developer into the real world of cost constraints. She states that web artisans should develop websites the way that IKEA builds furniture. The company "designs the price tag first." Towards the end of the article she includes the IKEA vision as stated on their website: <http://www.ikea.com> Paragraph headings include: "Understanding your limitations," "Long-term impacts," and "Guerilla requirement definition." Within each heading the author further includes key budgetary issues that have to be addressed. There is nothing revolutionary in this article. It is however, a sobering checklist of important issues to be considered by those starting out. - [*MG]

Wells, Catherine A. "Location, Location, Location: The Importance of Placement of the Chat Request Button." *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 43(2) (Winter 2003): 133-137. - Concerned that Chat Reference wasn't being used as much as expected, librarians at Case Western Reserve began experimenting with the size, shape, location and frequency of placement of the Chat Reference button on their site. They eventually found, perhaps to no one's surprise, that usage went up if the button appeared on the most heavily trafficked pages (home page, catalog page, database page). High on their wish list now is getting the button on vendor (i.e. subscription database) pages as well. - [*LRK]

Contributors to Current Cites * :

Charles W. Bailey, Jr., Margaret Gross, Terry Huwe, Shirl Kennedy, Leo Robert Klein, Jim Ronningen

Contributors:

Chris Awre, David Bevington, Peter Chapman, Sarah Clarke, Catherine Ebenezer, Jonathan Gordon-Till, Dave Huddart, Robert Hughes, Linda Kerr, Marty Kesselman, Ida Kwan, Penny Leach, Shona McTavish, Shirley Parker-Munn, Liz Reiner, Lesley Robinson, John Ross, Ann Smith, Christine Urquhart, James Watson.

Meetings Report

Current legal issues in information work: key areas and what you need to know

Seminar organised by the UK Online User Group
Belfast 6 April 2004

Thanks to Easyjet it was much cheaper for me to fly from Edinburgh to Belfast than to London. Also I was born in Belfast, so I was quite happy to attend this seminar, which sounded very relevant to my work. The venue sounded very modern but in fact was previously a school and we sat in what had been a classroom with a blackboard and children's paintings on the wall! However the tables and chairs were full size and we had all the modern technology (for PowerPoint presentations) as well.

Charles Oppenheim, Professor of Information Science, Loughborough University, started the day talking about "Copyright and Database Rights". He admitted at the beginning that it was a "fast whiz through", assuming little knowledge of the legislation, and he packed a lot into his one and a half hours! He started with the basic principles of copyright and told us not to confuse it with physical ownership. There is a tension between owners and users and it is important to get the right balance. Copyright is a negative right, which stops or prevents people from copying original work without permission. He went through categories of work, restricted acts and infringement and emphasized the difference between fair dealing and library privilege (the first is copying yourself, the second is asking librarian to do it). NB: e-signatures are still not accepted yet on declaration forms. Moral rights (e.g. in newspapers) and e-copyright concerns came next.

He then looked at current issues and recent developments, with database and web issues and linking. The new EU 2001 Directive was mentioned. I was particularly interested in the changes and interpretation of "commercial and non-commercial research" which is not defined in the legislation. He talked about technological protection systems which can cause problems for access to information. The Copyright (Visually Impaired Persons) Act 2002 was discussed. The importance to librarians of reading licenses carefully and managing them was stressed.

Although I knew quite a bit about copyright it was very useful revision to go over it again. A lot of information was covered in the time, and a whole day could have been allocated to it.

After a break, which was very welcome with huge home made assorted scones, Laurence Bebbington, Law Librarian and Information Services Copyright Officer, University of Nottingham, kicked off with "Freedom of Information: public access to recorded information". I am responsible for this in my

organisation and although the Scottish legislation only appeared in 2002 all of the UK is going "live" from 1 January 2005. Laurence reviewed the Act, with requests for information, responding, exemptions, Publication schemes, regulation and enforcement. He then compared the FOIA 2000 with the DPA 1998, which I found very useful.

A Question and Answer session followed, including, under FOI, the thorny subject of access to Council minutes. Having just completed our Publication Scheme (for a government agency) I know it is difficult to change the culture of organisations to become far more transparent and accountable.

After lunch Professor Oppenheim ran through the eight principles of Data Protection. I didn't know much about this and wanted to know a lot more. I found the examples that Charles gave made it a lot easier to grasp them. Cases like the Soham murders have brought DP into the news a lot more, and illustrate that not everyone interprets the Act correctly (e.g. 5th principle - "shall not be kept for longer than is necessary", but the police should have kept them). Examples of security (7th principle) included not having a VDU with borrower details visible to others in a library. Personal data was defined with the rights of data subjects and data controllers, and transfer of data. Questions followed, e.g. how long to retain references for job applicants.

This session was followed by Laurence's talk on recent developments in DP. This was fascinating as he gave specific court cases. In one example, Durant v Financial Services Authority 2003, the Court of Appeal took very narrow definitions of "personal data" and "relevant filing system" in the Act, redaction (blocking out) of documents was justified, and none of the Information Commissioners guidance was referred to. A result of this was that the IC had to review and amend his guidance. The court cases show that the only important interpretation is what the Court of Law decides!

There is now an increased public awareness of DP, and increasing LIS areas of impact such as contracts/licensing (with lists of users), sharing databases, FOI, Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act etc. have important DP issues.

After a tea break, Laurence launched into "Disability Discrimination - what you really need to know". He introduced the DD Act 1995 and went over the meanings of definitions used. He told us that to discriminate against someone is to treat them differently, but that it may be OK if it can be justified. Examples were given in LIS such as access to buildings, furniture, IT equipment and web sites.

Our last session of the day was about managing risks

and developing policies for information work. Risks are everywhere, such as copyright infringement, unlicensed software use, illegal distribution and defamation by email and unauthorised data disclosure. We have to identify, prioritise, manage, monitor and review policies (e.g. disclaimers in all university emails going out). We were warned if putting up posters to be careful of wording (use "Under the Act you may be able to ...", rather than "you cannot do this..."). If in doubt take legal advice!

Wow. It was a long day. Both speakers were excellent. They were extremely knowledgeable and provided a great double act, but there was a lot of information to take in. We certainly got our money's worth and learnt a lot. I definitely found it very useful and it is an area that is increasingly important to all information professionals.

Lynda Clark
Scottish Agricultural Science Agency

Books waiting for review

The following books from Facet Publishing are awaiting reviewers - please contact Peter Chapman if you would like to do one (or more...)

Chowdhury, G G introduction to modern information retrieval 2nd ed.