New-look Bennetts

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There is advice on researching and finding information as well as discussion on how to use computers and the internet to improve library services...

Library supplier James Bennett Pty Ltd has released a new version of its website at http://www.bennett.com.au/. It offers access to the searchable James Bennett Online (JBO) database for online ordering. Additionally, it offers selections (updated weekly) of forthcoming titles, for example, reference material for both academic and public libraries, and lists of new fiction and non-fiction for public libraries. There is also a list of specials.

Aussie Amazon?
OzBooks, a new online bookshop, has a little of the look and feel of the successful Amazon.com, but it is Australian-based so prices and delivery charges are quoted in Australian dollars. You can search by author or by word. OzBooks offers discounts on Australian recommended retail prices. The site guarantees the safety of all online transactions. Find it at http://www.ozbooks.com/.

Web by Anon?
If you want to be anonymous online, the American Association for the Advancement of Science is on your side. In its recently released study on online anonymity, *Anonymous communication policies for the internet* [http://www.aaas.org/spp/anon/], the Association, which published the prestigious journal *Science*, concluded that the benefits of online anonymity outweigh the disadvantages, and that regulating anonymity will put brakes on the free exchange of information.

ExLibris
Marylaine Block gave up her day job and started the e-zine *ExLibris* to help librarians use the web more effectively. There is advice on researching and finding information as well as discussion on how to use computers and the internet to improve library services. Material is added all the time and the archive is searchable. Find it at http://marylaine.com/exlibris/index.html. You can now request to have *ExLibris* sent to you by e-mail.

Those hard-to-find publishers
Small and independent publishers have banded together to establish a web presence at Publish Australia [http://www.publishaustralia.com.au/]. This national network of publishers, formed in 1994, provides an online catalogue which you can browse by date, publisher or subject. You can also buy online.

Publishers worldwide
Acquisitions staff, collection development staff and serials librarians will delight in AcqWeb's international directory of publishers and vendors [http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/law/acqs/pubr.html]. AcqWeb links to the websites and provides the e-mail addresses of publishers and vendors used by libraries worldwide, as well as providing other library-related links.

Just the Australian material, please
OzSearch is a portal for the Australian Web. Only sites in the .au domain are included in the directory, so it is a boon for those who want Australian-only destinations. Similar in concept to portals such as Yahoo, OzSearch provides browseable categories and a search tool for the site, as well as Australian news headlines and weather. It is mercifully free of the plethora of blinking ads, pop-up windows, or pushy graphics that the other portals cannot resist. Find it at http://www.ozsearch.com.au/.

Australian government directory
The Australian Government Directory at http://www.agd.com.au/ is a commercial guide to Australian government (though most information seemed to be freely available at the site). It provides listings and links to federal, state and local governments, as well as further links on Australian business, tourism, indigenous issues, education and organisations. A welcome feature is a scope note explaining exactly what you can expect to find in each section, though there are some drawbacks in the presentation of material.

Life before the web
A new report from the Digital Library Federation explores options for salvaging quantitative data stored in technically obsolete formats and its associated paper documentation. *Preserving the whole: a two-track approach to rescuing social science data and metadata* is a report on a Yale University project to transfer into currently accessible formats public option survey data collected and encoded in the 1970s. *Preserving the whole* is available on the website of the Digital Library Federation at http://www.clir.org/diglib/dlfhomepage.htm or in print form from the Council on Library and Information Resources for $US15, including postage and handling. See the website at http://www.clir.org/ for details.

One for the homework brigade
The State Library of New South Wales has launched a new digital archive on Matthew Flinders at http://www.slnsw.gov.au/flinders/. The archive is sponsored by James Fairfax, and new material will continue to be added over the next couple of years. It includes digitised versions of Flinders' diary (very readable handwriting) and is a very attractive and easy to navigate site.

History of the 'net
The recent airing of the television series *Nerds 2.0.1 — a brief history of the internet* seems to have sparked interest in internet history. Sites have been popping up all over the place. The internet Society's *Brief history of the internet, Version 3.1* [http://www.isoc.org/internet/history/brief.html] includes a lot of highly-technical information and also provides links for those who want to go on to find out more.

All about Bill
Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft, has a new personal site which features biographical information, transcripts of his speeches, essays, and columns, and information about his book,

Business @ the speed of thought. Gates also outlines his philanthropic concerns — libraries are numbered among his grant beneficiaries. There is also a detailed timeline on the development of Microsoft [http://www.microsoft.com/billgates/].

Local studies conference

Post-haste the millennium: opportunities and challenges in local studies is the title of the 2nd National Local Studies Conference organised by the Local Studies National Section of ALIA. The conference will be held on 12–13 November 1999, at the Rose and Crown Hotel, Guildford, WA. The conference aims to enhance the knowledge and skills of local history enthusiasts and to promote understanding and collaboration between individuals and organisations committed to the preservation of Australia's cultural heritage. For more information, contact Jenni Woodroffe, Phone/fax: 08 9367 4759 or e-mail: jenni@omen.net.au.

Australian archives...

Finding Australian public records is a lot easier now that the *Directory of archives in Australia* is online [http://www.asap.unimelb.edu.au/asa/directory/]. You can search the directory, browse alphabetically or by state, and find links to other archives and finding aids on the world wide web. While you may not be able to search for records online, there is considerable information about services and publications.

... and British public records

The PRO Catalogue Online [http://www.pro.gov.uk/finding/default.htm] is a new online catalogue from the United Kingdom Public Record Office. It provides access to over eight million document references. You can browse the record collections by the alphabetical code of the department or court that created them or search by up to three keywords.

Partnerships and paradigms

The ALIA Reference and Information Services Section conference and exhibition will be held on 6–8 September 1999, at the Sydney Hilton. The conference, *RAISS 1999 & beyond: Partnerships and paradigms* aims to provide an opportunity for librarians and information professionals to explore reference and service issues for the new millennium. For more information, visit the website at http://www.csu.edu.au/special/raiss99/.

Who's online?

Who's online, who's not, and who probably is not going to be is the subject of *Falling through the net — defining the digital divide* [http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/digitaldivide/], the third in a series of reports from the United States Department of Commerce on the use of computers and the internet in the United States. The two earlier reports can also be found at the site [http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/digitaldivide/].

On company business

Hoover's Online has created a partnership with the Dow Jones Publications Library (DJPL). When you search Hoover's [http://www.hoovers.com/] for company information, you receive the Hoover's company capsule free (fuller profiles have to be paid for). You are also offered the option to search the Dow Jones Publications Library (in the 'For researchers' section). Follow the link to see selected resources from the DJPL on the company. The results from the DJPL identify the articles (full title, newspaper/journal name, and date). Unless you want to pay US$2.95 per article, you would need to track down the articles elsewhere. The DJPL currently indexes 6000 publications, so with its free search capability, it is a useful addition to business search tools.

Country comparisons

The Human Development Report for 1999 has just been released on the web at http://www.undp.org/hdro/contents.html and would be useful for any librarian or researcher wanting background information or statistics on the effects of globalisation. The report ranks 174 countries on quality-of-life indicators such as life expectancy, wealth, and literacy. Much of the report is in .pdf format only, (for which you would need the Adobe Acrobat viewer software, available free from http://www.adobe.com/). The contents pages should be accessible in any browser.

Yet another search tool

Searchpower.com was recently launched at http://www.searchpower.com/. The tool claims to link to over 1700 different specialised search tools in over sixty categories. They might be needed, since a recent *Nature* report states that even the largest search engine (Northern Light which claims to index 160 million pages) is only covering sixteen per cent of the web. I am a HotBot [http://www.hotbot.com/] fan from way back, as I like the straight-forward customisation offered in the advanced search screen, but many trainers seem to be switching to Google. This search tool, developed at Stanford University, uses link analysis to select the results it considers most relevant to your search. See for yourself at http://www.google.com/.

Getting online

From Ohio State University comes *Writing for the web: A primer for librarians* [http://bones.med.ohio-state.edu/primer/]. The document is intended to be a general guide to web content creation, rather than a detailed guide to HTML. It is based on the premise that most librarians now have to know the basics (including the jargon) of designing and creating documents and resources for the web.

Gumshoe?

The Investigator's Toolbox at http://www.virtuallibrarian.com/it/ seems more private eye than librarian in flavour, but it aims to provide useful websites for research into individuals or business intelligence. The sites it links to are annotated so you can easily be selective about what links you choose to follow. ■