

Infobroker



Kerry Webb

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Infobroker is a list hosted by the Business Research and Information Service, Queensland at the State Library of Queensland, and is managed by Julie Sibthorpe. The list is open to brokers of all types, corporate librarians, independent information professionals and consultants as well as interested people from the online industry. Information about the list, together with instructions on how to subscribe is at <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/maillist/mlinfobr.htm>.

Web Indexing — honourable mention

I mentioned in my last column that I would be reviewing some of the good entries in the Australian Society of Indexers Web Indexing competition. This month's feature is the Australian Institute of Alpine Studies at <http://www.environment.gov.au/environment/bg/alpine/>. I like it because it tells you clearly what it is, it looks good, it is well organised and it has Dublin Core metadata. It has also won quite a few awards.

Netscape FAQ

The people at Netscape have developed a pretty good product, but it seems that they are no better than the industry average when it comes to documentation. How many times have you looked in vain for an explanation of a feature (or a bug) in their online Help facility? Well, you can try another source of assistance at <http://www.ufaq.org>. This is the 'Unofficial Netscape FAQ' and is the work of a collection of volunteers who have collected frequently asked questions from Netscape-oriented newsgroups. It also has links to a collection of other FAQs which might provide the answers to your questions.

MARC Y2K compliance

The question has been asked if the MARC format complies with Y2K requirements. LC maintains that the record format itself is compliant, as the date fields in it have no chance of conflict with earlier dates. Of course, this does not remove the necessity for libraries to check their systems to make sure that all programs using the MARC format will not cause problems. Details of the LC explanation are at <http://lcweb.loc.gov/marc/yr2000.html>, and <http://lcweb.loc.gov/marc/lccn.html> details their interim and proposed changes to the LC Control Number.

Meanwhile OCLC's statement of the Y2K problem is at <http://www.oclc.org/oclc/menu/y2k.htm>.

English as she is spoke

The alt.usage.english newsgroup is the setting for interminable discussions on various aspects of our premier language (even if many of the contributors are from the USA). The FAQ that has been produced from the newsgroup is a goldmine of trivia relating to usage, punctuation, word and phrase origins,

word puzzles, and hardy perennials like 'Does the next millennium begin in 2000 or 2001?' (Hint: does it really matter?) See the FAQ at <http://www.faqs.org/faqs/alt-usage-english-faq/>.

New books on web publishing

In my ceaseless quest to learn more about creating good Web pages, I recently found 'Philip and Alex's guide to web publishing' at <http://photo.net/wtr/thebook/index.html>. The author describes it as 'a catalogue of the mistakes that I've made while building near 100 websites over five years'. I particularly recommend Chapter 5 'Learn to program HTML in 21 minutes'. He writes with humour and clarity and has some really good stories to tell.

Another book that I recommend is *Raggett on HTML 4* by Dave Raggett and a few others. A review is at <http://www.exakta.ac.uk/html4398.htm>.

Web-based exhibitions

For a great example of how to do an exhibition on the web, check out the Virtual Museum of Arts El Pais in Uruguay at <http://www.diarioelpais.com/muva2/>. It has the look and feel of Douglas Adams' *Starship Titanic* (without the bots with attitude) and guides you effortlessly through the galleries, with the ability to zoom in and out to examine the works along the way. It also has biographies and bibliographies for the individual artists.

New conservation e-list

Concirc is an Australian e-mail group formed to promote the discussion of preservation, conservation, circulation, access to collections in libraries, museums, art galleries, government departments and small collections everywhere. The e-list is managed by Gillian Harrison from the QUT Library and is unmoderated. To subscribe, send a message to mailserv@qut.edu.au with SUBSCRIBE CONCIRC EXIT in the body of the message.

Treasures of the BL

I am conscious that when reporting on digital library initiatives, it is the United States that gets all the kudos. Well folks, that is where most of the action is. So I am pleased to note that the British Library has put some of its Digital Treasures online. To see them, go to <http://www.bl.uk/> and then select Digital Library / Treasures. Well done, the Poms.

Open Source software

You may not be sure what it means, but 'you're soaking in it'. Open Source software, such as the Linux operating system, the Apache Web server or the sendmail e-mail server are used widely across the 'net, and its popularity causes quite a few rumbles of concern in the boardrooms of commercial software enterprises. Now it is the turn of

library systems developers. The website at <http://www.med.yale.edu/library/oss4lib> contains details of the first few projects and how to subscribe to the oss4lib-list e-list.

Report on digital image distribution

A special report examining the costs of distributing digital images to the university community has just been released. *The cost of digital image distribution: the social and economic implications of the production, distribution, and usage of image data* is the result of a twenty-two-month study at UC Berkeley. This project created a collection of images and descriptive information (primarily in the areas of cultural studies, art history, history, and photography) from a variety of museums and delivered it digitally to university users of campus networks.

The study found that it will be a long time before digital image repositories will be able to deliver the critical mass of images needed for instruction and research; that the higher education community is enthusiastic about providing access to such information but there are many impediments to widespread adoption of these systems; and that the anticipated shift from analogue slide libraries to licensed digital images represents a shift from ownership to access through ongoing subscription. This last aspect concerns both administrators and academics.

The complete report is available online in both html and PDF format at <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Imaging/Databases/1998mellon>.

Something special

Someone at Leiden University in the Netherlands has done a great job in putting together a collection of special search engines, including fee-based services, dictionaries and services for many subjects. It is at <http://www.leidenuniv.nl/ub/biv/specials.htm>.

Oz Lit texts

'The Australian literature database: a collection of 18th, 19th and early 20th century texts' is available at <http://setis.library.usyd.edu.au/ozlit>. The collection consists of nearly ninety full-text Australian literary, historical and political works, which have been SGML-encoded according to the Guidelines for Electronic Text Encoding and Interchange (TEI2). They are fully searchable for keywords and phrases, and can be browsed by the names of their authors.

Online Law journal

The Asia Pacific Intellectual Property Law Institute at Murdoch University has launched the *Digital Technology Law Journal* at <http://www.law.murdoch.edu.au/dtlj/index.html>. It is an online periodical, publishing refereed articles, comments and reviews on intellectual property law issues concerning the digital environment. Contributions are being

sought for the second issue of DTLJ and the deadline for submissions is 31 March 1999.

Publishers directory

When you want to check on which publisher is currently owned by whom, try the ACQWeb *Alphabetic directory of publishers, vendors and related links on the world wide web* at http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/law/acqs/pub_alph/a.html. And what is it about acquisitions librarians and cats?

OzSearch

The *OzSearch internet guide* has been officially released and can be reached at <http://www.ozsearch.com.au>. The guide now indexes over 5000 Australian websites and plans to increase this to 25 000 sites by the middle of 1999. It is not a web search engine, but offers a service similar to Yahoo so that you can either browse through the hierarchical index or search it based on the name or description of the sites.

The song has ended, but the malady lingers on

I do not completely subscribe to the notion that information wants to be free, but I do regret the passing of the International Lyrics Server at <http://www.lyrics.ch/>. It appears that the music industry complained about the copyright status of the 100 000 song lyrics on the server and the database has been closed down, pending some sort of resolution. It is a pity that they did this, as I doubt that many sales of sheet music were lost because of this terrific service. Let's hope that they can sort something out.

California Digital Library

The California Digital Library (CDL) has opened its public digital doors (or should we say 'portals') by making available an integrated web gateway to digital collections, services and tools at <http://www.cdlib.org>. It complements the physical libraries on the nine campuses of the University of California system by focusing on selecting, building, managing, preserving, and providing access to shared collections of high-quality digital materials for the University and its partners.

The CDL comprises browsing and searching tools to more than 2000 electronic journals, and more than 3000 inventories or finding aids for special and archival collections throughout the state, along with many journal abstracting and indexing databases and reference databases.

Roots

In case you wondered where it all came from, 'Netizens: On the history and impact of Usenet and the internet' traces the development of the 'net and particularly Usenet from its beginnings to the start of its great commercial impact in the mid-90s. There are links to various versions and some reviews at <http://www.columbia.edu/~hauben/netbook/>. ■

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The ALIA home pages and the ALIA web service, ALIANet, can be found at the following URL:
<http://www.alia.org.au/>

**SAVE YOURSELF
THE TROUBLE OF
TYPING THESE
URLS!**

This column (with associated hyperlinks) is on ALIANet, and has the URL of <http://www.alia.org.au/incite/www/>

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Contributions and suggestions for this column are always welcome. Please e-mail Kerry Webb at kerry.webb@alianet.alia.org.au or via the ALIA National Office, incite@alia.org.au