Give my regards to Broadway

Kerry Webb

In the ongoing series of honourable mentions from the AUSSI Web Indexing competition, let me introduce Pathfinder from the University of Sydney's Law School. One of the things I like about the site is the listing of useful texts and journals as well as the obligatory hotlinks. In each of the various aspects of the law, there is an introduction, notes on legislation, cases, how to use the catalogue and so on. Although some of the information is specific to the university, it would be a good starting place for any student of legal matters.

A view of Online online
If you want a summary of the Online 99 conference, there is a glowing review at http://www.infotoday.com/newsbreaks/nb0301-1.htm. The reviewer was quite impressed with the conference, with Sydney and with our very own Neil McLean.

Lauds to the rings
Some time ago I spoke about Web Rings. They are still around and they are growing in popularity. If you want to explore the concept, try http://www.webring.org/. Apart from explaining what rings are all about, the site has a search engine to find rings on particular subjects, which is not a bad way to start when you are looking for information on broad topics.

When a search engine may not be what you want
I had a need recently to check on some of the crucial events surrounding the birth of the internet and prepared to use my trusty search engines, until I realised that 'internet' and 'history' might not be useful keywords because they are so common. Then I remembered that this was one of the reasons why indexes like Yahoo had been invented. A quick trip through the hierarchy found http://millennium.cs.ucla.edu/LK/Inet/birth.html.

Financial censorship?
In one of the more startling developments in Net regulation, the Australian Securities and Investments Commission was able to close down an online chat room in February. The reason given was that the site (http://www.chimes.com.au/) was not being run by a licensed investment adviser. I had a look at the site's archive to see the tenor of the discussions there, and it seemed similar to the sort of talk that you would find in a pub or a tea room. The forum re-opened after a few weeks with the warning that 'the publisher advises that the posting of securities reports is not allowed.'

A new way of looking at it
Researchers are working to represent knowledge in all sorts of ways. One of the more interesting ones in recent times has been the Hyperbolic Tree from Inxight at http://www.inxight.com/Content/243.html. They have a few examples like the LC website and the Louvre where you can move around the information hierarchy until you come to a 'leaf' which is a hotlink to real data. I like it, but I'm not sure what the average user will make of it.

... and another
And on the subject of interfaces, the Multimedia Library at IRCAM in France has modelled its public space in 3D using VRML. You will need a plug-in (which is freely available) and a later version of Netscape or IE, and then you can travel around the library, looking at shelves to see what is there. The subjects are displayed beside the VRML window and by clicking on them, you can see what is in that part of the collection. They plan to add digital objects to this collection so that you will be able to experience images, sounds and video as well as the bibliographic references. See it all at http://mediatheque.ircam.fr/infos/vrml/index-e.html.

Eternal vigilance, unfortunately
In the January 1999 issue of *American Libraries*, Karen Schneider writes about protecting public workstations from unauthorised meddling, and referred to the excellent security documents from the California State Library's Infopeople project. Have a look at http://www.infopeople.org/Security/ to get some good ideas, not just from Infopeople but from other libraries' experiences.

Film cataloguing
The Library of Congress is currently coordinating the revision of *Archival moving image materials: a cataloging manual* (AMIM), in conjunction with the Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA). The period for comments is now closed, but it is worth reading for anyone interested in cataloguing multimedia collections. The LC draft is at http://lcweb.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/amimcovr.html.

Find that word!
For lovers of the English language — especially its oddities — try the Word Detective on the Web, the online version of a newspaper column that answers readers' questions about words and language. The column is written by Evan Morris and appears in newspapers in the United States, Mexico and Japan. The web version has a comprehensive index of back issues, and links to explanations of the origins of all the old chestnuts (except 'chestnut', strangely enough). See it at http://www.greenapple.com/~words1/index.html.

Mura online
Mura, a Ngunnawal word meaning pathway, is the name of the catalogue of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (http://www.aiatsis.gov.au) which is now accessible through the internet. Apart from the details of pictorial collections, films and videos, recorded sound collections, manuscripts, rare books, language items and pamphlets, one of the main features of the catalogue is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index, comprising more than 36 000 biographical references to published materials held in the Li-

brary. The index is a research tool much valued by those who are tracing their family history.

Museum list
There is a new listserv called the 'electricmuse', intended for all those interested in web development issues for cultural organisations in Australia. The list has been established after many requests from museum workers for snippets of information and URLs to be more freely available to the Australian community. To subscribe send a message to listcaster@amol.org.au with subscribe electricmuse in the body of the message.

Digital library research
The British Library Research and Innovation Centre (BLRIC) has commissioned a review of digital library research, with the aim of assessing progress which has been made in recent years in programs throughout the world. They are inviting comments and suggestions from interested individuals, groups and organisations. Full details are at http://www.bl.uk/services/ric/awards/digit.html. The site also provides an interesting list of projects that have been funded by the BLRIC.

Don't leave home without it
The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) has overhauled its Web site to include features that make it easy to get valuable, accurate and timely information about quarantine and inspection issues. The site now includes current news and events, facts for travellers, information for importers and exporters of animals and organic produce, quarantine and inspection laws, guidelines for industries, government reports and general information about AQIS. See it at http://www.aqis.gov.au.

European treasures
The Conference of European National Librarians has a new virtual exhibition with descriptions and images of treasures from all over Europe, going back as far as the 8th century. They have selected some of the most impressive artefacts in their collections, like rare and precious books, illuminated manuscripts, book bindings, drawings, prints and decorated papers. There is a *Gutenberg Bible*, the *Koran* in silk, the famous *Codex Gigas* and work from various composers and artists, making a small but impressive representation of European cultural heritage.

It is organised so that you can look at the treasures from a particular country, or by format or creator, whatever their present location. There's also a chronological index, making it possible to view these European cultural highlights from century to century. The exhibition is available at five servers across Europe, including http://renki.helsinki.fi/gabriel/treasures/entree.html.

Colorado digitization project
The Colorado Digitization Project (http://coloradodigital.coalliance.org) is a collabora-tive venture between Colorado's archives, historical societies, libraries, and museums to provide integrated access to the 'unique and special resources' held in and by these institutions. One broadly useful feature (see 'digital project resources' on the main page) is an online digital toolbox which helps administrators with the questions that they should ask in the initial planning stages of a digital project, as well as giving links to general information on digital projects, information on the technical aspects of digitisation, and suggestions for funding sources.

New government web pages
The Commonwealth Government Entry Point — the introduction to government information — has had a makeover and I do not think they have really improved it. Each department has a link to its home page and also to the search facility for its site. The result is quite cluttered as well as a little confusing for people wanting to find the agencies within each portfolio. See for yourself at http://fed.gov.au.

Librarians' resource centre
The Toronto Chapter of the Special Libraries Association has put together the Librarians' Resource Centre at http://www.sla.org/chapter/ctor/toolbox/resource/index.html. It is a compilation of internet resources organised for the practising librarian, arranged within three sections — serving our clients, professional development, and technical services. I like the collection of links to Web-related material in the technical services area. This site is worth book-marking.

Electronic publishing
The *New York Review of Books* has examined electronic publishing in academia in an article titled 'The new age of the book' [http://www.nybooks.com/nyrev/WWWfeatdisplay.cgi?19990318005F]. Although it is a little sensational (it compares the ten million hits on the NYPL Website with the 50 000 books requested in its main reading room, and it quotes Bill Gates as a 'pioneer of the Web lifestyle'!) it does take a broad look at the potential impact of electronic publication as a means of addressing some of the challenges faced by libraries and academics.

European visual archive
The European Visual Archive (EVA) began in December 1998 and will run for two years. Partly funded by the European Commission, it will involve both private and public sectors to stimulate the use of multimedia information content by exploiting resources in public archives. Initially it will mean that photographs from 1900 to the present (initially from Antwerp and London) will be digitised and displayed on the Web. The project will provide solutions to language barriers, it will use appropriate search and navigation methods, and employ direct charging systems. The site is at http://www.eva-eu.org/. ∎