Webb's web

Kerry Webb

Breaking new ground

Congratulations to Colin Griffith and the team from ABC Multimedia for their pioneering work in integrating TV and the Net. The first episode of the series *Frontier* was broadcast early in March. The following evening there was an on-line discussion (courtesy of the type of software used for WebChat) where listeners sent questions and comments to the show's producers and other commentators on indigenous affairs. There was a moderator to ensure that the discussion remained on-topic, and the questions were referred to the appropriate panellist.

The discussions have been archived at the ABC site at http://www.abc.net.au/frontier/ and there are plans to continue this sort of activity with other programs.

Metadata down under

Many of the world's experts in the field of Metadata came to Canberra from 3-6 March for the 4th Dublin Core Metadata Workshop, jointly organised by OCLC, the Distributed Systems Technology Centre (DSTC), and the National Library. All of the documents relating to the Workshop can be found at http://www.dstc.edu.au/DC4/

For a more general overview of metadata developments, you can go to the IFLANET Metadata page at http://www.nlc- bnc.ca/ifla/II/metadata.htm

A warning

There has been coverage in the press about an insidious scam, but in case you missed it. A particular site in North America offered adult pictures, but you had to download special software to view them. However, when the software was loaded into your computer, it turned the volume of your modem down, disconnected your computer from your ISP and reconnected you to a provider in far-off Moldova, racking up large phone bills.

It sounds unlikely, but it has been reported on reputable sites, so beware. Don't load any software onto your computer unless you're sure about the source.

Who was the first, the biggest, the fastest?

The Info Connect List of Library Records has now been launched at http://www.users.dircon.co.uk/~kush/Page1.htm. Actually it's part of a larger operation consisting of an extensive directory of library-related information, but it's the collection of library records that catches the eye.

Funny — there's no entry for the National Library of Australia as the first national library to have a Web site, but they do have a list of famous people who once worked in libraries.

For lovers of books

Lovers of trivia will be familiar with Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, a cornucopia of arcane but fascinating information. Well, it's now on the internet at http://www.bibliomania.com/Reference/PhraseAndFable/index.html

Other work at the Bibliomania site includes the *Collected poems of William Blake, The complete works of Lewis Carroll, The wealth of nations, Anna Karenina* — all in HTML format.

One step forward - two steps back

The battle against unwanted e-mail continues. A US district court in Ohio has granted a preliminary injunction barring a firm from sending unsolicited e-mail to the subscribers of Compuserve. Compuserve had tried to block the messages but was foiled by the firm falsifying the point-of-origin information on the e-mail and by configuring its network servers to conceal its actual Internet domain name.

However, the firm in question (Cyber Promotions Inc) has started to advertise a bulk e-mail service which will permit customers to 'send their solicitations to hundreds, thousands or millions of Internet users across the world'. The president of Cyber Promotions says that 'For the first time in history, mass marketing on the Internet will be determined by economics rather than 'netiquette.'' I hope not.

... and relief from Web advertising

If you don't want to have all those ads and blinking banners on your screen as you move around the Web, relief is near (or at least getting nearer).

Junkbuster from http://www.junkbusters.com is a filter for Web browsers. It blocks requests for URLs (typically banner ads) that match its blocklist. It also deletes cookies and other unwanted information that is exchanged between web servers and browsers, but which is not normally displayed or under the user's control. The only version available at present runs under Unix, but the developers are considering Mac and Windows versions.

More on filtering

The debate about censorship goes on and on. There's a useful resource at http://www.libertynet.org/~lion/filtering.html on *Filtering the Internet in K-12 schools and libraries.* Part of LION, the Librarians Online Information Network (sponsored by Library Services of the School District of Philadelphia), the resource has information on software products and other technologies that allow schools to control access by children to objectionable sites on the Internet. There's a link to a comparative review of Fil-

tering Programs (including Cyber Patrol, Cybersitter, net Nanny and Surfwatch), as well as an article titled 'A dozen reasons why schools should avoid filtering' from the March/April 1996 issue of *From Now On: The Educational Technology Journal.*

It also has a link to a very good page at http://duckdock.acic.com/carolyn/guide.htm. This provides a range of information on how to guide children's use of the Internet.

A big bunch of dates
Another useful tool can be found at http://www.wiskit.com/calendar.html It's a perpetual calendar which can show any month in any year from 1 to 9999, with the added bonus of an explanation of why 2000 is a leap year. One word of warning — it requires a Java-enabled browser, so you can't see it in Netscape 2 or earlier versions.

Heavens above!
The creators of *Expanding universe : a classified search tool for amateur astronomy* at http://www.mtrl.toronto.on.ca/centres/bsd/astronomy are rightly proud of their work. It has a large number of astronomy links (incidentally providing at last a justified use of an all-black background), but what makes it unusual is the design. It is organised around the Dewey Decimal Classification, but also has an alphabetical term list for alternate forms of access. After the authors proudly announced this, they were reminded that the National Library of Canada had been doing this for a while through its Web directory *Canadian information by subject* at http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/caninfo/ecaninfo.html

It doesn't really matter who did it first; both are good initiatives and as long as the information is easier to find, we're all better off.

A life on the ocean wave
The Nautical Fiction List is a readers' list of novels, novelettes, short stories, poetry and drama of the sea, in English. Many of the entries have a short synopsis and there is a search facility, which is useful as the list contains about 546 authors and 1581 titles. Go to http://www.cyberdyne.com/~jkohnen/naut-lit.html#nfl for the voyage of a lifetime.

An on-line bibliography
Miles Fidelman is the author of *All-out internet access: the Cambridge public library model*, part of the 'Technology trailblazer' Series from American Library Association Editions. This book, based on the experience of installing high-speed Internet workstations in the Cambridge (Mass) Public Library, provides detailed, how-to guidance on planning, implementing, operating, and supporting Internet service in a public library setting.

The author has put the book's bibliography

on-line, comprising a collection of links and references about Internet service in a public library setting. See it at http://civic.net/library.html

ITEM access
The Image Technology in Museums and art galleries knowledge base (ITEM), is an international searchable text and image information database detailing hypermedia publications and resources, primarily about the visual arts. It's at http://item.suffolk.ac.uk

Leonardo — a winner!
The Leonardo project at the Library and Information Service of Western Australia represents a partnership of Western Australian cultural and academic institutions which is working to provide greater public access to cultural material through networked, interactive multimedia. The main site is at http://www.liswa.wa.gov.au/leonardo.html. There's not much to see just yet, but early in March George Brown, LISWA's Manager of Interactive Multimedia demonstrated the prototype of their system which should be up and running in April. Very impressive.

Kodak Photo CD project
Cornell University Library and ten other New York State research libraries are conducting an evaluation of the use of the Kodak Photo CD technology to preserve and make accessible a range of research materials. The project is designed to provide an assessment of image quality by developing benchmarking formulas for conversion and presentation.

The group is looking for help from other cultural and research institutions in evaluating how applicable the findings are to the others' experience with Kodak Photo CD projects. Cornell will supply detailed guidelines to assist participating institutions in this process. In return, participants will receive copies of the report summarising the findings and recommendations for the use of the Photo CD process to capture and provide electronic access to important research materials. If you are interested in participating, contact Anne Kenney (ark3@cornell.edu) or Oya Rieger (oyr1@cornell.edu) for further information.

Blowing their own trumpets
Gabriel, the Gateway to Europe's National Libraries, has been launched to provide a range of information about national libraries in a uniform way in several languages, with on-line links to sources of information about their services and collections. It provides a bulletin board with news items about the national libraries and gives access to all of their Web servers through a single search service. You can find it at http://www.konbib.nl/gabriel/, http://portico.bl.uk/gabriel/, http://renki.helsinki.fi/gabriel/, and http://www.ddb.de/gabriel/. ■

… libraries are evaluating the use of the Kodak Photo CD technology to preserve research materials and to develop benchmarking formulas for conversion and presentation.