

Librarians' contributions to the Internet



Kerry Webb

Some time in May I entered into a discussion with a member of a list who lamented that apart from providing some public access terminals and establishing telnet collections to their on-line catalogues, librarians hadn't done much on the 'Net. He said that we were close to being able to find just about anything we need to know on the Web, and that libraries should be digitising their collections as soon as possible or else they would become irrelevant. In a subsequent message, he said that he was about to enter the library school at the University of Illinois and was a big supporter of keyword searching through search engines like AltaVista and Lycos. When I suggested that librarians were responsible for compiling many very good subject guides, he said that he wasn't aware of any of these.

I suppose it comes back to something we have acknowledged for a long time — we aren't very good at promoting our good works (even to prospective librarians), which is a great pity, as we have some good stories to tell. In previous columns, I've written about the Clearinghouse for Subject-Oriented Internet Resource Guides at the University of Michigan School of Library and Information Science. A number of people associated with that initiative now operate the Argus Clearinghouse at <http://www.clearinghouse.net/> which collects resource guides developed by librarians and others and lists them by subject, with a search facility and ratings for each guide. They also have a monthly Digital Librarian's Award, so maybe the world might come to learn what we are doing after all. But in case the world hasn't found the Clearinghouse yet, don't be shy about blowing our own trumpets.

Rural support on-line

Farmwide Online is a site provided by the National Farmers' Federation at <http://www.nff.org.au/>. Information featured there includes links to news and weather, commodity prices and markets, technical information and government information. It also has a service called Eureka which provides daily stories and commentaries on key rural issues. It's put together well and should be an invaluable resource for anyone with an interest in rural matters.

Employment list

LIBJOBS is an international employment service list for library professionals, provided by IFLA. Full details are at <http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/ifla/ll/lists/libjobs.htm>. The list is moderated, so that extraneous advertising and spam will not be distributed. To subscribe, send the message subscribe LIBJOBS firstname lastname to listserv@infoserv.nlc-bnc.ca.

Internet Medicus

There are many sites on the Net dealing with health issues, most of them produced as a by-product of someone's other duties. Internet Medicus is different. It's put together by Sheelagh Noonan, formerly of the library at Canberra Hospital, and is an index to medical and health-related sites on the Internet, all of them chosen by Sheelagh and updated on a daily basis. For a service of this quality, you need to pay a subscription, but it looks like pretty good value for money. All of the details are at <http://www.hcn.net.au/internetmedicus/>

Port Phillip home page

Richard Holt of the Port Phillip Library Service recently won an award from the Victorian Branch for his design of a home page. It's a good example of the sort of information that we should be giving to our clients. There is a very good introduction to the Web, a well-chosen collection of links to Net resources (including business resources), and a general impression that it's been done with considerable thought. It's at <http://yarra.vicnet.net.au/~ppls/>.

More on intellectual property

The people at the Commonwealth Department of Communication and the Arts have been compiling a page on intellectual property matters at <http://www.dca.gov.au/contents/intprop.html> with links to more than a dozen Australian and overseas sites dealing with copyright and related issues. Not only that, but also Peter Cook of the QANTM CMC has been putting a similar page at <http://www.qantm.com.au/copyright/> with a little more explanatory material.

Library Internet policies

At <http://www.ci.oswego.or.us/library/poli.htm> there is a collection of the policies in place at more than one hundred American libraries which provide access to the Internet. It appears that several libraries have filtering systems in place, and an increasing number have established rules against viewing inappropriate material. Clearly, they are taking note of community interest in questions of access to a range of materials.

More pages on Link

Tony Barry has been improving the pages associated with the Link list, which hosts discussion on networking issues in Australia. One new feature is a set of links at <http://ningaii.anu.edu.au/link/topics/Default.shtml> to current (and enduring) topics being discussed on the list, such as censorship, electronic commerce, e-mail spam and Internet organisations.

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Institute of Family Studies

The Australian Institute of Family Studies web site at <http://www.aifs.org.au/> features an extensive list of forthcoming national and international conferences in the area of family studies, details of AIFS publications, and links to many resources developed in conjunction with the International Year of the family in 1994.

Rights management

The COPEARMS (Co-Ordinating Project for an Electronic Authors' Rights Management System) is funded by the European Commission ESPRIT Program. The project aims to assist other projects concerned with intellectual property rights management and to encourage the development of interoperable Electronic Copyright Management Systems (ECMS). The COPEARMS Web site is at <http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/ifla/VI/2/p5/proj5.htm>. Recent additions to the site include the proceedings of recent meetings held in London, Barcelona and Florence, and the latest version of the Reference Model for an ECMS.

Metadata reports

Some recent reports on metadata developments and Internet resource discovery are now available from the UKOLN web site. They arise from projects within EU programs — DESIRE under Telematics for Research and BIBLINK under Telematics for Libraries. You'll find them through the UKOLN Metadata page at <http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/metadata/>.

What's new with law

The Law Foundation of New South Wales is famous for its AUSTLII site which has a huge collection of legislation and judgements online at <http://www.austlii.edu.au/>. It also operates Foundation Law (managed by Sandra Davey) at <http://www.fl.asn.au/>, which has plenty of general legal information, as well as a collection of links to information about specific topics such as the Sydney 2000 Olympics at http://www.fl.asn.au/practice/prac_olympics.html. If you want to keep up with what's happening on the site, look at <http://www.fl.asn.au/news/>. News in May included the forthcoming publication of some New South Wales Court Lists on the Net, progress in AUSTLII's attempts to publish all Australian legislation (Queensland and Tasmania seem to be the last holdouts) and information on a mailing list for Legal Research.

And for you busy people...

The Dublin Core Generator at <http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/cgi-bin/dcdot.pl> will take a specified Web page and automatically generate Dublin Core HTML <META> tags suitable for embedding in the <HEAD>...</HEAD> section of the page. The Generator provides an on-line

facility to edit the tags that have been generated, together with a help function to guide you through the process. It's very neat.

Web education conference proceedings

The universe at your fingertips: continuing Web education was a conference held at the University of California, Santa Barbara in April 1997. The proceedings are on the Web at <http://www.library.ucsb.edu/universe/>. The papers covered quite a range of subjects relating to education, reference work, and Web page creation (including tips on how to create graphics).

Electrical fields and health

There is a growing number of media references to concerns about the effects of power lines and mobile phones on users and those unfortunate enough to be in their vicinity. The Medical College of Wisconsin has collected links to resources on these topics, including answers to many Frequently Asked Questions, at <http://www.mcw.edu/gcrc/cop.html>.

Electronic publishing

A new article on electronic publishing is at <http://www.law.pitt.edu/hibbitts/akron.htm>. It is written in the context of legal scholarship but has much wider applicability. The author argues that electronic self-publishing is the only way that legal scholarship can cope with the challenges of cyberspace. Apart from the content (which is first-rate) it is laid out in an extremely attractive style. Read it at <http://www.law.pitt.edu/hibbitts/akron.htm>.

On-line journal for career development

Librarian Career Development is now available on the Net, with a home page at <http://www.mcb.co.uk/liblink/lcd/jourhome.htm>. The journal offers advice about what skills library and information workers of the future will need and looks at how individuals have successfully structured their careers in order to make the right moves when the time came. Subscription is A\$329, but you can try their 30-day free trial to see if it meets your needs.

Studies in cyberculture

The Resource Center for Cyberculture Studies is a not-for-profit organisation which aims to study various aspects of cyberculture. In the future it will sponsor a series of projects and workshops on the subject, but for now it contains a collection of scholarly resources, including university-level courses in cyberculture, events and conferences, and related links. You'll find it at <http://otal.umd.edu/~rccs/>. ■

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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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