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And about time too...

The Internet Librarian Hall of Fame [http://www.rlc.dcccd.edu/lrc/fame.htm] honours people who have trailblazed a path on the internet for people like us to follow. The site is fairly small at present, having only been established in April this year, but it does commemorate and give career details for a range of librarians, such as Carole Leita, co-ordinator of *Librarians' Index to the Internet*, Greg Notess of *Search Engine Showdown* fame, and Peter Scott, creator of HyTelnet and LibDex. The site from Richland College Library in the United States accepts nominations for people who match two criteria — inductees must currently be, or have been, librarians, and they must have made a substantial contribution toward integrating use of the internet and the world wide web into library services. So why isn't Gary Price (Direct Search) in there? Or Tara Calishain of researchbuzz? Perhaps they soon will be. Someone should nominate some Aussies as it is wall-to-wall Americans in the Hall so far.

Showing the way

The Texas Information Literacy Tutorial [http://tilt.lib.utsystem.edu/] (TILT for short) is an interactive tutorial on information literacy. It starts with the absolute basics and builds from there, in three thirty-minute modules. What is good about TILT is that you can choose a pathway early on so that you can learn about the aspects of the web that most interest you. There are currently six choices — censorship and freedom of speech; global communities; internet business; laws and regulation; new trends; and security and privacy. This will be handy for a beginner who wants to go into online business or for one who is only concerned with the futuristic possibilities of the Net. The tute aims to help you identify a variety of information sources, such as newspapers, journals, and databases, hone your database search skills, evaluate what you find and then cite it accurately. It comes in two modes — fully interactive (all kinds of bells and whistles) or in a version that requires no plug-ins.

Find by genre

Public librarians might like FictionDB.com [http://www.fictiondb.com/] as it points lovers of genre fiction to a whole range of information that will keep them smiling. Apart from lists of books by favourite authors, there are links to author web sites and to book reviews, lists of books in series, and lists of books by main character. This is handy if you want to track all the books featuring a favourite character such as Kay Scarpetta or Hercule Poirot. So far the site only covers westerns, romances, and mystery, but mystery covers the extremely popular crime/whodunnit field, so Cornwell/Christie/Rendell readers are well-served. There are links online to buy books, but given the state of the Australian dollar, readers will probably give these a swerve and go for the public library option. Some authors, such as Barbara Vine (one of Ruth Rendell's pseudonyms) are less well-served than others — the listing of her works is incomplete. But even pseudonyms are covered at the site, so you can not say they are not trying.

Snail mail

In the internet age, does anyone still write letters? I seem to get only bills in the mail these days. All the same, PostInfo is a site that should be in every library's virtual reference collection as it lists postal authorities around the world by country. If your parcel gets lost en route to Peru, have a look here to find the address to write to to complain. The site also provides search tools for postal codes by country, advice on the correct layout of addresses for each country, and some postal rate calculators (not a comprehensive listing). You will still need to go to the local Post Office to send your letter or parcel, but you will be mailbox-ready and have some idea of the cost before you go. [http://postinfo.net/links/]

Hard slog

As anyone who has tried it knows, researching the Net online is not a piece of cake. There is more to it than just slotting terms into a search engine, however comprehensive its database may be. For those who do not want to go it alone, have a look at the web site of the Association of Internet Researchers [http://aoir.org/]. This is an international, academic association dedicated to promoting critical and scholarly research in the fresh, green fields of internet studies. They publish, network and go to conferences. You can see a bibliography of relevant books on the topic at the site which

also links to other resources such as ejournals concerned with internet studies and websites with good content.

More about research in the digital age
A new report from the National Academy of Sciences in the United States looks at the challenges and opportunities now faced by researchers in science and engineering, given the advances in information technology in the past few years. Since researchers in physics were trailblazers in using the Net to share their latest findings, it is only right that they should now be taking stock of the changes, such as different expectations of researchers, that the world wide web has wrought in a whole range of academic disciplines.[http://www.nap.edu/html/issues_digital]

Beyond Google
If you have ever used Google [http://www.google.com/], you will know it is one of the fastest, most comprehensive search services on the Web, with a seemingly uncanny ability to return useful results high up in your search returns list. Now a new add-on to the Google search, iLOR, aims to improve on the Google experience by offering extra features to make your search results easier and less confusing to handle. iLOR does not improve the Google search itself, but helps you after the search is over by allowing you to save useful links into a separate window, to e-mail them to other users (or back to yourself) or to create a link to the search results page. [http://www.ilor.com/]

Zines and e-zines
Online and offline, zines are important to library users. Even if they are short-lived, many 'zines have keen fans, so it helps to know a little about this kind of publishing, if only to be able to point the way to the online versions. Zines bills itself as a 'librarian's short guide to the world of self-publishing'. Though largely American in coverage, this starter guide introduces the wide variety of self-published work in both print and electronic versions. The site provides some reviews of books on the topic, as well as links to selected ezines. [http://64.81.48.24/chad/sjsu/262/zines/]

Beyond Tamworth
The Country Music Search Engine [http://country-music-club.com/] is a Grand Ole idea for fans of this musical genre. It provides news and information on country music, as well as access to the searchable Country Music Directory, a vast database which lists web sites, links to news and online publications, clubs and associations, festivals, sheet music, and song lyrics (aren't they all the same, then?). There are links to downloadable sound files and reviews of albums by singers and groups. You can even design your own dream guitar.

Kids zone
The Children's Book Council of Australia [http://www.cbc.org.au/] is a good starting point for information on kids' books, especially ones written by Australian authors. You can also find out about Children's Book Week, and annual Australian awards for works for children at the site. You can link to the websites of selected authors and children's book illustrators too. Many Aussie authors and artists, such as Mem Fox, Duncan Ball and Morris Gleitzman, have personal web sites, and children might enjoy visiting the site of a favourite illustrator. For the very small, the Mother Goose website [http://www.amherst.edu/~rjyanco/literature/mothergoose/] provides a full-text collection of nursery rhymes listed alphabetically by first line (very handy if you have forgotten the rest). There are annotated links to related material online.

Thank you and goodbye…
It might be time to start up an RIP section in this column as web sites and services progressively throw in the towel. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* was probably the biggest to say 'die' recently (though, mysteriously, it still seems to be offering free content). AltaVista recently discontinued its Raging search (but you can use Google instead, so that's no loss). Now Inference Find has quit. For those who liked the service there, there is no joy at all. InFind simply ran out of money and there are no plans to provide the service elsewhere. Also killed off recently were the subject-specific Scout Reports from Internet Scout. There were three — social sciences and humanities, business and economics, and science and engineering — all now defunct because of funding loss. Internet Scout hopes to continue with the main Scout Report, but who knows? Watch this space. ∎

Since researchers in physics were trailblazers in using the Net to share their latest findings, it is only right that they should now be taking stock of the changes, such as different expectations of researchers, that the world wide web has wrought in a whole range of academic disciplines.