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A plague on all their houses

Halls of fame are always fun, but for those with a taste for Schadenfreude, halls of infamy may be even more enjoyable. The Publishers' Page of Shame lists brand new books that have fallen apart almost as soon as they hit the library shelves. No one publisher is targeted in the list; it seems poor bookbinding spans the industry as a whole. The BoothBay Harbor Memorial Library in the United States state of Maine has put this site together, and contributions are welcomed, as the growing body of evidence will be used to attempt to shame the book industry into cleaning up its act. Given the cost of new books, it is reasonable to assume that they should last long enough to circulate many times. Add your outrage to the site's listings at <http://www.bmpl.lib.me.us/shame.htm>.

Taming the avalanche

Searcher magazine [<http://www.infotoday.com/searcher/jan02/block.htm>] is a great place to get tips on web and database searching, and the January issue is no exception. 'My rules of information', by Marylaine Block, who puts together the excellent ExLibris e-zine, spells out Block's seven rules (expanded from the original four) for developing the kind of information literacy librarians need in the age of information overload. This is bread and butter stuff, but it needs to be said, and said often. After all, it takes time and effort to wise up to the web, and learn to use it in the right way — as an open-all-hours extension and amplification of offline sources, not as a whole new concept — so Block's advice on information strategies will be handy for those still trying to come to grips with the internet.

It could happen to you

No-one ever thinks the roof will cave in or that floods will devastate a well-planned library, but accidents happen, and so do freak storms, acts of war and plain bad luck. Before catastrophe hits, it might be wise to have a disaster plan in place so that worst case scenarios are averted. Daniel Campbell has written an introduction to such plans for the excellent Legal Resource Exchange, and all libraries should probably print out and keep this one. It covers the basics — why you need a plan, how to prepare for a range of emergencies, what items to prioritise for saving, and how to rehearse and record disaster

responses. It also covers nuts and bolts like telephone tree communications, emergency supplies such as torches and radios, and getting emergency money put aside well in advance. Well worth a look at <http://www.llrx.com/features/disasterplan.html>

Keeping current

Gary Price's Virtual Acquisition Shelf and News Desk (<http://resourceshelf.blogspot.com>) is a great spot for digging up information about topics in the news, and also for discovering newly announced web resources, particularly invisible web databases. Gary now offers a weekly update e-mail service for the site which is updated daily. The weekly update highlights the major additions over the week to the weblog, and provides a link should you wish to visit the site to view the fuller listings. You can subscribe to the weekly update service at <http://www.freepint.com/resourceshelf/update.php3>. Gary also has a good Winter Olympics listing at <http://www.freepint.com/gary/olympicreference.html>.

It takes a lifetime

The United Kingdom Library Association has issued a new report, entitled 'Libraries and lifelong learning: a strategy 2002-4'. The report first defines what lifelong learning is, and then moves on to the key issues for libraries to consider and the role of the library sector in facilitating lifelong learning. Further references are also supplied if you want to read up more on the subject. The introduction is online in HTML, and the rest of the eighteen page report is available as a PDF. http://www.la-hq.org.uk/directory/prof_issues/lfs.html

Get Smart

Lifelong learning requires information literacy, and a nice-looking new site, LibrarySmart, [<http://www.librarysmart.com/working/home.asp>] tries to make that skill accessible to ordinary people, not just to librarians. (The print is a little small for my liking, which spoils it a bit.) The site is divided up into three main sections — one on tips and strategies for evaluating information, one for parents, teachers and librarians, and one for kids and students. The site was created by the Washington State Library as part of its Information Literacy Project so it is very American in its focus, but the ideas behind many of the sites listed are universally relevant and the other ideas — suggestions for getting information about eve-

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ryday life such as getting a job, starting your own business — can easily be adapted to Australian conditions.

Humanities report

The authors of the new report, 'Scholarly work in the humanities and the evolving information environment', [<http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub104/contents.html>] have examined how humanities scholars conduct and collate their research, and provide suggestions on ways in which academic libraries can adapt to this rapidly changing environment. The report is good at explaining the changes that have occurred — greater use of online sources, more print-on-demand use, increasing remote use of libraries — and then predicting where and how change will next occur. The report is dated December 2001 and will be relevant to any academic library, not just to those serving the humanities. The report is a joint publication of the Council on Library and Information Resources and the Digital Library Federation.

Rescuing the newsgroup archives

USENET newsgroups have been around a long while in internet terms, but the older postings were increasingly at risk as services hosting them changed hands or closed down. Google is hosting them now at <http://groups.google.com/> but the early postings were in danger of being lost forever until a software engineer at Google stepped in to try to save them. The story of how he tracked down the files is covered in the story 'The geeks who saved usenet' published by Salon.com. [http://www.salon.com/tech/feature/2002/01/07/saving_usenet/index.html] This is an entertaining read about an important slice of internet history as well as a victory for geeks everywhere. Future researchers will be grateful that the problem was recognised in time before the files vanished forever into cyber-oblivion.

Magazines and weblogs

LibDex is probably better known as a finding tool for more than 17 000 libraries worldwide, but it also hosts an alphabetical directory of online library journals, newsletters, and e-zines at <http://www.libdex.com/journals.html>. You can click on to the home page of the journal or newsletter from the listing. Also new at the site is a directory of library weblogs [<http://www.libdex.com/weblogs.html>].

The first links are to articles about why weblogs are a natural tool for librarians, and then links to individual weblogs follow. The site is a little stingy with information about each blog — more detail about individual weblog 'flavours' would help, as the titles alone (The Laughing Librarian?) are not particularly informative. New blogs are welcomed, so if you want to add yours to the LibDex collection, visit the page and get the details on joining up.

Everybody's doing it

Digitisation projects are still getting going all over the place. The European Commission has got into the act, funding the new ERPANET Project, [<http://www.erpanet.org>] which will try to establish a set of best practice guidelines in the area of digital preservation of cultural heritage and scientific objects. ERPANET partners include representatives from museums, libraries and archives, research institutions, government organisations, the entertainment and creative industries, and the commercial sector, including the computing and software industries. ERPANET aims to provide a virtual clearinghouse on state-of-the-art developments in digital preservation and the transfer of that expertise to individuals and institutions. You can get more information and documentation at the site.

Document delivery

FindLaw [<http://www.findlaw.com>] has been around for a while as a huge legal portal. Probably less well-known is their newsletter service which offers a range of topics to choose from. All newsletters are available via e-mail. Just sign up for the ones that interest you. What can you get? You can sign up for class action summaries or major legal news, though the emphasis will be mainly on United States legal matters. However, the latest addition to the newsletter service will be more generally useful. This is the *Breaking Documents* newsletter. This will alert you when new primary legal documents from major breaking news stories such as Enron or the United States terrorist attacks become accessible online. This could be a handy tool for librarians, journalists or interested members of the public wanting to tap into deep background on major news events. <http://newsletters.findlaw.com>. The archive of breaking news documents is at <http://news.findlaw.com/legalnews/documents/>. ■

This column
[with URL links]
can be found at:



<http://www.alia.org.au/incite>

Contributions and suggestions for this column are always welcome. Please contact Belinda Weaver via e-mail.

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