

Webb's web

Examples of Government 2.0

I've been wary of the idea of incorporating Web 2.0 concepts into government websites. I came across an article from US Federal Computer Week http://www.fcw.com/print/22_13/features/152467-1.html that lists five US Government blogs worth reading. Well, I'm still not convinced. The US State Department blog says that almost 95% of submitted comments are accepted, but those that make it to the screen aren't all that illuminating. Others of the five aren't too bad, but you'd have to ask if it's worth the trouble.

Picking up the pieces

Not every site gets hacked, but if it happens to you it would be good to know how to start your recovery process. Google has provided some suggestions in My Site's Been Hacked - Now What? <http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/2008/04/my-sites-been-hacked-now-what.html> It's largely concerned with matters to do with search engines, but there's quite a bit of generally useful information there, and as always the readers' comments are interesting.

The future needs you

The Digital Lives Research Project <http://www.bl.uk/digital-lives/> at the British Library is looking for your input as they try to understand the way we protect our personal digital collections - the ones at home and not those we use at work. It was a sobering experience for me as they asked what I'm doing with my important documents and images to ensure that they survive computer crashes, burglary and the bus that we don't see coming round the corner. I realised that I don't really need any new software, just a little bit of discipline to do what I know I should be doing.

Yet another site for keeping up to date

It's nearly impossible to keep track of all new things on the Net so when a good new current awareness site comes along, it's worth noting. I found Lifehacker <http://www.lifehacker.com.au/index.html> in a roundabout way - I'd been asked to test drive a new FaceBook application and the post-evaluation interview ranged very widely indeed, and halfway through the developer asked if I'd seen this one, and so it went. The link I've provided goes to the Australian version - which is a nice tweak on the old idea, with little headers in each item to identify the US- and Oz-centric aspect of whatever it is they're talking about.

Another little bit of jargon explained

If your e-mail address is on spammers' databases, you may have encountered a lot of strange messages recently with messages from all sorts of systems administrators telling you that they have no such user or the message was otherwise undeliverable. They're almost certainly examples of 'backscatter', resulting from spammers forging your address in the From or Reply-to parts of the messages, and the receiving

systems bouncing them 'back to you'. It's quite annoying because you can never be sure that it isn't a genuine message from someone who you've been trying to communicate with, but at least we have a name for it.

For Search Engine Optimists, perhaps?

If you're serious about getting traffic to your website, you'll probably give some attention to search engine optimisation (SEO). If you're really serious, you may consider getting some professional SEO help, but in most cases it's not worth the expense. A good place to start is the Web Developer's SEO Cheat Sheet http://www.seomoz.org/user_files/SEO_Web_Developer_Cheat_Sheet.pdf that's been put together by Danny Dover. In two A4 pages, he's encapsulated just about everything that most of us need to know about this often-misunderstood topic.

Keeping an eye on things

I'm sure I've said it before, but I love the Net - especially how you keep learning new things (actually it's almost impossible not to learn new things). It all started with that blog of mine. I wrote a post about LibriVox <http://librivox.org/> in which I suggested that the amateur readers (while in most cases doing a workmanlike job) couldn't match the professionals. Quick as a flash, a response came back saying "oh yes they can", and I looked a little further and found that there was one reader at least who was half-way decent. But then I wondered how this respondent (who turned out to be one of the LibriVox founders) saw my post, and it turns out that the technorati.com site has a watchlist facility <http://www.technorati.com/watchlist/> where you can enter some keywords and they look out for any references in blogs to those terms. Neat!

Hits the target

The Arrow Discovery Service <http://search.arrow.edu.au/> hosted at the National Library of Australia, allows you to search almost 140,000 resources produced through Australian research. It searches simultaneously across dozens of research repositories from universities and other bodies, and the contents have also been indexed by Google.

Don't forget to visit my blog
<http://www.alia.org.au/webbsblog>



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