Webb's web

Is the search engine market hotting up?

Towards the end of July, the latest Google Killer was revealed, and its name is Cuil **http://cuil.com** pronounced 'cool'. At first glance, it should have some chance of success: the founders come from Google (which raises some interesting questions about IP) and they've raised a fair bit of venture capital. So I had a quick look at it and came away not very impressed. The results were quite variable, with some popular search terms showing no results at all and in some cases misspellings gave more hits than correct spellings. After a couple of days, two things were obvious: the consensus of the trade press was that it's not yet ready for prime time, and the searching had improved a little. It looks like they did a lot of tweaking after the launch. Unfortunately for them, it didn't improve on closer inspection. Many search results are accompanied by an image, an image that usually has nothing to do with that site. The result that points to my father's obituary has a Scientology banner (which would have caused him some amusement) and the one for my ALIA blog is illustrated by a picture of a piece of earthmoving equipment. Strange.

> In an Internet dominated by Google, does anyone need to remember a site address?

The Word from the past

A long long time after it was first written, a project is well under way to create an online version of one of the oldest copies of the Bible. The Codex Sinaiticus **http://www.codex-sinaiticus.net/en/** is made up of fragments held in four institutions around the world, and the first result of the collaboration - involving high resolution images of the Gospel of Mark, several Old Testament books, and notes on the work - has just been published. The complete project, which has required extensive conservation and digitisation work, will result in the final work going online around this time next year.

With a little help from my friends

I'll be making a presentation later this year on websites with particular value to librarians in their professional activities. Now I know about a few of these and have written about them from time to time, but I'd appreciate any favourites that you might want to suggest. Send them to me at **kwebb@alianet.alia.org.au** Thanks.

ICANN make a difference?

Towards the end of June, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) caused a bit of a stir when they made a decision to permit a whole new range of top level domains, adding to the familiar .com, .org and the global top level domains like .au, .nz, .uk and so on. It was just as important that they also approved the use of non-Roman characters in domain names, but that wasn't as exciting to some commentators as the possibility of a future website with the www.kids.bradandangelina address. It will be quite a while before any of these new domains come into being and the cost is likely to be prohibitive to the prospective owners, but the real question is: does it matter? In an internet dominated by Google, does anyone need to remember a site address? Apparently in Japan, there are advertising campaigns that feature search terms rather than URLs. That ICANN decision may eventually turn out to be of not much consequence at all.

Colour fast

With more people coming to website creation all the time, it stands to reason that more people will be making the obvious mistakes all the time, especially as web development tools make it possible for anyone to make these obvious mistakes. The challenge of course is to get the necessary guidance to those most in need of it; a difficult task but made easier by sites like Colour Theory **http://dev.opera.com/articles/view/8-colour-theory/** It takes you back to square one, first explaining the basics and then showing you a few simple steps in mixing and matching your colours. I recommend it.

Which e-book?

I've not been inclined to try e-books - for various reasons. For one, I really do like the experience of using those paper-based thingies, and then there's the type of books that I read: many of them are old, out-of-print or just sitting in my bookshelves waiting to be taken out, caressed and absorbed (awwww). But it's getting hard to resist the call of the newer gizmos, and Kindle **http://www.amazon.com/Kindle-Amazons-Wireless-Reading-Device/dp/B000FI73MA** in particular has been the subject of much discussion on a couple of lists where I hang out. And then there's a sort of comparison between it and the Sony Reader at **http://bookbitch.blogspot.com/2008/06/guest-blogger-michelle-gagnon.html** We'll see ... but I can't really justify the expense until my current Mt Toberead is whittled down a little.

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