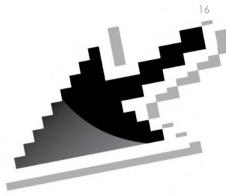# Webb's Web

More on my blog www.alia.org.au/webbsblog

WEBB'S WEB

Aspects of privacy

I use LinkedIn as a means of developing and maintaining a professional network – although I find the continuing posts about who is now connected to whom is really of limited benefit. Recently though I've become more concerned about privacy issues with all social networking sites. At some time in the past I may have given LinkedIn access to my address book on Gmail because I seem to get lots of suggestions for connections that could only have come from that source. What happened recently though took it to a new level.

A person from the publishing world whom I'd never met asked to be connected. I got in touch with him to see who he was, and he satisfied me that we had a vague link so I accepted the invitation. The next day, an unsolicited mail arrived in my Gmail account from his publishing house. Now, my Gmail address is not generally known so I'm wondering if this is an astonishing coincidence or is this data leaking from LinkedIn? Or are we just becoming a little too paranoid?

I later found out how he might have got and used my Gmail address. When I responded to him to ask how he knew me, the message was sent from Gmail. He then felt free to add this to his address book to spam me. He and I are no longer connected.

More to it than meets the eye

Although I am no longer directly responsible for WCAG 2.0 (**www.w3.org/WAI/intro/wcag.php**) compliance for government websites, I still take an interest in the subject. So I attended a presentation on a compliance tool that performs a comprehensive machine-based check on web resources to see how they comply with the guidelines. We were all quite surprised to see that around 95% of our websites would fail at present. I'd done some rudimentary checking a year ago and felt quite confident that our sites would be in an acceptable state by the end of 2012 – as required by the National Transition Strategy (NTS, **www.finance.gov.au/publications/wcag-2-implementation/index.html**). But now I know that we can't make it without a lot of work between now and then. And I'm assured by the suppliers of the checking tool that the other states and territories are in a similar position. Which leads me to ask: should the NTS be re-evaluated?

The pros and cons of piracy

Lloyd Shepherd wrote an article in *The Guardian* about what happened when he found a book of his about to be pirated (**tinyurl.com/73vhx3l**) – and it started off a full-scale and generally polite discussion on copyright infringement and theft. At the end of three days of discussion, a couple of things were clearer to me: all analogies break down sooner or later – and many of us are quite unwilling to admit that what we continue to do is legally, morally and ethically wrong.

Another side of social media

In a story about recruitment practices in the age of social media at **tinyurl.com/6sd356l**, a Sheriff's Office is reported to require job applicants to sign into social media sites so that they can be screened. Apparently they have the right to refuse to do this, but none have done so. The Sheriff's Deputy said that this speaks well of their applicants. Well… no… it doesn't really.

Wikipedia: how's it going?

It used to be that the elites derided Wikipedia because, well, it wasn't *Britannica*. Or some other reason. Anyway they derided it. Now, it's pretty well in the mainstream, and we all use it without thinking too much about the original criticisms. And then a story comes along that makes you realise what's happening behind it all, and it's not a pretty sight. Danny Sullivan, a noted expert on search engines, wrote about his experiences in trying to get something fixed in Wikipedia (**daggle.com/closed-unfriendly-world-wikipedia-2853**) and received the usual blend of cheers and boos from the usual suspects. The quote that I liked from the comments was:

"And that's why Wikipedia can't replace all other encyclopedias – because, in fact, it's still a hermetic encyclopedia, but without experts on subjects it covers."

Posted by Kerry Webb