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## Looking after yourself in the Workplace: 'insurance' measures for Information Professionals

By Bill Raschen

Hell comes in many guises. For Jean Paul Sartre, it was other people, and for the poet Shelley it was a city much like London. For me, it was my local JobCentre in the late summer of 2004, where I'd sign up every two weeks whilst friends and their families were holidaying on the continent. It hadn't formed part of my career plan, and I'd only recommend it to my very worst enemies. What follows are a few personal guidelines that mid-career Information Professionals could follow - hopefully to stay employed and marketable, but also to cushion the blow if unemployment does strike. The guidelines are all fairly obvious, and I only wish I'd acted on them better myself.

If you're happy and comfortable in your working life, you'll want to make sure that things stay that way. The initial, basic step is of course to work hard, and to make sure you're coming up with what your employers and target audience want. Sadly, the trouble is that bad things can happen out of the blue. Measures such as staff cutbacks, corporate relocation (as in my case) or takeovers could all result in job losses - and those jobs might include your own.

The key word to watch out for here is 'insurance'. At home, it's pretty much taken for granted that we'll insure our cars, homes and so on. In a work context, much the same is true - except in this case, we'll be looking after our careers. An important first step is to develop links with fellow professionals outside of your workplace. You may be deeply involved with your work, but try not to become too isolated. Get involved with professional groupings, attend meetings, and write for newsletters. Your contributions will almost certainly be valued, and will provide a relatively pain-free method of keeping your head above the parapet. When things go wrong, it'll be better for you to have professional friends out there than to be an unknown.

Secondly, keep training. CPD (Continuing Professional Development) can be a chore, but it's a worthwhile one. Attend courses if you can, and at least read the trade papers. Look at the job adverts as well, even if you're not actively job hunting. Are your skills marketable at a salary that you'd want? If not, have a think - or seek some professional advice. If there are gaps in your skills base, fill them now rather than be at a loss later on.

Lastly in this context (and hopefully it won't need saying), try to be helpful and kind to your fellow professionals, even if as a rule you don't do 'nice'. For example, try to keep tabs on the FreePint 'Bar', and if you can help answer an enquiry, then do so. Similarly, if fellow professionals within your subject area have a question or problem, then try to help out. Again, it's part of the process of getting yourself known - and people will be more likely to come to your aid if you've done them a favour.

So, do I practice what I preach, now that I'm back in full time employment? No, not always. But paying better attention to the insurance measures mentioned above would certainly have helped make my own redundancy less painful, and will hopefully make life more tolerable for any readers of this column faced with the same situation.

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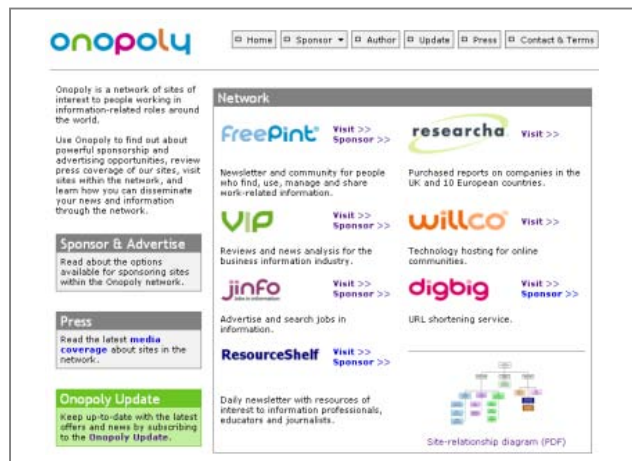
Bill Raschen is the London-based Intranet Manager for a firm of surveyors. Out of hours he designs websites, and is a keen amateur astronomer.



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## Latest Job Listings

### **Information Assistant**

(added 13th July 2006)  
URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5502>  
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited  
Location: London - City, United Kingdom

### **Junior Researcher**

(added 13th July 2006)  
URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5501>  
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited  
Location: London - City, United Kingdom

### **Records Assistant**

(added 13th July 2006)  
URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5500>  
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited  
Location: London - Central, United Kingdom

### **Part-time Librarian**

(added 13th July 2006)  
URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5499>  
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited  
Location: London - South, United Kingdom

### **Information Centre Associate**

(added 13th July 2006)  
URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5498>  
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited  
Location: London - City, United Kingdom

### **Professional Support Assistant**

(added 13th July 2006)  
URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5497>  
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited  
Location: London - Central, United Kingdom

### **Researcher** (added 13th July 2006)

URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5496>  
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited  
Location: London - Docklands, United Kingdom

### **Information Quality Manager**

(added 13th July 2006)  
URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5495>  
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited  
Location: Gloucestershire, United Kingdom

### **M&A Analyst** (added 13th July 2006)

URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5494>  
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited  
Location: London, United Kingdom

### **Relocation Project Manager**

(added 12th July 2006)  
URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5493>  
Recruiter: TFPL Ltd.  
Location: Manchester, United Kingdom

### **Librarian/Information Researcher**

(added 10th July 2006)  
URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5492>  
Recruiter: Instant Library Recruitment (Tribal Group)  
Location: Berkshire, United Kingdom

### **Senior Information Officer**

(added 10th July 2006)  
URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5491>  
Recruiter: TFPL Ltd.  
Location: London, United Kingdom

### **Cataloguer** (added 7th July 2006)

URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5490>  
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited  
Location: London - City, United Kingdom

### **Senior Information Officer**

(added 7th July 2006)  
URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5489>  
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited  
Location: London - South, United Kingdom

### **School Librarian** (added 7th July 2006)

URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5488>  
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited  
Location: Berkshire, United Kingdom

**Information Services Manager**

(added 7th July 2006)  
URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5487>  
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited  
Location: London - City, United Kingdom

**Records Manager** (added 7th July 2006)

URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5486>  
Recruiter: TFPL Ltd.  
Location: Central London, United Kingdom

**Records Manager** (added 7th July 2006)

URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5485>  
Recruiter: TFPL Ltd.  
Location: London, United Kingdom

**Collections Editor** (added 6th July 2006)

URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5484>  
Recruiter: TFPL Ltd.  
Location: Bromley

**Information Researcher**

(added 6th July 2006)  
URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5483>  
Recruiter: TFPL Ltd.  
Location: Central London, UK

**Researcher** (added 6th July 2006)

URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5482>  
Recruiter: TFPL Ltd. United Kingdom

**Intranet & Portal Administrator**

(added 6th July 2006)  
URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5481>  
Recruiter: TFPL Ltd.  
Location: Central London, United Kingdom

**Graduate Trainee** (added 6th July 2006)

URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5480>  
Recruiter: TFPL Ltd.  
Location: London, United Kingdom

**Information Quality Manager**

(added 6th July 2006)  
URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5479>  
Recruiter: TFPL Ltd.  
Location: Cheltenham, United Kingdom

**Cataloguer** (added 6th July 2006)

URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5478>  
Recruiter: TFPL Ltd.  
Location: Hampshire, United Kingdom

**Records Manager** (added 4th July 2006)

URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5477>  
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited  
Location: London - Central, UK

**Researcher** (added 4th July 2006)

URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5476>  
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited  
Location: London - Central, UK

**Part-time Assistant Librarian**

(added 4th July 2006)  
URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5475>  
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited  
Location: London - West, UK

**Information Researcher**

(added 4th July 2006)  
URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5474>  
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited  
Location: London - City, United Kingdom

**Project Manager** (added 4th July 2006)

URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5473>  
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited  
Location: Hertfordshire, United Kingdom

**Library Administration Assistant**

(added 4th July 2006)  
URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5472>  
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited  
Location: London - City, United Kingdom

**Research Librarian**

(added 4th July 2006)  
URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5471>  
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited  
Location: London - City, United Kingdom

**Corporate Information Manager**

(added 4th July 2006)  
URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5470>  
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited  
Location: Bedfordshire, United Kingdom

**Senior Research Associate**

(added 4th July 2006)  
URL: <http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5469>  
Recruiter: TFPL Ltd.  
Location: London, United Kingdom