FreePint®

2nd February 2006
No.199

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HTML Version
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/020206.htm>

Fully Formatted Acrobat Version
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/020206.pdf>

About FreePint

FreePint (ISSN 1460-7239) is an online network of information workers. Members receive this free newsletter twice a month, packed with tips on finding and managing quality and reliable work-related information.

Joining is free at <http://www.freepint.com/> and provides access to a substantial archive of articles, reviews and events, with answers to research questions and networking at the FreePint Bar.

To read the fully-formatted version visit <http://www.freepint.com/issues/>. To receive a fully-formatted version as an attachment or a brief notification when it's online, visit <http://www.freepint.com/subs/>. Please circulate this newsletter, which is best read when printed out.

Editorial

When I studied for my information science degree at Aberystwyth University here in the UK, I remember we had a module on the 'reference interview'. It was in the 'information consultant' module and taught how to ask an information enquirer questions to qualify exactly what they are looking for.

I remember thinking how wonderful it would be to be an 'infomediary', able to tease out (through a process of gentle interrogation) the real underlying information need. Little did I know that the Web was about to be launched and, just a few years hence, that most information searching would be reduced to just one- or two-word searches in a handful of centralised information-seeking launch pads.

With a background in the mechanics of information storage, retrieval and dissemination, I marvel at the speed and quality of the search algorithms of the major search engines. However, there is still a big problem with finding very specific information. For that, you need to be able to formulate search questions precisely -- not only technologically (through advanced search syntax) but by articulating exactly what you need (with alternative keywords) and why you need it.

The lack of such skills is nowhere more evident than at the FreePint Bar, which has become a focus for tricky research questions that require human intervention. Information requests at the Bar are often made without any of the necessary contextual information, and therefore a 'virtual reference interview' needs to take place to find out exactly what is required and what has been tried already.

Jane Macoustra examines this behaviour in today's newsletter, where she explains how to get the most out of the information questions that are being posted at the Bar. There have been almost 30,000 questions and answers since the Bar's launch in 1999, but it's still the less-definable, non-technical queries which are the hardest to help with.

As we approach the bicentennial edition of the FreePint Newsletter later this month, do remember that there is a fully searchable archive of newsletters and Bar postings on the FreePint Web site <http://www.freepint.com/search/>, plus the last call for your comments in our member survey <http://www.freepint.com/go/b36367>.

Although I do believe that a professional qualification in 'information' can stand you in good stead for an interesting and rewarding career, basic information-literacy training is vitally important now for anyone using the Web for work-related purposes. Thanks to professionals like Jane Macoustra, this basic information training is becoming freely available, which helps to plug the hole of purely technologically-based information-seeking solutions.

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Lee McLean is Business and Multimedia Librarian at London Business School and a Masters student via distance learning with Victoria University, New Zealand.

Submit your top five favourite Web sites. See the guidelines at <http://www.freepint.com/author.htm>.

My Favourite Tipples

by Lee McLean

- After receiving strategically useful feedback from library users in our 2004 LibQUAL survey <http://www.libqual.org> we are repeating the process in 2006. The site also has an excellent collection of related publications.
- Content creators are watching the BBC mp3 downloading and podcasting trial with interest. Try it out now yourself <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio/downloadtrial/>.
- Whether organising an office party or client event, or just planning your next meal out, London Eating's customer reviews will tell you what a restaurant is REALLY like <http://www.london-eating.co.uk>.
- <http://www.dvdrr.com/> - I'm a 'DVDs by post' convert. Compare options, sign up and never be stressed out by an overdue rented film again.
- From the 'How To Library' to its Quick References, I use Webmonkey a lot. The HTML cheat sheet in particular is very helpful <http://hotwired.lycos.com/webmonkey/index.html>.

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Thomson's flagship product reviewed in VIP

The January 2006 issue of VIP reviews Thomson Business Intelligence, Thomson's new flagship product, that provides access to news, market research and broker research, via a single interface.

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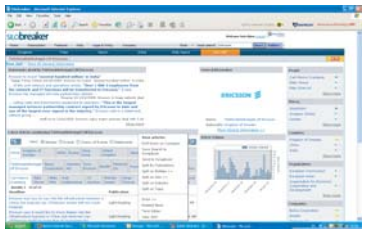

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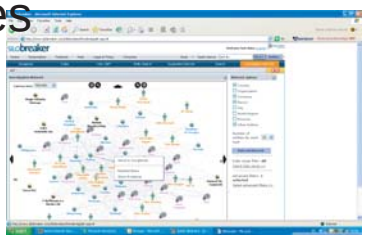

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7. You're done! Click the Login button and go straight to the service. From now on during the trial period, you can login straight from Silobreaker's homepage by using your username/password.

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Jinfo :: Jobs in information

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The Jinfo service enables you to search and advertise information-related job vacancies.

The Jinfo Newsletter is published free every two weeks, and contains a list of the latest vacancies along with job-seeking advice. The latest article is entitled "The Emotional Side of Career Transitions". Read it online and subscribe free at <http://www.jinfo.com/newsletter/>.

NB: There are 42 other jobs in the current edition of the Jinfo Newsletter <http://www.jinfo.com/newsletter/> and over 100 in the Jinfo database <http://www.jinfo.com/>.

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FreePint Bar

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Penny Hann, FreePint <penny.hann@freepint.com>

The FreePint Bar is where you can get free help with your tricky research questions <http://www.freepint.com/bar>

Subscribe to the twice-weekly email digests at <http://www.freepint.com/subs/>

There's a lot to get your teeth into this week: with such a wide range of postings, there should be something for everyone.

Let's start off with an unusual question: Do you know where to find posters featuring airlines, aircraft and airports, and holiday destinations that strongly imply airliners? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b36773>.

Or have you ever set up a 'learning zone' within a corporate information environment? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b36936>

This FreePinter is looking for an 'estimated population of information professionals by sector' <http://www.freepint.com/go/b36935>. Perhaps you know of a list of all trade associations and industry bodies <http://www.freepint.com/go/b36875> or a list of construction companies that provide international aid (for example, by building schools and hospitals in deprived areas)? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b36776>.

The latest issue of VIP Eye has just been published; it includes news on the Google and Motorola partnership, and the potential for mobile search <http://www.vivavip.com/go/l245>.

A number of VIP subscribers have requested a comparative review of market research products. Is this something that interests you? If so, please let Pam Foster (VIP's Editor) know which products you'd like her to include <http://www.vivavip.com/go/l255>.

These postings are computer-related queries:

Whenever an email is sent from a Hotmail address to an Ntlworld address it bounces back. Any ideas why? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b36858>

The St John Ambulance in Berkshire has a website but it is not showing up on search engines. Is there a cheap/free way of fixing this? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b36796>.

And finally, these dissertation-related postings at the FreePint Student Bar should get you thinking ...

The first is on the effectiveness of corporate governance in publicly owned enterprises <http://www.freepint.com/go/s4882> and the second is looking at how Google is used by university students for their assignments <http://www.freepint.com/go/s4887>. Do you know where to find material to help with these projects?

Penny Hann Production Editor, FreePint <penny.hann@freepint.com>

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Compare pay-as-you-go services in VIP

The December issue of VIP compared pay-as-you-go services from four major providers - Alacra, Dialog, Factiva and LexisNexis.

VIP compared coverage, search options, results, usability and more:

<http://www.vivavip.com/>

{the ugly truth}

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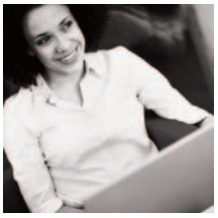

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S-001

"Learning languages online"

By Emma Thompson

Emma Thompson is a Hispanic Studies graduate and Information Specialist. She manages the Business and Languages Information Service (BLIS) at the University of Plymouth, a multimedia library within the Plymouth Business School. Emma has worked in free and fee-based business information in the public and private sector, and most recently in higher education. Contact Emma via http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/staff/ethompson

Introduction

According to the Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies <http://www.llas.ac.uk/> there are 700 reasons to learn languages. There are also, however, plenty of reasons why learning a language can be difficult, despite good intentions. Common reasons are lack of time, or unavailability of classes, or even bad memories of how you were taught at school.

The Internet can offer you instant access to authentic written, spoken languages and even whole language courses, depending on your available time and interest. Whether you are a complete beginner with "learn Spanish" on your list of goals, or someone who learnt French at school and has become rusty, the Internet offers you possibilities to learn and improve your language skills.

Much has changed since my last FreePint article on this subject in 1999 <http://www.freepint.com/issues/270599.htm#tips> - the increased adoption of broadband has made online audio and video manageable, MP3 players have entered the mainstream and now podcasting opens up huge possibilities. It seems a good time to revisit some sites to see what they now offer, and to showcase some of the new sites that can help a language learner. Obviously, I cannot cover all languages and all levels, but I hope to inspire (or kick-start) those who want to explore the possibilities for brushing up old skills or learning an entirely new language.

The basics

Are you a complete beginner, or did you study a language a long time ago? Perhaps you are not sure how good your language skills are now. You can gauge your current level online. BBC Languages is an excellent first stop <http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages>. It has a quick test to gauge your level in French, German, Spanish and Italian. Depending on your results, you will be directed to appropriate resources for your level and language.

For other languages, try Dialang <http://www.dialang.org/english>. Dialang is a European Union project, free to use, which tests and assesses your language level in 14 European languages.

Survey :: Understanding FreePint as an Online Community

We're trying to build a better understanding of the composition and needs of the FreePint community.

Please take two minutes to complete our survey: <http://www.freepint.com/go/b36367>

You may need the basics quickly; for example, greetings and introductions for a conference or a quick break abroad. You can also download key phrases from the BBC Languages site in 37 languages - these can be printed out or downloaded as an MP3 so you can take them with you on your MP3 player and hear the pronunciation spoken by a native.

For languages not covered by the BBC, try I Love Languages <http://www.ilovelanguages.com/>, which is a huge eclectic collection of language resources, linking to many online courses including lesser used languages.

Online courses

A portal such as I Love Languages will point to sites that have courses in specific languages - some charge a fee, but many are free. A couple of good ones are: German for Travellers <http://www.germanfortravellers.com/>; The Cervantes Institute Aula de Lengua for Spanish <http://cvc.cervantes.es/aula/>. The aforementioned BBC site has a wide variety of courses including videos that complement their programmes shown on the BBC Learning Zone slot. They can be used independently of the TV series, such as German Steps <http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/german/lj/>. For beginners, it is useful to reinforce basic phrases and master pronunciation by listening to key phrases spoken by a native speaker; these online offerings include audio and video that help the learner do exactly that.

Related FreePint links

"Training - Industrial/Vocational" articles in the FreePint Portal <http://www.freepint.com/go/p182>

Post a message to the author, Emma Thompson or suggest further resources at the FreePint Bar <http://www.freepint.com/bar>

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Media sites - podcasts and television

We all learn to speak our native language through listening, so it makes sense to use the many possibilities on the Internet for audio language learning. Radio stations have been available online for some time now, and if you have a broadband connection you can listen, at your leisure, to stations from Azerbaijan to Zimbabwe. Find the station to suit you at <http://www.radio-locator.com/>. The disadvantage is that unless you are quite an advanced learner, dipping into a random broadcast can be more frustrating than enjoyable. It can be tricky to pause or rewind, and it is easy to lose track of the speaker. You may miss some vocabulary or struggle to keep up with a presenter who has a strong accent or speaks fast. The other disadvantage is that you are limited to listening on your computer.

For the language learner, Podcasts overcome many of the difficulties associated with radio online. Podcast was the word of 2005, according to the New Oxford American dictionary. Podcasting has certainly jumped from obscurity into the mainstream in the past year <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/4504256.stm>. Many radio stations and individuals are now making podcasts available to download, and all of these resources are in many languages other than English. Podcasts are a tremendous resource for intermediate to advanced language learners. To find a list of many podcasts available go to podcast.net <http://www.podcast.net/>. You will then need to download software to organise your downloads - for example iTunes <http://www.apple.com/itunes/> from Apple, or ipodder <http://www.ipodder.org/directory/4/ipodderSoftware>.

With podcasts you can listen when it suits you, as many times as you wish, pause to look up a word, or repeat a small section until you understand it. Personally, podcasting allows me to indulge my love of Spanish cooking by signing up to the fortnightly podcast of Guisando.org <http://www.guisando.org/> and improve my Spanish at the same time. For beginners, there are also podcasts specifically designed for learners, offering regular advice on grammar and pronunciation, for example: Let's Speak German <http://learninggerman.mschubertberlin.de/podblog/>. Every day there are more podcasts available from radio stations and amateurs - why not free up some space on your MP3 player to learn a new language or improve rusty skills? With the podcast software, the programmes are automatically updated and can be copied to an MP3 player to listen anywhere - in the car, on the train, out jogging or in the gym - these can all be opportunities for improving your language skills.

Newspapers and magazines have been available online for some years. More recently, many have begun to restrict much of their content to subscribers or pay-per-view customers. However, newspaper sites can still be a useful resource for language learners. Use <http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/> to find newspapers by country.

By using TV station websites from other countries, you can watch and listen to news and current affairs from abroad <http://www.tv5.org/TV5Site/lf/langue_francaise.php/>. The French Television station TV5 has pages that are made specifically for learners, including language games and quizzes. Also for French, the Swiss TV channel TSR <http://www.tsr.ch/> streams much of its news content to view on-demand - with excellent quality pictures and audio. For Italian, the RAI site allows you to watch streamed news broadcasts <http://www.rai.it/>.

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Email and online shopping

We all use email daily, and online shopping is very well established. Both can be used to the advantage of language learners. For help with writing, why not find an email pen friend in your target language? The Tandem server <http://www.slf.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/> is based in Germany, but enables partnerships between language learners speaking dozens of languages. You can link up with a native speaker for an e-tandem partnership using email, or even sign up for phone tandem if you want to practice your speaking skills. Tandem language learning can be face-to-face, email or on the phone - the idea is that you help someone learn your native language in return for helping you with their native language. It is an excellent way of (virtually) meeting a native speaker and getting personalised help, for free. You make an agreement with your tandem partner; for example, you may agree to email once a week, half in your own language and half in the language of your partner - and then in your replies you correct each other's mistakes.

Aficionados of international cinema can also use films for language learning. When buying DVDs online, look carefully at the available subtitle options - depending on where you buy the DVD the options can change. For example, if you buy region 2 DVDs from abroad, for example, from Amazon Germany <http://www.amazon.de/>, you may find you have many more subtitle options than those you buy in the UK. The price difference, even with the additional postage costs, is not prohibitive. You can then view in the original language with subtitles in the same language - enabling you to follow the narrative without depending on English.

Of course, it is not just DVDs that you can order from abroad; you can also order books and music, which in the past were difficult to get hold of unless you had access to a specialist bookshop or were visiting the country.

With opportunities available to watch, listen and read in your target language, you don't need to have 700 reasons for learning a language, with the possibilities offered by the World Wide Web, there is simply no reason not to try,

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- KM and blogging
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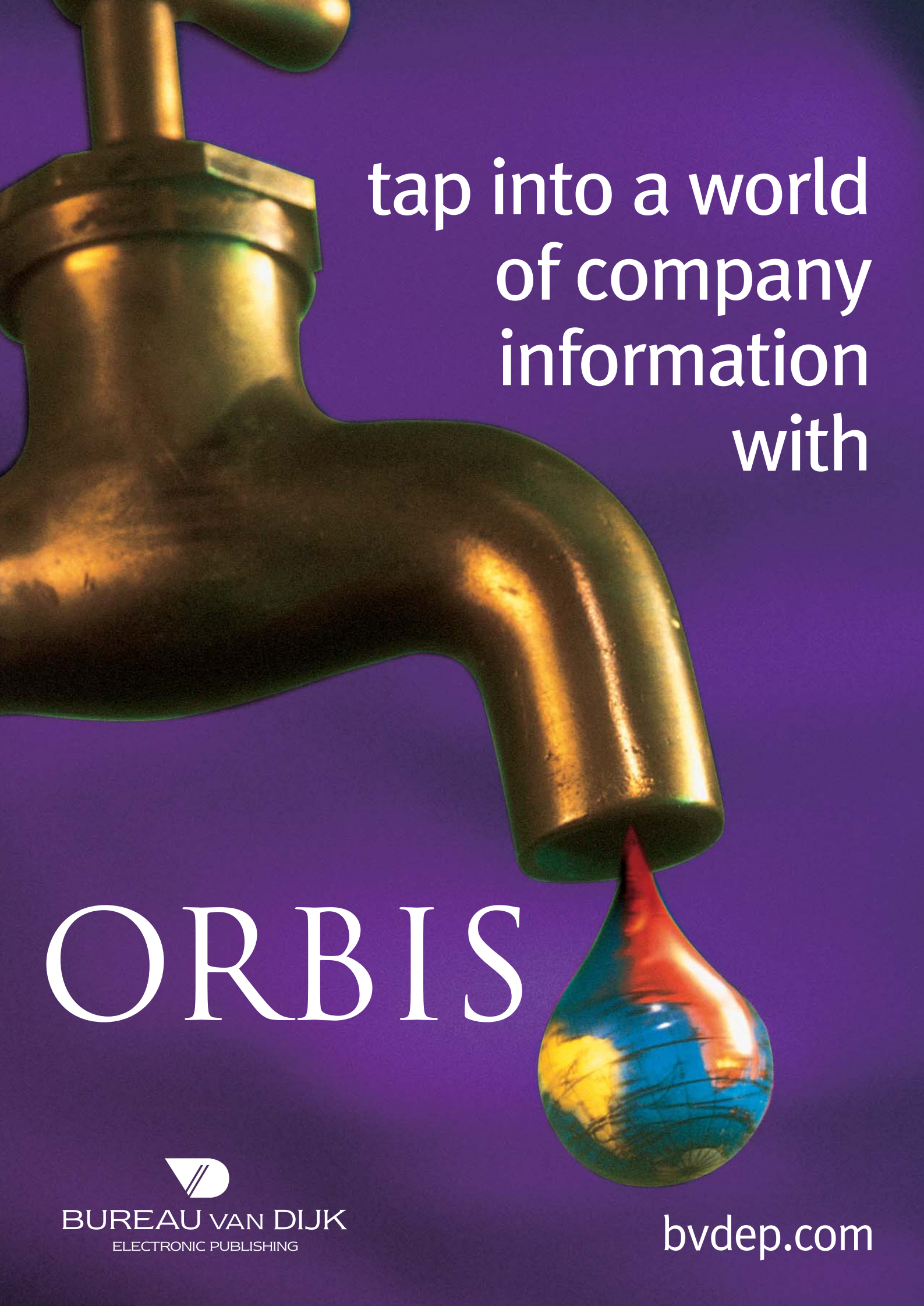
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" Knowledge-based working: intelligent operating for the knowledge age"

Reviewed by Jela Webb

Jela Webb, via her business, Azione, is a freelance strategic advisor, consultant and trainer in information and knowledge management, working with private and public sector clients. An associate of Ashridge, Learnership and TFPL, she has implemented KM programmes in FTSE 100 companies and has a particular interest in how best to manage and motivate knowledge workers.

She is also a Visiting University and Business School Lecturer and presents at KM conferences. As a writer, Jela has contributed articles to KM journals and last year published a report 'KM for SMEs: Solutions and Strategies'.

She may be contacted via <http://www.azione.co.uk>.

The author Steve Ellis has a number of years experience in Knowledge Based Working (KBW) both as a practitioner and an academic. Drawing upon personal experience, coupled with his doctoral research studies, he has written a very readable text, which focuses on the topic of 'knowledge work' from a human-relations perspective, rather than focusing on KM from a technology-led perspective.

In the 'knowledge age', many organisations are facing challenges - their most important and valuable assets are their people and theknowledge they use in day-to-day operations. For many, this calls for new HR management techniques, and this book is aimed at providing advice and guidance to those who find themselves managing 'knowledge workers', as well as those who need to have an appreciation of KBW to support their studies (professional qualifications and continued professional development).

The book is divided into four main chapters:

1. An introduction to Knowledge-Based Working - this covers definitions of KBW, how it is reflected in today's organizations and what it may mean to employees

2. Managing KBW and knowledge workers - this considers how knowledge workers should be 'managed' and how this differs from the ways in which managers have traditionally managed and motivated employees

3. The new rules of organisational behaviour for KBW - here, Ellis refers to a consultancy model to assist the reader (practitioner) to complete further analysis of KBW - referred to as the "4C's" of KBW - Commitment, Culture, Confusion and Convergence

4. The implications of KBW - in this final chapter, Ellis considers the immediate and future consequences of KBW from the perspectives of individuals, managers and organisations.

Readers will learn about the implications of the new knowledge economy, how KBW has the capacity to affect all organisations, and what impact this will have as KBW becomes the dominant model of working in the 21st century. The book also helps senior managers and executives to understand how KM affects them, their employees and the broader organisation. Organisations that have focused heavily on a KM systems approach will find this book provides them with some alternative/complementary methods that will help to support their present KM activities.

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Find out more about listing a vacancy today:

<http://www.jinfo.com/>

Chapters are interspersed with 'reflection points' allowing the reader to consider issues raised and each chapter concludes with a set of self-assessment questions. The book contains some practical case study examples, drawn from the author's experience, and these are presented in a way that reinforces learning points.

The book is a slim volume (136 pages) and written in a style that makes it accessible to both the novice and the expert. Ellis is a firm believer in the positive benefits that KBW brings. He shows very clearly how the vast majority of us are being exposed to KBW in these changing times and how we might adapt to the new ways of working.

Related FreePint links:

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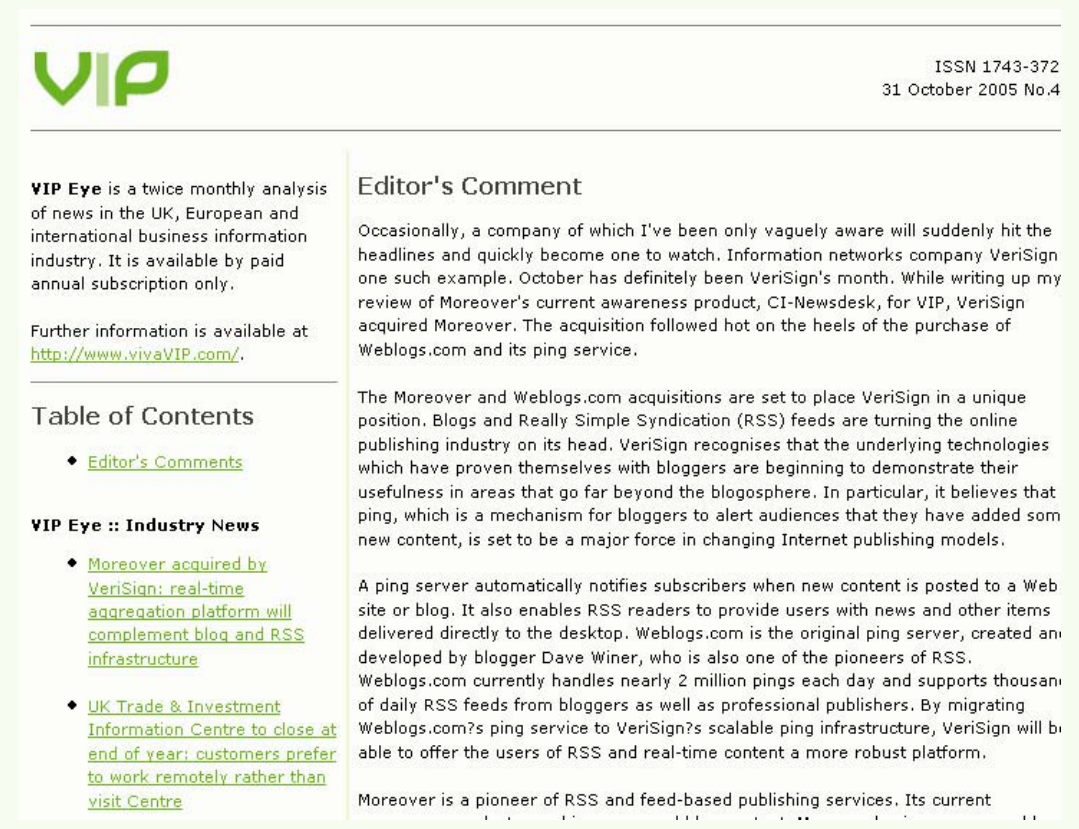

ISSN 1743-372
31 October 2005 No.4

VIP Eye is a twice monthly analysis of news in the UK, European and international business information industry. It is available by paid annual subscription only.

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Editor's Comment

Occasionally, a company of which I've been only vaguely aware will suddenly hit the headlines and quickly become one to watch. Information networks company VeriSign one such example. October has definitely been VeriSign's month. While writing up my review of Moreover's current awareness product, CI-Newsdesk, for VIP, VeriSign acquired Moreover. The acquisition followed hot on the heels of the purchase of Weblogs.com and its ping service.

The Moreover and Weblogs.com acquisitions are set to place VeriSign in a unique position. Blogs and Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds are turning the online publishing industry on its head. VeriSign recognises that the underlying technologies which have proven themselves with bloggers are beginning to demonstrate their usefulness in areas that go far beyond the blogosphere. In particular, it believes that ping, which is a mechanism for bloggers to alert audiences that they have added som new content, is set to be a major force in changing Internet publishing models.

A ping server automatically notifies subscribers when new content is posted to a Web site or blog. It also enables RSS readers to provide users with news and other items delivered directly to the desktop. Weblogs.com is the original ping server, created an developed by blogger Dave Winer, who is also one of the pioneers of RSS. Weblogs.com currently handles nearly 2 million pings each day and supports thousan of daily RSS feeds from bloggers as well as professional publishers. By migrating Weblogs.com?s ping service to VeriSign?s scalable ping infrastructure, VeriSign will b able to offer the users of RSS and real-time content a more robust platform.

Moreover is a pioneer of RSS and feed-based publishing services. Its current

"Bar Orphans: Getting your questions answered at the FreePint Bar"

By Jane Macoustra

Jane Macoustra has over twenty five years experience as an Information Professional, working for large corporations, investment banks and law firms including one of the magic circle law firms. She has recently worked in the public sector for a large County Council, and in the academic community teaching information literacy. During her career she has covered every aspect of librarianship. She runs her own consultancy business, Tai-Pan Research.

Jane is a member of CILIP, the AIIP and the Special Libraries Association where she is currently serving as the President for the Asian Chapter. Prior to this, Jane also served as a Director for the SLA Asian Chapter.

[The comments made in this article are solely the opinion of the author and are not representative of any other person or company.]

Why don't some questions get answered at the Bar?

I often log into the FreePint Bar <http://www.freepint.com/bar/> to see what questions are being asked, and I think the response from the tippling community is very good. But I have noticed that some of the questions end up with a long stream of responses, while other questions are all but ignored and turn into 'Bar Orphans' - lonely queries with nary a response. My assumption has been that the IT/technical type of questions generated the most responses.

Not long ago, I decided to make a special effort to try to answer the unanswered Bar questions, as an exercise in keeping my research skills honed. When I began this process it occurred to me that maybe the FreePint community didn't respond to some of the questions because the questions themselves were, in a sense, unanswerable.

Creating answerable questions -- information literacy

One aspect of the discipline of information literacy is knowing how to ask a question in such a way that a researcher can respond without having to ask for clarifications. Asking questions is a skill that comes naturally to some; for others, however, it is not so easy.

Many libraries and information centres rely on systems for research requests that require the requestor to complete specific fields. These systems allow the library or information centre to compile statistical data on what work is being requested, as well as how much time is spent on the research work; for institutions that charge back their time and/or costs, this step is a must. They also ensure that the researcher has basic, clear information before the work commences.

Sometimes the requestor does not have a clear idea of what he/she really needs to complete the assignment. Sometimes it's hard to know what you need until you know what's out there, but you can't know what's out there until you start the research.

One reason the Bar is popular is that many professionals, who need information to do their work effectively, do not understand how to undertake the research. But if the responses they receive are off- topic from their real needs, requestors may feel frustrated by the experience as well as the answer provided. Yet they may not realise that they need to frame their requests differently in order to get better results.

Asking a question

Many people start a query by thinking about what they expect the research results to be. This is not necessarily the correct strategy to take when formulating a question. For example, if you need information on the shoe manufacturing industry in the UK, you'd probably be expecting someone to send you a link to a shoe manufacturing association portal. Fine, but what if you can enhance that research by looking a bit closer at the industry? Rather than thinking about those ideal end results, think laterally and divide the industry up into sectors: children's shoes, women's shoes, men's shoes, industrial wear, and (come to think of it) where do the emergency services obtain their footwear? Consider both the big picture and the details in order to come up with an answer that is as valuable as possible. Look for the bigger picture, otherwise the answer is quick and dirty and does not hold as much value.

The sort of questions that requestors should ask themselves, before taking any further steps, are:

- What do I need?
- Why do I need it?
- How can I make the question more explicit? Is there more than one description (synonym) for what I need?
- Is there an acronym for what I am looking for?
- What search terms would narrow down or expand the results?
- What don't I want? Are there any antonyms that can describe what isn't required?
- Is this a specialist subject?

Related FreePint links

'Information and Libraries' articles in the FreePint Portal <http://www.freepint.com/go/p69>

Post a message to the authors, Jane Macoustra, or suggest further resources at the FreePint Bar <http://www.freepint.com/bar>

Read this article online, with activated hyperlinks <http://www.freepint.com/issues/020206.htm#feature>

Access the entire archive of FreePint content <http://www.freepint.com/portal/content/>

- What additional information can I provide that may assist the researcher?
- Where have I have already looked?
- Is all the spelling in my request correct?
- Is the grammar in my request correct?

A number of requests at the Bar for information have proven unanswerable without additional information, including:

- Region, country, county, or city
- How recent the information needs to be
- How detailed the information needs to be

If the query was, for example, "information on the development of the number of manufacturing jobs in Japan, China and India", the following information could be used to formulate the question:

Manufacturing what?
Manufacturing where?
Competitors are who?
Litigation pending?
Good/bad press?
Statistics?

Then, the question could be asked as follows:

"I need to locate statistical data on the number of jobs in the manufacturing of white goods/washing machines/fridges/microwaves /tumble driers in Japan, China and India in the last two years to enable me to see what trends are occurring within this industry. I don't need this information for Macau, Hong Kong or Taiwan. I have already checked on Google, but did not find much that was relevant".

The results you get depend entirely on what you ask for and how you ask for it. You may require a quick response or a more detailed answer.

Before asking a question, it is a good idea to produce a mind map around a Venn diagram <http://digbig.com/4qdet> of what you need, and also a reverse mind map on the same page in a different colour, showing what you don't need or what may be useful. A mind map would enable you to formulate the questions posed above much more easily. If you don't know enough about your subject, use a dictionary such as Onelook <http://www.onelook.com/>. Onelook has almost 1000 dictionaries indexed, and also has a great reverse look-up facility that is still in Beta testing mode. Some of the dictionaries are specialised and can assist with difficult topics.

Also consider how the response to one question can enable you to answer other questions. If you need information for six countries/industries/legal systems, etc., why not ask for information on just one area and then apply the information provided to the rest of the other areas yourself? That way, you learn more about what goes into a research plan and can opt to do the work yourself - or at least be better informed about how to frame the questions for best results. Bar responders are generous in providing not just answers to questions but guidance on sources, approaches, and research know-how.

If you try the suggestions I have given above, you may eventually find that you have focused your ideas enough to do the research yourself. If you still prefer to ask, then at least you will know that you are asking as well as possible and not creating a Bar Orphan.

Conclusion

Unanswered questions languish at both the Bar and the Student Bar, although the Student Bar does not appear to have as many non-respondents. I suspect this could be mainly because the students are usually asking for assistance with a subject for their dissertations and not asking specific research questions. Still, some Student Bar questions go unanswered, which suggests that although students have been inducted at Higher Education level on how to use the library and what is available to them, some are not attending the information literacy classes which are freely available to them. A large number of students expect to find everything they need on the Internet and don't appreciate the free use of the proprietary databases that are available to them while they are studying. Therefore, some students struggle to use the databases and they don't know the best way to formulate a question for research assistance.

Information practitioners are happy to assist at both Bars, and frequently do so. Using the tips in this article will help newcomers and veterans alike ask the kinds of questions we most love to devote our (free) services and energies to: answerable ones.

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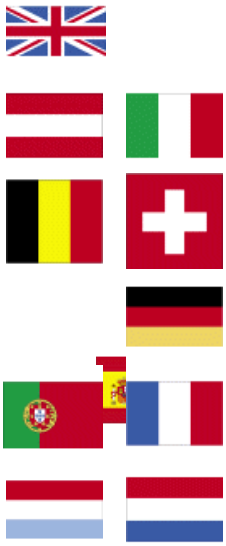

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- "Focusing on Data Protection & Privacy" 2nd March <http://www.freepint.com/go/e624>
- "Working with Agencies - Fostering a Prosperous Working Relationship" 8th March <http://www.freepint.com/go/e658>

Canada:

- "2006 Government & Health Technologies Conference & Expo" 8th - 9th March <http://www.freepint.com/go/e620>

United States:

- "Braintrust International 2006" 20th - 22nd February <http://www.freepint.com/go/e656>
- "Strategic & Operational Portfolio Management" 27th February - 1st March <http://www.freepint.com/go/e654>
- "Linking Customer Feedback to Business Results" 27th February - 1st March <http://www.freepint.com/go/e655>
- "Spring 2006 ASIDIC meeting" 12th - 14th March <http://www.freepint.com/go/e619>
- "Lean Design & Development" 12th - 15th March <http://www.freepint.com/go/e652>
- "Achieving Customer Service Excellence" 13th - 15th March <http://www.freepint.com/go/e653>
- "JISC Conference 2006" 14th March <http://www.freepint.com/go/e633>

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A look back at what FreePint covered at this time in previous years:

- FreePint No.176 10th February 2005. "Understanding Consumers through Online Competitive Intelligence" and "Child Rights: Is Information really free for all?" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/100205.htm>
- FreePint No.153 5th February 2004. "Disintegrating Digital Fences: Finding Business Information in Ukraine and its Neighbouring Countries" and "10 things you should know about the UK's Freedom of Information regime" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/050204.htm>
- FreePint No.130 6th February 2003. "Online Library Catalogues" and "Patent Searching Without Words - Why Do It, How To Do It?" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/060203.htm>
- FreePint No.105, 7th February 2002. "Business Information in Germany" and "Pay Per Click Search Engines and Promoting your Website" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/070202.htm>
- FreePint No.80, 1st February 2001. "An adventure in ADSL: the Superhighway finally becomes 'super'?" and "E-Books" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/010201.htm>
- FreePint No.55, 3rd February 2000. "Classical Music Web Sites" and "Researching the Researchers - Finding Market Research Agencies on the Web" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/030200.htm>
- FreePint No.31, 4th February 1999. "Researching from home" and "Internet Resources for Seniors" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/040299.htm>
- FreePint No.7, 5th February 1998. "Fabricating Information" and "Engineering resources: examples and sources" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/050298.htm>

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