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Editorial

Rates of pay for information professionals are rarely discussed at the Free Pint Bar. However, our Jobs database has raised awareness of remuneration for information-related vacancies, and one Bar poster made the following observation last week:

"... what strikes me - as someone who entered the field 3.5 years ago and who has trained on the job - is how badly paid information professionals are. Shouldn't we be pushing to raise the status of the work?"
<[http://www.freepint.com/
go/b17329](http://www.freepint.com/go/b17329)>

A reply on the same day agreed that financial rewards are poor for information professionals. The respondent says that we are discouraging 'Web savvy' people from entering the information profession, and that as a result they gravitate to computing and IT. Not only does this damage the profession, but also the quality of information organisation on intranets, extranets and the Internet. He says that we are the best people to build the 'info chassis', not the programmers:

"The profession needs to blow its trumpet about the real benefits that an information professional can bring to a networked environment. Further, the profession needs to set an example and recruit info professionals for web posts when they arise ... After all, if we don't believe in the migration of traditional library skills to the web, then who else will?" <[http://www.freepint.com/
go/b17333](http://www.freepint.com/go/b17333)>

I myself did a degree in Information Science at Aberystwyth. It was great because it straddled both information and computing. The Information Science half was dedicated to information management, information retrieval, etc., whilst the Computer Science half covered basic programming, databases, SQL, etc. This has proven to be an excellent foundation, both in my previous work at information vendors, and here at Free Pint. Imagine how amazed I was to hear that the year after I left they closed the course due to 'lack of demand'.

Over the last few years there have been many concerns about the future of the information industry. I personally think we've never had so

many opportunities, but we need to acknowledge a few things ...

We shouldn't moan that graduates don't have basic reference and database searching skills if we're not willing to communicate this to the library schools. It doesn't matter that knowledge management is being taught in a business school, as long as the students are also getting a grounding from the information school in information science.

All good information professionals have the ability to work and communicate with other departments, functions, faculties, etc. We can raise the status and visibility of the information industry by utilising the skills of others whilst at the same time demonstrating how invaluable our own skills are; those of information organisation, retrieval, architecture, etc.

We must constantly review remuneration, both with peers and with similar positions in different industries. We have to continually benchmark our services and demonstrate the importance of information awareness within all organisations. When we do this we raise our perceived value.

So, what do you think? Is this an issue or do I have a bee in my bonnet again? Can individuals really make a difference to the status of the information profession? How can we attract people to become 'information professionals'? Perhaps this isn't a problem in other countries where information is held in higher regard? Or maybe the information industry is broadening much faster than we think?

I have posted this Editorial to the Bar, and so please post your comments and thoughts to
<[http://www.freepint.com/
go/b17417](http://www.freepint.com/go/b17417)>.

I hope you enjoy today's Free Pint where we look at resources for international law, Weblogs, and the usual mix of job listings, reviews and tips. A big thank you to all our sponsors and advertisers, and to you for your continued support of the Free Pint community.

Best regards
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My Favourite Tipples from David Tucker

Questions about market research on the Web often crop up in the Free Pint Bar. Not much is free, but these sites help with the two costed stages a) finding an off-the-shelf, published report, or b) commissioning a specialist consultant or company to do the research (usually much more expensive). DIY research has been helped by the Internet, but it's still worth knowing what's been published or chatting to a specialist first.

- <http://www.marketresearch.com> - An international directory of 50,000 published reports from 350 companies. Search and order by topic, whole report or chunks.
- <http://www.marketsearch.com> - A long-established directory of 20,000 published reports, not only from MR publishers. Search by industry code. Registration and payment required for full details of reports.
- <http://www.bmra.org.uk> - The UK's trade association for MR companies. (The Market Research Society is the professionals' body.) Register to use Selectline - search for a specialist in a topic area, by postcode etc. Links to Esomar, the international trade association.
- <http://www.mori.com> - One of the oldest and most famous MR and polling companies. Website offers fascinating snippets of current and archived survey results. Topics include society, politics, business.
- <http://www.tnsfres.com> - Corporate site of the UK's biggest MR agency, for insight into MR industry news, and more snippets of recent research findings.

David Tucker is a freelance consultant in market research and business information consultant, commuting between London and Scotland. Specialisation - leisure and travel, UK and Europe. Email your top five favourite Web sites to simon@freepint.com or see the guidelines at <http://www.freepint.com/author.htm>.

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http://www.online-information.co.uk/online/conf_call_speaker.asp for full details of conference themes and how to submit your paper.
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Free Pint Gold

This time last year we ran a smashing article to help find out about funds online. Very valuable to anyone in the UK with savings, a mortgage, etc. The Feature was a discussion of Middle-Eastern business information sites; interesting in these turbulent times.

- Free Pint No.86, 26th April 2001. "Investment Funds" and "Searching for the ultimate Middle East business site" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/260401.htm>

Two years ago we reviewed aerospace links, and the TEFL article was coincidentally written by someone in the Middle East.

- Free Pint No.61, 27th April 2000. "Top sites on the Web for Air Transport" and "The Internet as a tool for teaching English as a Foreign Language" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/270400.htm>

In 1999 the focus was on sites with 'outdoor' information, along with a look at accessing engineering trade journals online.

- Free Pint No.37, 29th April 1999. "Finding Outdoor Information on the

UK Company Directors Exposed - Not Literally

Whether you have a dispute or are just nosy, an 8 pound 'Individual Director Report' reveals an awful lot about a UK company Director:

<http://www.freepint.com/icc/sample>

Web" and "Something for nothing? Engineering e-journals"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/290499.htm>

Four years ago, when Free Pint hit its teens, Martin White provided a list of mainly US intranet resources. This tricky teenager (Free Pint, not Martin White) didn't believe in reading books, hence no book reviews, and had misnamed the Free Pint Bar the Free Pint Forum.

- Free Pint No.13, 30th April 1998. "Intranet Resources on the Web" and "Access IAC Direct Through InSite Pro" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/300498.htm>

About Free Pint

Free Pint is an online community of information researchers. Members receive this free newsletter every two weeks packed with tips on finding quality and reliable business information on the Internet.

Joining is free at <http://www.freepint.com> and provides access to the substantial archive of articles, book reviews, jobs, industry news & events, with answers to your research questions and networking at the Free Pint Bar. Pay to upgrade your membership and also receive the weekly Free Pint Pub Crawl current awareness newsletter.

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

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Free Pint Bar
In Association with Factiva
a Dow Jones & Reuters Company
Reviewed by Simon Collery

<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/020502.htm#bar>>

Free Pint Bar <<http://www.freepint.com/bar>>

[Note: To read a posting enter the message number in place of XXXXX in the address

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/bXXXXX>>]

I didn't think I'd find the question "What is .net?" (17179) particularly interesting. However, I am intrigued by the putative explanation, which mentions that "Napster ... uses a rich client talking to a directory service in the cloud". Maybe the cloud is just a smokescreen, really.

Equally baffling is how to answer the question about how badly paid the information professions are (17329). Perhaps there's an inverse proportion between how important politicians and journalists say a profession is and how well they get paid. So if they keep puffing the information professions we'll soon be as badly paid as nurses and teachers.

Anyhow, I should cut to the quick and mention some of the postings that have not yet received a response. They are about biotech news information sources (17213), companies that can do business research at short notice (17172), the educational applications of interactive TV (17167), UK pizza wholesalers (17171), language resources for semantic search applications (17227), a list of marketing managers for UK IT companies (17195) and the optimum distance of information resources from the average office worker (17178).

Other business queries have been about the company, cwcom.net (17286), researching a UK hospital (17257), libraries that hold Mintel Reports (17267), English language resources for researching Finnish companies (17223) and resources in any language for researching Luxembourg companies (17367).

There were industry related postings about ethical investments (17385), the Timber and Brick Information Council (17268), IEC and equivalent engineering standards (17152), the German clothing market (17396) and the UK Motor Market (17245).

Good resources have been recommended for anyone interested in online surveys (17324), patent research (17156), UK yellow page information (17200), building and construction publications for various European countries (17278), intranet policy documents (17358), lists of online forums (17334) and locating journal articles, in this case, one appearing in Nature (17303).

I reviewed a useful source of glossaries for translators (17253) and a frequent contributor to Free Pint recommended a Web site on the philosophy of Ayn Rand and an article on setting up a Web site on the cheap (17190).

There were quite a lot of technical queries so I'll start with the ones that have not yet been answered. They were about

**Information Vacancies
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Whether you're looking for an information-related job, or have a vacancy to fill, visit Free Pint Jobs:

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**Factiva Launches 2002
White Paper Series**

Factiva launches its 2002 White Paper Series with a new report on the value of information tools. Free, Fee-Based and Value-Added Information Services considers the quality, availability and value of information on free Web sites, fee-based Web sites and value-added information services. To learn more visit:

http://factiva.com/collateral/files/whitepaper_feevsfree_032002.pdf

Quick Books software (17255), Hemscott's Company Guru (17277), software for giving repeat prescriptions over the Internet (17238), the library management software, Autolib (17276), retrieving files on PCs (17401) and inserting hyperlinks in pdf documents (17170).

Techies have also been posting messages about Gator (17221), library management archiving systems (17373), downloading the Quicktime viewer (17263), preventing your modem from automatically disconnecting you (17346), printer options in IE (17382), mobile computing software (17240), software for testing link collections (17153), intranet in a box software (17228), validating URLs in a database (17173) and receiving free SMS notification about emails (17287).

Quantitative data has been sought in the form of Indian pharmaceutical industry statistics (17196), IT expenditure in US colleges and universities (17219), the minimum sales figures for new products in their first five years (17177), the historical rankings of the world's top ten mining companies (17183), UK household debt figures from the 1950s onwards (17290) and the number of hours of original TV programming in an, as yet, unspecified geographical region (17258).

Miscellaneous, there have been a number of music related questions, one about a folk song or nursery rhyme (17354) and a number about TV advertisements (17220, 17319, 17337, 17335). And apparently there is some data on how big Noah's Ark needed to be (17251).

Other difficult to classify queries were about Beecham's Buildings Ltd. (17357), some chemical symbols (17232), the source of several quotations (17384, 17204, 17266), UK aircraft maintenance checklists (17181), lists of best selling books (17248), a free or cheap colour chart for official UK colours (17205), dates for school holidays around the world (17209) and the possibility of setting up an information professionals' group in the UK West Country (17366). And that's it for the moment!

Free Pint Student Bar

<<http://www.freepint.com/student>>

[Note: To read a posting enter the message number in place of XXXX in the address

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/sXXXX>>]

Students' holidays are now over but they haven't been in the Student Bar much yet. However, there were a couple of queries, one about computer ethics postdoctoral courses (2473) and one from a student researching child safety online. He's looking for residents of London, UK, to fill in a questionnaire (2477).

Simon Collery, Content Developer
<simon@freepint.com>

Glen Recruitment

Glen Recruitment is a leading independent Employment Consultancy dealing in the recruitment of Information Specialists, Knowledge Professionals, Business Analysts, Researchers and Librarians. We provide both permanent and temporary staff at all levels from Senior Managers to recent Graduates. Our client list could not be more exceptional and includes prestigious organisations of all sizes. For more details call 020 7745 7245 email info@glenrecruitment.co.uk

Free Pint Jobs

<http://www.freepint.com/jobs>

As well as the selected listings below, check out the weekly Bar postings which list the latest additions to Free Pint Jobs. This week's can be found at <http://www.freepint.com/go/b17391> and last week's at <http://www.freepint.com/go/b17265>.

Here are some of the latest featured jobs:

Web Editor

<http://www.freepint.com/go/j1738>

Web editor for successful business information portal. Must be fluent in a European language with strong written English.

Recruiter: Alacra, Inc

Information Specialist

<http://www.freepint.com/go/j1761>

Information Analyst/Researcher for involved role with major Law Practice. Corporate Affairs experience helpful.

Recruiter: Glen Recruitment

Team Librarian

<http://www.freepint.com/go/j1773>

Located West of London? Want P/T or F/T library work? Children's or Local Studies work interest you? Variety is the spice of life!

Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment

[The above jobs are paid listings]

Free Pint Jobs is THE place for information-related vacancies. Whether you're job searching or have a position to fill, you should be using Free Pint Jobs.

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"We have, and will continue, to recommend them as a company who offer a super service and advice in plain English. Which in today's world of 'jargon-bingo' meetings is, in our opinion, invaluable." Better Business

<http://www.freepint.com/help/hosting/custom.htm>

Events

<http://www.freepint.com/events>

Yes, it's well and truly conference season. In the UK you'll have to get your skates on if you want to catch Aslib's one-day conference "Mobilising Knowledge for Business Performance" which takes a practical and participative approach to discussing KM issues <http://www.freepint.com/go/e104>. "Online Information for the City" will be of interest to those "... who are implementing knowledge management solutions, or integrating internal and external information on a corporate intranet" <http://www.freepint.com/go/e118>.

The British Library and xrefer are offering "The Librarian's Challenge of Delivering Online" to help us deal "... with the challenges posed by an increasingly sophisticated and demanding user base" <http://www.freepint.com/go/e134>.

You can also catch the "Update 2002" from the Aslib Electronics Group <http://www.freepint.com/go/e107>, "e-biz summit" from the World Trade Group <http://www.freepint.com/go/e82>, and the "International Conference on Virtual Communities" from Infonortics <http://www.freepint.com/go/e109>.

Across the sea, the "Competia International Symposium 2002" in Massachusetts offers plenty of opportunities to network, as does the "InfoToday 2002" umbrella conference in New York <http://www.freepint.com/go/e113>.

Details of these and many other conferences in the information industry can be found on the Free Pint Events page <http://www.freepint.com/events>. Submit details of your event for free promotion, and keep us informed about any changes to current listings.

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**"The Internet Legal Guide:
Everything you need to know when
doing business online"
Written by Dennis Powers
Reviewed by Paul Pedley**

This book aims to be a common-sense easy to read publication on what is legal and practical when using the net. It covers issues relating to the internet and ecommerce, and points out ways of minimising the legal risks involved. The internet legal guide gives tips on how to design and create your own website, and to do so in a way that fulfils any legal requirements.

The book provides sample wording for a number of legal agreements such as a text licensing agreement, image licensing agreement, privacy policies, e-commerce agreement, or web site terms of use.

Dennis Powers covers a lot of ground in this book, dealing with topics such as copying or posting text and non text items on the net, and how to protect your intellectual property; the myth of anonymity on the web and electronic trails; defamation and libel; data protection and privacy issues; web privacy statements; how to limit the amount of spam that you get; fraud and scams; "clickwrap" agreements; electronic signatures; domain name disputes; and how to deal with buying shoddy or inferior goods from legitimate firms.

The book is written from a US legal perspective, although the very nature of the internet means that much of the material is relevant to people based elsewhere around the world. It is written in a very clear and straightforward manner, and deliberately tries to avoid the use of legalese. In addition to looking at how the law applies to the various activities carried out on the web, the book also considers the use of netiquette to determine your conduct. The author says that you will need to apply a standard of reasonableness to your

dealings in cyberspace "regardless of whether statute at that time regulates such conduct. The courts will for sure".

The question of whether people can link freely on the web is discussed and this covers issues such as deep linking, the use of frames technology and meta tags. There is also a sample form of wording for a linking permission agreement, whether this be with or without payment.

The global nature of the internet has shown all too clearly the conflict of laws that exists because of the differences in the laws of nations around the world. Since cyberspace knows no boundaries, the book considers the question of which law is applicable; and also looks at the ways of resolving legal disputes. Arbitration is discussed, as well as the possibility of incorporating an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) provision into contracts. The author points out that whilst the development of specific laws on a country-to-country basis has not kept pace with the internet's growth and changes, the vast structure of legal concepts and laws that are already in place is often sufficient for many users to determine what they can or cannot safely do.

There is an index and selected bibliography. But I think that the book would benefit from having a separate listing of the legal cases cited, with the full citations to make it easier for those wishing to follow up on some of the cases mentioned.

Paul Pedley is Head of Research at the Economist Intelligence Unit. He is a member of the steering group for the JISC Legal Information Service <<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/legal>>, and a regular speaker and writer on legal issues such as copyright and data protection.

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To propose an information-related book for review, send details to <bookshelf@freepint.com>.

Tips Article

<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/020502.htm#tips>>

"International Law"
By Mike Mecham

International Law has a long history but the tragic events of 11 September 2001 have brought it into sharp focus. Throughout the media, academics, lawyers and politicians are to be found examining many issues of international law, particularly in areas such as armed conflict, terrorism, the rules of war, sovereignty and human rights. This, at a time when the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in the Hague is proceeding against Slobodan Milosevic <<http://www.un.org/icty/index.html>>.

What, therefore, is international law and what areas of international relations does it cover? Even a cursory examination shows the coverage to be extensive. But where is the citizen to go for information? A good textbook, though primarily for the student, might be the 2001 edition of Antonio Cassese's 'International Law' with its own linked website <<http://www.oup.com/uk/best.textbooks/law/cassese>>.

However, for the citizen at large, as well as the student, a vast amount of information on international law and associated issues is available through the Internet. This article offers an initial introduction, particularly for readers not familiar with the subject. It is inevitably selective and does not cover the full spread of subjects, including trade, see <<http://www.wto.org>>, and financial institutions, see <<http://www.worldbank.org>>.

Search Engines

A good starting point is a trusted search engine such as Google <<http://www.google.com>>, Northern Light <<http://www.northernlight.com>>, which is useful for international relations issues, or Yahoo! Law <<http://dir.yahoo.com/Government/Law>>. There are also several other legal specific search engines e.g. Findlaw (US) <<http://www.findlaw.com>>; Legal Engine (US) <<http://www.legalengine.com>>; World Law (Australasia) <<http://www.austlii.edu.au/links/index.html>>.

Portals

However, at least four portals offer extensive gateways into international law:

Guide to Electronic Resources for International Law <<http://www.ajil.org/resource/hom.htm>>

This forms part of the website of the American Journal of International Law. After an introductory section, the guide is divided into different subject areas e.g. human rights, international economic law, treaties and so on. The guide has additional value because it not only provides extensive links through its subject headings but also includes a

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What better way to contact current job seekers?

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<<http://www.freepint.com/jobs>>

narrative for each entry which helps to more readily identify appropriate sites. This is helpful with a slower PC as it reduces wasted time on inappropriate links. Highly recommended.

Legal Research on International Law Issues Using the Internet <<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/~lrou/forintl.html>>

This website is maintained by the University of Chicago Law School. It again has an extensive array of links with a table of contents more detailed than that provided by the AJIL. However, there is little narrative and links are simply identified through generic title. A useful supplement to the AJIL guide.

Guide to Foreign and International Legal Databases <http://www.law.nyu.edu/library/foreign_intl/>

Maintained by the New York University School of Law, the website provides access to a vast array of databases covering subjects from taxation, copyright to environmental, international, international trade, international criminal law and human rights. A very good backup.

Internet Website Index

<<http://home.att.net/~sломansonb/intlweb.html>>

This is the most basic portal, providing a simple alphabetical/topic index, though running through 34 pages e.g. air law, country studies. A useful backup.

Institutional Websites

The websites of the major institutions of international law include the following:

United Nations <<http://www.un.org/english>>

This is the main UN website with links to others of importance, primarily through its international law link <<http://www.un.org/law>>. From here can be accessed treaties, law of the sea, trade law, criminal tribunals, and a research guide to UN documents.

Particularly useful is

<<http://www.un.org/databases/index.html>>, the UN database, which includes Dag Hammarskjold Library online catalogue, voting records and index to speeches.

International Court of Justice <<http://www.icj-cij.org>>

The ICJ, which sits at The Hague, was set up in 1945 under the UN Charter and acts as a world court. Its website provides extensive information on the Court, its history, purpose, members, decisions, texts on key cases.

International Criminal Court

<<http://www.un.org/law/icc/index.html>>

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court was adopted in 1998 by a UN conference and opened for

signature. It has now received the required 60 ratifications and will enter into force on 1 July 2002. It has been ratified by the UK but not the USA. The website is very detailed, providing an overview, ratification status, access to key documents, and associated bodies.

International Law Commission
<<http://www.un.org/law/ilc/introfra.htm>>

The ILC was established by the UN General Assembly in 1947 to promote the progressive development of international law and its codification. It meets annually and is composed of 34 members elected as independents by the General Assembly for five year terms. Most of ILC's work involves preparation of drafts on topics of international law. The website provides full access to key documentation and the working of the ILC.

Human Rights

The question of human rights is now a central concern of international relations and international law. Websites abound and those below again offer a good introduction:

Human Rights Internet <<http://www.hri.ca/welcome.cfm>>

Based in Ottawa, the HRI aims to offer human rights activists and organisations in particular, but also governments and international agencies, an information resource on human rights issues and the role of civil society. The website includes access to full text reports on various topics, including international law. It also offers a range of subscription databases. One of its most useful (free) tools is the Human Rights Internet Directory <<http://www.hri.ca/coldfusion/cfidir>>, a researchable database of human rights websites recorded by site context, features, geographical focus, key words and more.

Council of Europe Human Rights Web
<<http://www.humanrights.coe.int>>

This website provides public access to information about the Human Rights activities of the Council of Europe. It includes the European Court of Human Rights, case law, activities, the texts of conventions.

Amnesty International <<http://www.amnesty.org>>

This award winning website needs no introduction. The premier NGO in the field. Website includes news, copies of reports and links to other websites.

Human Rights Watch <<http://www.hrw.org>>

The largest human rights organisation based in the United States, with worldwide links and offices in other countries, including London. Its website again offers a huge resource, including country briefings, specific country reports and the full text of its World Report (currently 2002).

Interights <<http://www.interights.org>>

The International Centre for the Legal Protection of Human Rights, is an international human rights law centre established in 1982. It aims to support and promote the development of legal protection for human rights and freedoms worldwide. Its website includes databases on Commonwealth and international case law. Also available

is a lengthy and detailed analysis on 'Responding to September 11: The Framework of International Law' by the Legal Director of Interights, Helen Duffy.

Human Rights Library
<<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/index.html>>

A website maintained by the University of Minnesota to give access to over 7,000 human rights documents on subjects ranging from treaties and UN documents to bibliographies and research guides, together with links to 3,600 other sites.

Directory of Human Rights Resources on the Internet
<<http://shr.aaas.org/dhr>>

The Directory provides descriptions and links to hundreds of human rights organizations worldwide on the Internet, organized by site name, topical focus, and geographical focus. It is maintained by the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Specific key documents with direct access are: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 <<http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>>, the European Convention of Human Rights in English <<http://www.echr.coe.int/Eng/BasicTexts.htm>> and the UK Human Rights Act 1998 <<http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/19980042.htm>>.

Journals

There has been a proliferation of, primarily U.S., Law School Journals. Many have their own websites with contents lists, though few have online texts. Useful general websites for identifying law journals include:

Law Journals on the World Wide Web
<<http://www.law.cam.ac.uk/urllists/law-jour.htm>>, maintained by the Faculty of Law at the University of Cambridge, it lists journals which have some substantive full text content online.

Electronic Law Journals
<<http://ials.sas.ac.uk/links/Serials.htm>> is a comprehensive list maintained by the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies. It indicates whether the links provide full-text, abstracts, contents or homepage.

Law Reviews <<http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/lawrev.htm>> is a website maintained by the Jurist Legal Education network listing a vast range of law review journals.

The best single site for full text access is the European Journal of International Law <<http://www.ejil.org>>. It has complete access for Vols 1 (1990) to 9 (1998) and abstracts and selected full-text articles from 1999 onwards.

The excellent American Journal of International Law <<http://www.asil.org/abtajo.htm>> has an index of the issues from 1997 onwards and selected articles online from each issue. Full text is available through Lexis Professional subscription. The Stanford Journal of International Law <<http://www.law.stanford.edu/sjil>> has full contents pages going back to Vol 26, (1990), and the American University International Law Review <<http://www.wcl.american.edu/pub/ilr/home.htm>> has useful abstracts for all issues. But Emory International Law Review offers full-text online <<http://www.law.emory.edu/EILR/eilrhome.htm>>.

Other sources

There are a range of other websites containing useful

information and material:

Avalon Project

<<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/avalon.htm>> at the Yale Law school giving access to a vast array of documents in law, history and diplomacy from the 18th to the 21st centuries e.g. the Monroe Doctrine, Balfour Declaration, UN Charter and so on. It has them sorted by year, by major collection (e.g. U.S. multilateral treaties from 1864-1999), bibliography and a search facility. Excellent site which also includes a human rights archive.

International Law Dictionary and Directory

<<http://august1.com/pubs/dict/index.shtml>>

This includes definitions of words and phrases; descriptions and acronyms of international organisations with links; country links; and online legal guides, resources, materials and search engines.

Internet Law Library

<<http://www.priweb.com/internetlawlib/89.htm>>

A product of Pritchard Law Webs provides links to documents and journals probably covered elsewhere but a useful backup.

Legal Essays on the Web

<<http://www.law.cam.ac.uk/essays/schol.htm>>

Another website maintained by the Faculty of Law at the University of Cambridge, it gives access to a large number of academic essays arranged according to subject e.g. administrative law, human rights, international law and so on.

United States

If researching the United States there are a number of key websites:

US Government <<http://www.firstgov.gov>>.

The official Government website with full and extensive links to all parts of the Administration.

US State Department

<<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/washfile.htm>>

Another valuable website from an important Department in relation to international law and international relations.

Basic Facts About the USA

<<http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts>>

Maintained by the State Department and includes basic documents and writings, famous speeches, historical materials.

Famous Speeches and Documents

<<http://www.uiowa.edu/~c030162/Common/Handouts/handouts.html#Potus>>

Maintained by the University of Iowa and a good backup to other web sites listed.

US Basic Readings in Democracy

<<http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/democrac/demo.htm>>

Access to full documents, including speeches and landmark law cases, from the Declaration of Independence to today. Divided according to subject e.g. creating government, slavery, international, cold war and so on.

US Congress <<http://thomas.loc.gov>>

An excellent website giving full access to the legislative process - Congressional record, committee reports, bill texts, archive material and an explanation on how the system works.

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- Read this article online, with activated hyperlinks <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/020502.htm#tips>>
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Feature Article<http://www.freepint.com/issues/020502.htm#feature>**"Weblogs and Blogging - Part 1"**
By Laurel A. Clyde

In just one month, January 2002, some 41,000 people created new weblogs using Blogger <<http://www.wired.com/news/culture/0,1284,50443,00.html>> - and Blogger <<http://www.blogger.com/>> is only one of the weblogdevelopment tools now available. Depending on your point of view, weblogs are either one of the most important Internet phenomena of recent years, or possibly the silliest. On the one hand, it is claimed that weblogs are empowering because "anyone" can create one to share their thoughts and ideas with the world. On the other hand, it is also claimed that weblogs add considerably to the already large amount of "vapid" content on the Web, making it harder to find valuable material <http://www.blogger.com/news_archive.pyra?which=2002_02_01_news_archive.xml>. There is a sense in which both perspectives are true: there are some well-maintained, high-quality weblogs that provide a valuable service, but there are also many weblogs that serve no apparent purpose apart from providing the owner with an online public space. Sheer numbers, though, suggest that weblogs cannot be ignored.

It is an interesting thought that more or less the same arguments were advanced for and against the Web itself not too long ago, as are now being advanced for and against weblogs. The Web made it possible for millions of people to develop Internet content and to communicate their ideas via a home page. Software developers produced tools that would enable them to do this more easily, and the result was an incremental increase in the number of Web pages. Despite the large number of questionable Web sites, the Web has become more and more important as a medium of publishing and communication, and search engines and directories have emerged that help people to find information amongst the billions of Web pages. Weblogs are very much a part of the Web, and likely to follow the development path that the Web itself has taken.

This article will first discuss the question, "What is a weblog?", and then describe types of weblogs. Following this is a section dealing with how weblogs are created, with reference to popular weblog creation software and services. Some examples of quality weblogs are described and an overview is provided of weblogs in the field of library and information science. Some lists and directories of weblogs, and search engines for weblogs, are identified. The article concludes with a brief discussion of what weblogs might do for you.

What is a Weblog?

Peter Scott <<http://library.usask.ca/~scott/pil2001/definitions.html>>, weblog expert at the University of Saskatchewan Library (Canada), has developed a widely-accepted definition of a "blog" or "weblog": it is, he says, "A Web page containing brief, chronologically arranged items of information". At this point, though, agreement about weblogs ends.

Some commentators insist that a weblog is a "personal Web page" <<http://www.edventure.com/conversation/article.cfm?Counter=7444662>>. However, institutions (including libraries) have created what they themselves describe as weblogs (see "Library and Information Science Weblogs" below for

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examples). Some commentators insist that a weblog has to be created with weblog software. However, many of the sites created without weblog software are to all intents and purposes indistinguishable from weblogs - and many of them appear in the directories of weblogs such as the one created by Yahoo! at <http://dir.yahoo.com/Social_Science/Communications/Writing/Journals_and_Diaries/Online_Journals_and_Diaries/Web_Logs/> or the list of Icelandic weblogs created by Salvor Gissurardottir at <<http://www.ismennt.is/vefir/ari/annalar/bloggarar.htm>>. Dennis G. Jerz <<http://www.uwec.edu/Academic/Curric/jerzdg/writing/index.html>> lists the great Arts & Letters Daily <<http://www.aldaily.com/>> as a weblog, for example, yet its establishment pre-dated the development of specialist weblog software and it is not maintained using such software - though it is updated daily as its name implies and information is presented chronologically.

A weblog can take the form of a diary, a news service (or summaries of and links to current news items on a topic), a collection of links to other Web sites, a series of book reviews, reports of activity on a project, the journal of an expedition, a diary of a family holiday written for the folks back home, a photographic record of life with a new puppy, or the random thoughts of a publicity-obsessed egomaniac. Or any one of a number of other forms. Professional photographers create weblogs to show off their photographs (as do the proud parents of new babies). Musicians create weblogs with embedded sound files of their work. The weblog of an American library school student ("She can be taught") describes her progress through her MLIS assignments <<http://geocities.com/thelibraryproject/weblog.html>>.

Most weblogs display material for the current month or the current week, with older material being archived on the site for browsing and/or searching. Some weblogs have other useful features - for example, links to similar weblogs, or links to the most important Internet resources in the field of coverage of the weblog, or a way to make contact with other people who read the weblog, or access to software and services.

Creating and maintaining a weblog is called "blogging". If you have a weblog, or contribute to a weblog, you are a "blogger". Bloggers may form "online communities" <[http://irights.editthispage.com/discuss/msgReader\\$115](http://irights.editthispage.com/discuss/msgReader$115)> whose members read, comment on, and create links to, each other's weblogs. While not many weblogs manage to create active communities that survive over time, it seems that one can still become a "blogaholic" through overly-enthusiastic blogging. If you think you might be in danger of succumbing to this malady, you can take an "Are You a Blogaholic?" test online at <<http://wannabe.catharsis.org/bin/quiz.cgi?quiz=one>> where you will answer questions such as "Do you feel like there is something missing from your life if you don't blog for a day?".

Some of the most interesting weblogs are created as cooperative or group projects. In this case, the weblog "owner" can give "posting rights" to other people, and their

"posts" may or may not (depending on the "rights" assigned by the owner) be reviewed before they are "published" to the Web page. Some weblogs are set up in such a way that only the owner or the owner and certain other people have posting rights, but anyone else can add comments to the posts. An example of a cooperative weblog is ComLib <<http://www.iasl-slo.org/comlib.html>>, created in the spring of this year by students in the "Computers and Libraries" course <<http://www.hi.is/~anne/candl.html>> at the University of Iceland <<http://www.hi.is/>>. ComLib carried news about web sites related to the use of information technology in libraries. All of the students in the class posted messages to the weblog, but it was not set up to allow comments from people outside the ComLib Team. Another cooperative weblog is the Illinois Library Association's ILA RTSF Technology Users Group Web Logger - The Forum <<http://www.techusers.blogspot.com/>> which aims to provide community Web space for the group.

Creating a Weblog

The majority of weblogs are now created using software or services designed specifically for this purpose. Some of the software is free - and some of the organizations that provide weblog software will also provide free server space to house a weblog so that it is publicly accessible on the Internet. There are also commercial versions of some of the free software; these commercial versions often provide more features. Some weblog software is available only as commercial software. Alternatively, bloggers can create and maintain their weblog using free software or a free weblog service, but use FTP (File Transfer Protocol) to load the resulting weblog to their own Web site.

The software that defined the weblog phenomenon was Blogger ("push-button publishing for the people") <<http://www.blogger.com/>>, made available by Pyra Labs in 1999 <http://www.webreview.com/2001/03_09/strategists/index02.shtml>. "It is not often you can say a website has changed the face of the Web, and had an impact far beyond the confines of its own domain. But, for many, Blogger is such a site", said Neil McIntosh in The Guardian on 31 January 2002 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/online/story/0,3605,641742,00.html>>. "Blogger offers you instant communication power by letting you post your thoughts to the Web whenever the urge strikes", promises the Blogger home page <<http://www.blogger.com/>>. While Blogger enables the user to create and update a fairly sophisticated Web site, the process is not quite as simple as has been suggested by "Jonno" <<http://www.jonno.com/>> (as

quoted by Tim Archer)

<<http://www.tradequeerthings.com/online.html>>. Jonno says, "Before Blogger came along, you had to know a fair amount of Web publishing technology in order to have an online presence ... but Blogger has made having a Web presence as easy as typing an email".

Blogger has certainly simplified the process of Web site creation, but its documentation and procedures do assume at least a basic level of knowledge of FTP, Web site structures, and technical terms. For those who want to go beyond the basic weblog templates, a knowledge of HTML is necessary. However, hundreds of thousands of people have used Blogger successfully to create weblogs. It is available for free through the Blogger Web site, and a version of the software called Blogger Pro extends the capabilities of the basic system. The Blogger Web site provides advice, documentation, and a means of contacting other Blogger users, as well as links to interesting weblogs created with Blogger.

While Blogger may be better known nowadays, Pitas is generally considered to be the original creator of easy-to-use weblog software <<http://www.pitas.com/>>. The Pitas software was available early in 1999, several months before Blogger. More realistic than most, the Pitas home page promises that the process of weblog creation will be "quick and fun, well, mostly quick". Users can create their own pages on the Pitas site, and they can have their own domain name, for example anneclyde.pitas.com. A selection of page templates is provided, or users can build their own page outlines. Other people can be given posting privileges without being given access to the entire weblog. Although there is a "Member Pages" button on the Pitas home page, it leads only to a list of the 50 most recent Pitas weblog entries, not to a list of all the weblogs on the Pitas system.

An example of commercial software for the creation and maintenance of weblogs is Radio from UserLand Software <<http://www.userland.com/>>. When it first appeared in 2000, Radio was seen as a program for managing MP3 music files and sharing playlists on the Web. Today, however, it competes with various free and paid tools like Pitas and Blogger as a foundation for weblogs. The UserLand home page says Radio is "An easy-to-use weblog tool that runs on your desktop, so it's fast, and ready to go when you are. Radio UserLand automatically builds your site, organizes and archives your posts, and publishes your content - without any knowledge of HTML, FTP, or graphic design".

All the user has to do, says the home page, is "install Radio and begin publishing, in minutes, not days". While for Dan Shafer <<http://radio.weblogs.com/0001285/stories/2002/01/11/myFirstReviewOfRadio8.html>>, "Radio 8 is the Web's Typewriter", for others it is not perceived to be quite so simple. It is not that Radio is difficult; it isn't. However, the user does need to be prepared to make some input and some effort. Version 8.0 of Radio (for Macintosh and Windows) is available for 39.95 US dollars. The price includes hosting (up to 10MB) and software updates for one year. A thirty-day free trial is available.

The "Weblog Madness" Web site <http://www.larkfarm.com/wlm/roll_your_own.htm> has a list of weblog software and tools under the heading "Roll Your Own". Weblog creation programs and sites listed here include Blog <<http://cyberian.tripod.com/Blog.htm>>, GrokSoup <<http://www.groksoup.com/>>, and SlashCode <<http://slashcode.com/>>. "Weblog Madness" also lists a number of "add on" tools that have been written by users

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Rex Cooke, Editor <rex@freepint.com>

to extend the facilities provided by Blogger and other services. These tools include additional templates, calendars, and a Bloglet to email update notices to regular readers of a weblog.

While you are waiting for part two, you might like to check out two good weblogs: Library Stuff <<http://www.librarystuff.net/>> and Privacy Digest <<http://PrivacyDigest.com/>>.

Part 2 of this article will be published in Free Pint No.112.

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Related Free Pint links:

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- Post a message to the author, Laurel A. Clyde, or suggest further resources, at the Free Pint Bar <<http://www.freepint.com/bar>>
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That's all for now. I hope you've got a lot out of this edition, and don't forget that there's much more online. I would encourage you to post your thoughts about remuneration for information professionals in response to my Editorial at <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b17417>>.

See you in two weeks!

William Hann, Founder and Managing Editor
<william@freepint.com>

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