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ABOUT FREE PINT

FreePint is an online network of information searchers. Members receive this free newsletter twice a month: it is 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 a substantial archive of articles, reviews, jobs & events, with answers to research questions and networking at the FreePint Bar.

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

EDITORIAL

We're hardly a day or two into October and the shops here in the UK are already full of all things Christmas. It seems that they try to build the excitement earlier and earlier each year.

Of course, special events that occur in December do require a lot of advance thought. We're readying ourselves for Online Information 2003 in London in December and are planning a really fun presence to launch our exciting new service called 'FreePintVIP' <http://www.FreePintVIP.com>. VIP will be a monthly publication focusing on information products and information people. Two months before launch and it's already taking off - organisations are posting their press releases to the VIP Wire <http://www.freepint.com/go/b25742>.

Also at the show we'll be announcing the winner of the 'Online Information / FreePint Award for Innovative Customer Service'. Voting will close shortly, so make your nomination soon to ensure it's registered <http://www.freepint.com/go/b25898>.

There's no let up in the amount we're packing into the newsletter today and I hope you pick up some valuable titbits. Of particular importance is digital preservation: I hope you'll check out the feature article which highlights the issues.

We also review the latest happenings at the Bar, which is busier than ever with over 100 postings in the last week alone. We're very pleased to have been swamped with orders for our latest report on negotiating licenses, and are looking forward to our first visit to India next week to talk at a conference about the power of online communities. As the pressure grows, so does my beard, which I've grown for our local musical production of Calamity Jane in which I'm appearing as Wild Bill Hickock. First night tonight!

I hope you enjoy today's FreePint and will give us your feedback at the Bar. FreePinters are very supportive people and that's what makes this such a great community to be a part of. Whip crack away!

All the best
William

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Find out more today at <http://www.freepint.com/jobs>

This week's selected listings are below. All new jobs are posted to the Bar and Bar Digest (circulation 12,000+) and matched against the 1000+ live job seeker profiles. Last week's Bar 'new jobs' listing is at <http://www.freepint.com/go/b25746> and this week's at <http://www.freepint.com/go/b25875>.

Here are some of the latest featured jobs:

Library And Administration Assistant<http://www.freepint.com/go/j2693>

After review of info needs, gov agency seeks librarian to push services forward & setup auto LMS; Chartered good but not essential. Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment

Analyst/Researcher<http://www.freepint.com/go/j2714>

Confident and proactive Corporate Finance Analyst/Researcher with telephone interviewing and report writing skills. Recruiter: Glen Recruitment

Corporate Records Manager<http://www.freepint.com/go/j2718>

Working for the Legal Services Commission, you will develop and implement robust records management policies and procedures. Recruiter: Legal Services Commission

Information Officer/Librarian<http://www.freepint.com/go/j2719>

MIDIRS provides a worldwide information service for midwives and other health professionals. Recruiter: MIDIRS (The Midwives Information and Resource Service)

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Innovative Customer Service - Nominations Please

Make your nomination for the information organisation which has provided you with *innovative* customer service:

<http://www.freepint.com/go/b25898>

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Practical Guide to Negotiating Licenses for Electronic Products

ISBN 1904769012

Do you negotiate licenses for electronic products? Then you must check out this new report from FreePint. Tips on contract clauses, model license agreements and more.

"Very informative, just what we needed (and were looking for) at the moment, as we are renegotiating a lot of e-journal contracts. Very good value for money."

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MY FAVOURITE TIPPLES from Ellen Metter

Ellen Metter is a librarian and author of 'Facts in a Flash: A Research Guide for Writers' and 'Cheerfully Childless: Humor for Those Who Hesitate to Procreate'.

Tell us about your favourite Web sites. Check out the guidelines at <http://www.freepint.com/author.htm>, then email penny@freepint.com.

- Since FreePint readers are undoubtedly an adventurous lot, the International Salary Calculator is likely of interest. At <http://www.homefair.com/homefair/calc/salcalc.html> choose 'click here' under the question "Want to compare Canadian or international cities?"
- Find an impressive array of facts and figures at the <http://infoplease.com/> site, created by the publisher of numerous print almanacs. There's a U.S. bias, but plenty of international information, too.
- Music dabblers should enjoy the All Music Guide (AMG) <http://www.allmusic.com>. AMG supplies essays on different music styles, discographies, and performer biographies. For classical music, see the AMG sister site at <http://www.allclassical.com>.
- Ancient World Web <http://www.julen.net/aw/> is a marvellous portal leading to Web pages that discuss many aspects of the world prior to 700 AD, including daily life, architecture, language and literature.
- Writers of all stripes will enjoy the <http://www.writing-world.com> page. Their free weekly newsletter offers informative articles on numerous writing topics. These articles are also searchable on their Web page.

EVENTS

United Kingdom

- "AUKML/ICLG Open Day" - range of speakers aiming to give LIS graduate trainees and students a flavour of the working day of the information professional on October 7th in London <http://www.freepint.com/go/e239>.
- "Usable Search Tutorial" - how to implement a good search engine. 10th October in London <http://www.freepint.com/go/e226>.
- "New Skills for Old" - skills and qualifications needed in library and information services on October 14th <http://www.freepint.com/go/e248>.
- "Library and Information Systems Technology - LIST 2003 - Small Systems Fair" - an exhibition of library management systems and software. 16th October <http://www.freepint.com/go/e251>.
- "News and Media Information on the Internet" - learn research skills of both journalists and information professionals. 24th October <http://www.freepint.com/go/e197>.
- "European Supply Chain & Logistics summit" - organized by World Trade Group Dates 28th - 29th October <http://www.freepint.com/go/e205>.
- "Joint RSC CIG/CSA Trust Chemical Information Training Day". 30th October <http://www.freepint.com/go/e250> Burlington House, Piccadilly, London.
- "STN Engineering Forum" Free half day Forum to be held at the Institute of Electrical Engineers in London. 30th October <http://www.freepint.com/go/e252>.

Australia and Territories

- "Building an effective strategy for Email Management" 29th - 30th October with case studies and presentations from the experts. Taking place in Sydney <http://www.freepint.com/go/e247>.

Submit details of your event today for free promotion. Simply complete the form at <http://www.freepint.com/events>.

Penny penny@freepint.com

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According to our usage guidelines, press releases can't be posted at the FreePint Bar. So it's good that they now have their own home in the FreePintVIP Wire <http://www.freepint.com/go/b25742>.

We have had to come up with solutions like this as we're pretty much our own Webmaster, like so many users of the Bar. One of them is looking for examples of written agreements about links between sites <http://www.freepint.com/go/b25778>. Another needs to 'prove' what content is on their Web site at any one time <http://www.freepint.com/go/b25873>. Do you know how to link different frames of an animated GIF to different target URLs? You'll probably have to use a bit of JavaScript <http://www.freepint.com/go/b25801>.

So much about using the Web isn't actually anything to do directly with it. Over the last month we've had a number of questions about storing information, both in flat-file/freeform and relational database format. For instance, do you know of a tool to archive Web pages which is free and integrated into Internet Explorer <http://www.freepint.com/go/b25842>? What about replacing images with characters in a Word file <http://www.freepint.com/go/b25681>? Could you help someone with a specific question about inserting a date field in a Word template to track library enquiries <http://www.freepint.com/go/b25664>?

While we're on information-related queries, have you heard about how to manage serials in Outlook <http://www.freepint.com/go/b25699>? Could you help a librarian wanting to move from the NHS to public libraries <http://www.freepint.com/go/b25883>? Or wanting to become a children's librarian <http://www.freepint.com/go/b25797>?

Finally, of the many published-research-related questions, we still need help with market statistics for new mobile handsets <http://www.freepint.com/go/b25750> and credit information providers <http://www.freepint.com/go/b25796>. What about an average percentage for the cost of design and packaging in the total production cost of an item <http://www.freepint.com/go/b25768> or expanding one's range of broker research sources <http://www.freepint.com/go/b25764>?

The FreePint Bar is where you can get help with your tricky research questions, for free! www.freepint.com/bar

Help with study for information-related courses is available at the FreePint Student Bar www.freepint.com/student.

Twice-weekly email digests of the latest postings can be requested at www.freepint.com/member.

TIPS ARTICLE

"Problems with Good Credit Information on Chinese Companies"

By Adam Dupre



Adam Dupre, owner and founder of China Company Research Services Ltd (CCRS), has worked in the specialist international credit information and company research business for 18 years. He was a founder, director and then CEO of MRC Business Information Group Ltd, one of the leading specialist providers of credit and commercial information and investigation in the international maritime and commodity trading markets. Adam left MRC in February 2002 to set up CCRS together with a Hong Kong Chinese business colleague, a team of researchers in Beijing and a network of highly trained Western business analysis experts. The intention behind the new company is to help supply the increasing need for high quality, comprehensive and reliable credit information on Chinese companies
<http://www.ccrs.info>

The continuing rapid rise in the importance of China as an economic power in the world has virtually recovered from the temporary blip in activity caused by the SARS outbreak earlier in 2003. The world markets are turning their full attention back to China as a massive emerging opportunity and for exporters all over the world, it's business as usual again. But for the Western business person there is still the major headache that's always been there when it comes to dealing with China: the difficulty in obtaining reliable corporate information, interpreted and analysed to Western commercial standards.

You would normally turn first to the major Western credit information companies, but they all have problems working effectively in China in the private sector. Why? Mainly, their problems come from their common strategy of trying to offer comprehensive coverage of a given market - they want to have a credit report on any company right there ready for delivery when you ask. In China this is kind of possible in the public sector where quoted companies have to disclose information, but when it comes to the increasingly important private sector, (which some say is already the effective driving force of the economy), the big credit reporting companies hit problems - for two reasons mainly:

1)

Financial and corporate information on private Chinese companies is not easy to get hold of. Three agencies of the Chinese State do collect it, but you need the right connections to get hold of it because it's not actually publicly available. It's collected locally in each of over 30 Chinese provinces, and there's no central databank for all companies in China.

2)

In their core, Western, markets, the big credit information providers are able to offer mass coverage of thousands of companies by using highly sophisticated software programs to analyse companies' financial accounts which they have downloaded into their systems. In China, even if they could get hold of all this

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information from the authorities, financial accounts are not subject to the same auditing standards as financial accounts in the West, so they can't be trusted in the same way. You really need to do some other checks (like phone research) around it the data you collect from the authorities, in order to confirm or correct it. And making extra checks makes the job labour- and skill-intensive in a way that the big companies are not geared up to handle.

There are local Chinese credit reporting companies, but they have problems too. One is cultural - the operating basis of the Chinese economy is so different from economies in the West that it is not easy for Chinese analysts to appreciate which aspects of a company's structure, condition and performance are of the greatest significance to Western businesses. For example, they know very well that Chinese company accounts may not be strictly accurate (revenue and profit can be underreported, as well as sometimes solvency problems being concealed), but they do not know how to explain this clearly to a Western audience. Also, there is not just a conceptual problem of explanation, there's also a real problem with language. Mostly the Chinese analysts do not write directly in English, but depend on translators who may not be familiar with the language of credit reporting, and whose English may not be that good in any case. These two problems make it difficult to understand and to rely on credit information produced by Chinese credit agencies.

So what is the answer? Inevitably, necessity will produce a solution in time. Major western corporations will continue to invest heavily in and sell to China. As WTO membership and Chinese government policy opens the door to the Chinese markets ever wider, Western investors and traders are already demanding much better quality Intellectual Property protection, and better legal recourse where contracts are reneged on. But for the time being, for some reason, the issue of the provision of reliable information and interpretation of company information for credit assessment purposes has not moved up the international political and commercial agenda in China. Maybe it's because the credit analysis function in so many Western businesses is just not considered the sexiest part of commerce? Or maybe it's because businesses are used to relying on the professionalism of their credit departments and don't realise the extent these actually need proper support? Whatever the reason, once the major intellectual property rules are agreed and once a solid and reliable commercial legal structure is in place in China, surely the issue of reliable credit information will be dealt with.

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- Post a message to the author, Adam Dupre, 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/021003.htm#feature>>
- Access the entire archive of FreePint content <http://www.freepint.com/portal/content/>

In the meantime, though, as international trade with China expands rapidly year-on-year and shows no sign of slowing, there's a real issue for the international credit manager as to what to do to get good credit information now. And as trade with China expands, this problem will just worsen before it gets better.

One answer, (that certainly works where it is been tried), is to combine the best of what the Chinese local researchers can get through their connections and their research skills, with experienced analysis from Western experts who know the international markets. The Western analysts can assess the Chinese subject companies to exacting Western commercial standards, provide comprehensive ratings and credit judgements that are appropriate to the market context and are geared to answer the concerns of the Westerner looking at potential business with China. Already this solution has proven success when applied in the Export Credit Insurance, International Transport, Education, Manufacturing and International Commodity Trading sectors in the United States and in the United Kingdom.

This kind of specialist research and analysis is obviously a bit more expensive than a standard on-line credit report (though in reality the cost difference isn't that great). But where there's so much more potentially to lose, maybe it's worth spending a little more to evaluate the risks in advance? It will be some time before it is realistically possible to generate mass credit information in China as quickly and reliably and cheaply as it is in most Western markets. A lot of money could be lost in that time.

What is the ResourceShelf?

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

ResourceShelf is a free daily update containing news of interest to information professionals around the world.

Topics include the latest news with web search engines, research tips, new web resources, and much more.

FreePint Financials -- UK Companies and Directors Revealed

FreePint Financials is a comprehensive database of all UK companies and company directors. It's free to search and requires no subscription to get detailed reports pay-as-you-go:

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

FreePint Jobs: 50% listing-fee discount for reg. charities

The listing fee is now halved for registered charities advertising information-related job vacancies:

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

GOLD

A year ago Paul Waddington gave us some practical tips on how to create good content that both draws and retains your audience on the Web. Andrew Everest interviewed David Snowden on Knowledge Ecology.

- FreePint No.122 3rd October 2002. "Effective Writing: How Good Copy Can Make Your Information Work Harder" and "From Knowledge Economy to Knowledge Ecology? - IBM's David Snowden Maps a 'Third Way' for KM at Open University Seminar" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/031002.htm>

Two years ago Valerie Moyses shared the "sources most used by the Library of Croner.CCH in supporting the work of the Tax Publishing Centre". Liz Edols looked at taxonomy definitions, values, examples and software.

- FreePint No.97, 4th October 2001. "Tax Links" and "Taxonomies are what?" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/041001.htm>

You will find lots of links to great patent sites in our tips article in 2000. Our feature looked at the changes to, and challenges facing, search engine technology.

- FreePint No.72, 5th October 2000. "Influence of the Internet on the Patent Process" and "All change for search technology?" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/051000.htm>

In 1999, Mark Southgate gave us his "selection of the best sources of information on various financial subjects". Sheila Webber shared her own experience of how to get listed on other people's sites.

- FreePint No.47, 7th October 1999. "Sources of UK Financial Information on the Internet" and "Getting Good References" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/071099.htm>

Five years ago Phil Bradley wrote about viruses - catching them and dealing with them. Pablo Dubois, Head of Operations at the International Coffee Organization, shared some of his knowledge.

- FreePint No.23, 1st October 1998. "The Good Times are not about to end, unfortunately" and "There's an awful lot of coffee in Brazil: Coffee information on the Web" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/011098.htm>
Penny <penny@freepint.com>

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If you have a suggestion for an article topic or would like to write for Free Pint then please contact <penny@freepint.com> or sign up for the Author Update at <<http://www.freepint.com/author.htm>>.

Duncan Parry is an Editorial manager at Espotting UK, working on the campaigns of major UK brands. Previously he worked on the link directory on Lycos UK, specialising in IT, Telecommunications and Internet categories. You can contact him here <<http://www.duncanparry.co.uk>>.

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- "Winning E-Brand Strategies" ISBN 1904298540, published by Spiro Press, written by Martin Brighty, Dean Markham.
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"Winning E-Brand Strategies"

Written by Martin Brighty, Dean Markham
Reviewed by Duncan Parry

Many would-be Internet millionaires spent thousands of pounds building eye-catching websites, only for the mantra "build it and they will come" to turn out to be false; visitors - even better, customers - didn't arrive, and the entrepreneurs were left struggling to market their website on a meagre budget or were forced to return cap in hand to their financial backers.

The authors of 'Winning E-Brand Strategies' took a different approach; they applied their in-depth knowledge of an existing trade (luxury ties from Saville Row) and built an online business with minimal funds; in fact they started out being paid by wholesale customers in silk, and grew the business without venture capitalist backing.

The aim of their book is to transfer their experience and provide the reader with practical advice on how to plan, launch and grow an online business that is competitive and can adapt to new challenges. Topics covered include ebusiness planning, collecting market data, website development (using an outside consultant), building an online brand and optimising a website to increase traffic from the search engines.

The information on planning and developing an online presence, including a niche market and strong brand, is useful and the examples of Hunter's successes and mistakes useful. However, the book is let down by the chapters on marketing a website through search engines. There is no mention of pay-per-click (PPC) search engine listings, which appear at the top of search results on all the major engines and are increasingly seen as an integral part of any search engine marketing (SEM) strategy. Admittedly the book was written in 2002; but PPC has been in existence since 2000 and there is no investigation of the potential for sales leads offered by PPC advertising. This is a surprising oversight. The book focuses solely on search engine optimisation (SEO) of the code and

DigBig -- Long URLs Shortened

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

Long URLs get broken in emails and are tricky to communicate verbally.

Problem solved: paste a long URL into DigBig and get a short one back.

content of a website to improve its position in search results.

The information on SEO is worth reading - but do not change your website based on this alone; some of the information is out of date and some important methods are not covered (e.g. increasing the number of links from quality websites to your site, to improve your ranking on Google). However there is good advice - including a discussion of methods to avoid because they may result in your site being banned from a search engine.

What is disappointing is that the authors fail to explicitly state the need to stay up to date with developments in search engine technologies and how they rank websites. A list of websites that would help the reader keep up to date would have been useful (e.g. Webmaster World <<http://www.webmasterworld.com/>> or SearchEngineWatch <<http://www.searchenginewatch.com/>>). However, they do have a website with some information on search engine marketing <<http://www.websurfer-netcafe.com/>> and links to resources.

Conclusion

So, would I recommend you buy this book to learn how to plan an online business and market a website? Whilst I am not aware of any definitive texts about planning an online business or online marketing, I would recommend you look for a more up to date title before you consider this one. In fact, I expect that you will need to buy two or more, as these topics warrant books of their own. Online research is also crucial, so read the forums and articles on the sites mentioned above.

FREE PINT

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FEATURE ARTICLE**"Digital Preservation - Barbarians at the Gate"
By Jonathan Crowhurst**

Jonathan Crowhurst is currently a Masters student in Library and Information Studies at City University, and has previously worked at the information service of a leading city law firm, as well as in insurance and market research. His first degree is in ancient history and archaeology.

There has been much written about the technique and rationale for digital preservation, and a large number of businesses and cultural institutions have digital preservation and records management programmes in place. This article is concerned with the actual dangers of digital preservation - data loss due to the ever increasing use of electronic mail and the loss of data due to changes in software and data storage platforms. The remedies advanced to counter the onset of a potential "digital dark ages" will be examined.

This article was prompted by a feature published in the science journal Nature (19 June 2003) <<http://www.nature.com>>. The authors, from the University of Texas, contend that the electronic world in general and email in particular is a very poor medium for preserving data and point out some serious pitfalls with over reliance on the technology for historians in several generations time.

Digital Domesday - A Chilling Example

The Toronto Star ran a feature (28 July 2003 "The Electronic Genie") following this publication <<http://digbig.com/3cqs>> on the subject, citing the BBC's 1986 Domesday project, which created an electronic version of William I's famous survey of the country published in 1085, as an example of the potential for digital disaster. The project cost GBP2.5 million, but 17 years after its creation the Domesday Book Mark II cannot be read as the BBC computers used for the project no longer work and the storage media are unable to be read by current technology. The original version can still be read in the Public Record office, 900 years after its creation.

In 2002, Shift.com carried an article by David Emberton in which he asks: "Two hundred years from now, how will historians assess the early twenty-first century? They won't, because scarcely anything will be left to assess. That's right: Welcome, my friends, to the digital dark age" <http://www.shift.com/content/web/385/1.html>.

The spectre of a "Digital Dark Ages" is not all that new. Stewart Brand, one of the founders of the Long Now Foundation, wrote in 1998 on the supposed "immortality" of digitised media <<http://www.longnow.org/10klibrary/library.htm>> and the long-term impact on digitisation projects and electronic preservation of the pace of technological change.

In 1997 at the IFLA Council and General Conference, Terry Kuny presented a seminal paper <<http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla63/63kuny1.pdf>> and among his observations are that "digital collections facilitate access, but do not facilitate preservation ... Digital places greater emphasis on the here and now rather than the long term, just in time information rather than just in case ... the tough task of actually doing digital preservation (and digital rescue) remains ahead."

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35 Billion Emails a day by 2005

The authors of the Nature article give some frightening statistics for the wide spread use of email - the number of corporate mailboxes worldwide is expected to grow from 131 million in 2001 to 225 million in 2005 - daily email traffic is anticipated to grow from 9.7 billion pieces in 2000 to more than 35 billion in 2005. What will happen to the letters, diaries, and so on which have been the bread and butter of historians in previous generations? Will it be possible to reconstruct personal histories in, say 2300, from this electronic traffic? Stuart Millar wrote in the Guardian (February 28 2002) on the Digital Preservation Coalition's warning to the UK Government to save our digital heritage - today's email writers are the Jane Austens (a prolific letter writer in her day) of the present <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,3604,659208,00.html>. Except we will still be able to read her correspondence in 200 years time. He also cites some other interesting examples of technological "black holes".

93% Of All Information Produced Each Year Is Digital

That is without the issue of the amount of material actually published. A project at the University of California aims to quantify the amount of information published in the world each year <<http://www.sims.berkeley.edu/research/projects/how-much-info/>>. They surmise that 93% of the information produced each year is stored in digital form. Hard drives in stand-alone PCs account for 55% of total storage shipped each year (1999 figures). The US produces 35% of all print material, 40% of the images and well over 50% of the digitally stored content produced in the world each year. This it seems is without actual records already in digital format. Many of them could disappear as technology changes.

Dorothy Warner's article "Why do we need to keep it in print? It's on the web" <http://libr.org/PL/19-20_Warner.html> highlights further problems. Preserving electronically itself is not the only danger, but so are people's attitudes. The very title suggests an alarming attitude towards the preservation of records, social and historical. The demise of the book has often been predicted since the coming of the web. To misquote Twain, reports of the book's death have been greatly exaggerated. Bear in mind too that the world wide web in particular is only a fraction of material that has actually been written down.

Other gremlins lie in the sheer pace of technological change. An article on the evolution

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of data storage technology appeared in USA Today looking at some problems <http://www.usatoday.com/tech/news/2003-01-17-digital_x.htm>. The issue is not just about the reliability or compatibility of storage media (punch card, tape, 5 1/4, 3.5, CD-ROMS, CD-Rs, CD-RWs, CDs, DVDs, etc). For further details look at <<http://digbig.com/3cqt>>, a list of links looking at issues such as longevity and permanence.

The other issue is software compatibility - to use a relatively small- scale example, I am sure at some point we have all had the bother of trying to get the latest iteration of Word to read Wordperfect. It might be possible to read old file extensions, but often all you get is a load of gobbledygook without the original formatting preserved. This is one of the issues vexing digital archivists as they try and make preserved records readable for future software iterations. It seems that software versions change every 18 months - witness the various versions of Windows which have been released over the past 10 years. An interesting review of these can be found here <<http://members.fortunecity.com/pcmuseum/windows.htm>>. The Rosetta Stone and the Vindolanda writing tablets have lasted thousands of years and can still be deciphered. Will the same be said about the records we are archiving digitally today.

Solutions

Fortunately a number of opportunities to correct this problem are available for either current digital archives or as new digital records are created.

In 1996 "Preserving Digital Information" was published by the United States Commission on Preservation and Access and the Research Libraries Group, whose brief was to ensure continued access to records stored in digital form indefinitely and consists of members of industry, the heritage sector, publishers, academics and congress. Their Final Report <<http://www.rlg.org/ArchTF/>> highlights the importance of a long-term strategy in ensuring digital archives remain accessible.

Johan Mannerheim suggests some interesting ideas and asks where the task of digital preservation falls - do we take an individual or institutional responsibility for preserving digital archives? <<http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla66/papers/158-157e.htm>>.

A paper by Hodge also looks at some long-term solutions and best practice <<http://www.dlib.org/dlib/january00/01hodge.html>>, while this article <<http://www.cilip.org.uk/update/issues/may02/article2may.html>> defines several techniques of digital preservation:

1. Technology preservation - maintaining and updating the old technologies - not acceptable in

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terms of time or cost in the long term

2. Refreshing - the copying of the bit stream from one medium to another without changing format
3. Migration - changing data to new formats which can have the unfortunate consequence of losing formatting if the new does not support the old
4. Emulation - this a way of preserving data where data is converted into a digital bytestream, bypassing hardware, and emulation re-renders the data. The legality of these is open to question, however. Emulation may possibly rescue the Domesday Project, as these articles explain <<http://digbig.com/3cct>> and <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/online/story/0,3605,871091,00.html>>.

Two other potential aids are XML and LOCKSS (lots of copies keep stuff safe), for storing electronic journals.

XML is eXtensible Mark Up Language, a simple, flexible text format which enables data to be transferred widely and was originally developed for electronic publishing. Further details can be found here <<http://www.w3.org/XML/>> but a full study is outside the scope of this article. Suffice to say it looks like it should have great potential for ensuring that digital documents can be read in the future.

LOCKSS has been developed by Vicky Reich and David Rosenthal of Stanford University <<http://www.dlib.org/dlib/june01/reich/06reich.html>>. Their site for potential users of the project can be found here <<http://lockss.stanford.edu/>>.

Conclusion

The Millennium Bug turned out to be one of the biggest non-events in history. The loss of data and history through over reliance on computer technology for preservation and storage is a far more serious issue as human culture will lose something of itself. We need to be thinking outside the box. We need to increase awareness among businesses and institutions who are storing data and records electronically, among software and hardware vendors whose only goal is the short term. Otherwise it will be easier for historians to reconstruct the world 100 years ago than those historians 100 years hence reconstructing the 21st century.