

Editorial

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<http://www.freepint.com/issues/050902.pdf>

I have always understood the holy grail of information-related work to be "Getting the right information at the right time to the right person at the right price". This is why many content vendors are at last focusing on 'content engineering' and many content purchasers are using such techniques to develop systems which integrate external content with that published internally.

Achieving this goal has a lot to do with understanding your audience, putting the information into context, integrating it with other knowledge and systems, and presenting it effectively. If we get it right as an industry, we should be able to reap significant rewards.

Of course, this is not before time. One vendor is celebrating its thirtieth birthday this year, but only now are they and their peers starting to realise that it's not about how much information they put into their massive databases; it's about how to dig out the nuggets at just the right time. This is where the real value lies.

Back to Free Pint, and we managed to hit the nail on the head a year ago when we ran Helen Clegg's article on business rankings. It was re-published by various business schools to all their MBA students, received widespread publicity, and was reviewed in a major international business magazine. We couldn't resist a re-visit one year on, and so I'm sure there will be as much interest in today's update to that article.

Electronic Copyright is also a hot topic, and our Exchange event on that subject in October is already full. You may want to check out the new 'Telecommunications Exchange', which sits alongside those on Competitor Intelligence, Data Protection and Private Equity

<http://www.freepint.com/exchange/>
. These Exchanges have a few places left, but they won't for long.

Don't forget to check out the fully-formatted version of today's newsletter at <http://www.freepint.com/issues/050902.pdf>. You can receive the formatted version by email, or a notification that it's online, by modifying your account at <http://www.freepint.com/member>.

I hope you enjoy today's Free Pint, and will pass the word on to your colleagues.

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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.

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Free Pint Gold

Well, we're really keeping it in the family this week. Duncan Parry and Helen Clegg both contributed to Free Pint 95 last year. Duncan took a look at various aspects to do with rail travel, ranging from buying tickets online to getting a refund. Helen's first article on rankings helped you find "the top companies in a particular market sector or country" which she has updated in today's issue.

- Free Pint No.95 6th September 2001. "Railways Online in the UK" and "From Fortune 500 to Handelsblatt's European 500 - a look at some useful European and International Rankings"
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/060901.htm>>

Two years ago Sam Vaknin took a look at web sites relating to mental health and Emma Turner and Karyn Meaden wrote a fascinating piece all about aeronautics.

- Free Pint No.70, 7th September 2000. "A Web of Mental Health" and "Top Sites on the Web for Aeronautics and Aerospace Science and Technology"
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/070900.htm>>

In 1999 Richard Eskins took us through some sites for finding 'drivers'. Martin White looked at effective intranet sites which at the time were few and far between.

- Free Pint No.45, 9th September 1999. "File finding, file filing" and "Intranets and extranets"
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/090999.htm>>

Four years ago, George McMurdo's Tips article focused on 'newsgroups' and Elizabeth Elliott pointed out some fast and easy ways of accessing free legal information on the web.

- Free Pint No.21, 3rd September 1998. "Tricks with local newsgroups" and "Legal Resources on the Web"
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/030998.htm>>

Penny <penny@freepint.com>

Targeted Science and Engineering Information

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My Favourite Tipples from Helen Baxter

- Time and Date.com
<<http://www.timeanddate.com>> - allows you to set up a personal world clock page showing current local times in selected cities. Invaluable as I live in New Zealand and telework with Europe, it automatically takes into account daylight savings changes.
- Babelfish
<<http://world.altavista.com/sites/gben/pos/babelfish/trns>> - Supplements my basic French, German, Spanish and Italian.
- Dictionary.com
<<http://www.dictionary.com>> - For quickly checking words. Also has links to an online thesaurus and other useful services.
- Ananova <<http://www.ananova.com/>> - The Press Association's website, with

news from around the world.

- Universal Currency Converter
<<http://www.xe.net/currency>> - a useful tool when you run a global mail order business.

Helen Baxter is Editor of <<http://www.knowledgeboard.com>> the European Knowledge Management community. KnowledgeBoard was created as part of the European KM Forum to support and identify commonality in KM terminology, application, implementation and to define 'KM Made in Europe'. She also runs a dance music record label and promotions company from her home in New Zealand
<<http://www.tmet.net>>.

Email your top five favourite Web sites to <penny@freepint.com> or see the guidelines at <<http://www.freepint.com/author.htm>>.

Free Pint Telecommunications Exchange

Thursday 24th October 2002, West London, UK
<<http://www.freepint.com/exchange>>

"This Exchange is intended to equip participants with an awareness of the key sources of information on telecommunications, an ability to research the sector efficiently, and a basic understanding of telecommunications networks and services."

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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/b19689>>.

Here are some of the latest featured jobs:

Information Manager/Public Relations

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j1996>>

Unique role for consultancy. Central London. To 38,500 pounds plus bonus.

Recruiter: Glen Recruitment

Internal Sales Consultant

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j2001>>

Birmingham calling! Brilliant opportunity with a library software supplier to undertake research & support for the sales team.

Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment

Knowledge Manager

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j2004>>

Global executive Search company requires Knowledge Manager to develop research, performance and information flow through the firm.

Recruiter: RecruitMedia

Free Pint Jobs is a great place for finding and advertising information-related vacancies.

Job seekers can search the database for free, and set up a profile to be notified weekly of relevant new vacancies.

Recruiters will receive significant publicity for listed vacancies, and jobs will be matched against the 600+ stored job seeker profiles.

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

Events

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

Anyone interested in Competitive Intelligence should feel privileged this Autumn. Here at the Free Pint offices, Arthur Weiss from AWARE, will be hosting the 'Free Pint Competitive Intelligence Exchange'

<<http://www.freepint.com/exchange>>. Florida is hosting the '9th Annual Competitive Intelligence Executive Summit' and in the Netherlands 'Competia European Symposium 2002' "will bring together the leading- edge practitioners in the field of Competitive Intelligence" <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e123>>.

The '5th Annual Advanced Marketing Research Executive Summit' is aimed at Senior Marketing Research professionals who are "Seeking to Maximize Effectiveness and Influence" <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e122>>.

Put a face to a name and see Free Pint's William Hann in action at the 'UK Inmagic User Group Annual Conference'. It is aimed at users of DB/textworks products and is being held in the UK <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e152>>.

Paul Pedley, Head of Research for the Economist Intelligence Unit, will be helping to ensure that your website or intranet is data protection compliant and encourage you to share any difficulties you might have. To find out more go to <<http://www.freepint.com/exchange/>>.

The 'International Chemical Information Conference & Exhibition' invites professionals, "in the field of chemical, patent, and sci-tech information", to its fourteenth annual conference in France <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e108>>.

The 'Free Pint Private Equity Exchange' will be run by Christopher Murphy, a director of Ravensbourne Research Limited <<http://www.freepint.com/exchange>>. It will cover; Terminology, Fund raising, Investment processes, Exit routes and Information sources.

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**"Offshore Funds"
By Trevor Harvey**

Offshore funds are located in jurisdictions which are characterised by light regulation and favourable tax regimes in order to encourage investment; these jurisdictions often have their own legislature which is distinct from the nearest country to which they are geographically related (e.g. the Channel Islands are a UK Crown Dependency). "Offshore has no precise dictionary meaning: the word simply reflects the fact that most low tax jurisdictions are islands. It is estimated that more than half of the world's money is offshore" (Lowtax.net).

In the past the word 'offshore' has been a loaded one, carrying with it associations of secrecy and underhand dealing. This is a false assumption and the wealth of information on the internet about offshore matters certainly dispels the mystique.

The premier internet resource for the offshore funds researcher is Lowtax.net <<http://www.lowtax.net>>. The initial reaction on first using the Lowtax site is that the layout is confusing and the links do not always make logical sense, but perseverance pays off as it is a very impressive resource on which a lot of time and effort is obviously spent. The offshore business review section of the website is an overview of the sector which covers the different functions that can be found offshore, primarily investment funds, banking and insurance. Detailed information is provided on 33 offshore centres: "a map and information about the country, climate, economy and currency, tax system, special offshore regimes and company forms, links to consultancies, banks and other service providers, and a comparative assessment of the value of each jurisdiction as an offshore financial centre" (Lowtax.net).

Some jurisdictions covered by Lowtax.net have been designated 'supersites'; for example, there are over 50 web pages of information on the Isle of Man including articles from leading players in the offshore industry. You can also sign up for a regular email newsletter. Other pages on the Lowtax site include the 'Offshore- Onshore Knowledge Base' which describes the low-tax opportunities open to international companies and investors and 'Offshore-Onshore Emerging Offshore Regimes' which covers countries new to the world of offshore (e.g. Hungary).

I shall now examine other web resources which are currently available for the following major offshore centres: Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Guernsey, Jersey, Isle of Man, Ireland and Luxembourg.

Bermuda

The Bermuda Monetary Authority <<http://www.bma.bm/>> is a very comprehensive site covering a wide range of information. The BMA is responsible "for the licensing of banks, deposit companies and investment businesses, the issue and redemption of Bermuda notes and coins, supervision of Bermuda's financial institutions, providing advice to Government on banking and other financial and monetary matters and the vetting of individuals and entities wishing to set up corporate entities in Bermuda" (BMA website).

**Free Pint Competitive
Intelligence Exchange**

Arthur Weiss looks at ways of finding information on competitors, what to look for and how to communicate it to decision makers.

Thursday 19th September 2002, West London, UK
<<http://www.freepint.com/exchange/ci190902.htm>>

Cayman Islands

"There are more than 580 banks and trust companies with assets of approximately US\$747.6 billion, 517 captive insurance companies with assets of US\$14.3 billion, and 3,041 mutual funds with estimated assets of US\$215 billion registered in the Cayman Islands. Some 40,000 offshore companies are also registered" (CIMA website). The two organisations responsible for financial services regulation are the Cayman Islands Monetary Authority <<http://www.cimoney.com.ky>> (CIMA) and the Stock Exchange Authority <<http://www.csx.com.ky/>>.

Guernsey

The Guernsey Financial Services Commission is the regulatory authority for the Bailiwick of Guernsey being responsible for banks, investment funds and insurance companies <<http://www.gfsc.guernseyci.com/>>. A sizeable section of the website is given over to fiduciary business (international trust and corporate services) with links to codes of practice and regulations.

Jersey

The Jersey Financial Services Commission <<http://www.jerseyfsc.org/>> has information on the supervision and regulation of the finance industry in Jersey. It lists very much the same kind of information as the Guernsey site (e.g. news items, company registry, guidance and regulations) but a useful addition is a legal section via a link to the Jersey Legal Information Board at <<http://www.jerseylegalinfo.je/Law/LawsInForce/byAlpha/default.asp?URL=12-1996.htm>>.

Isle of Man

The Isle of Man Government site <<http://www.gov.im>> contains everything you need to know about the island: tourism, economy, agriculture, government budget, transport, communication, and business directories. The Island prides itself on the fact that it has been voted the "best offshore financial services centre" for four consecutive years.

Offshore operations include a range of banking, investment and fund activities conducted by major institutions from around the world, all supervised by the Financial Supervision Commission <<http://www.gov.im/fsc/>>. The website has an online handbook (for subscribers only) detailing all the FSC's regulatory requirements. A section of the site is devoted to the Manx Companies Registry with information on company searches and filing requirements. Insurance operations are supervised by the Insurance & Pensions Authority <<http://www.gov.im/ipa/>>. The mission statement posted on their website says that the IPA will "provide security for investors, prevent and deter the Isle of Man being used for the purposes of financial crime, preserve the international reputation of the Isle of Man and ensure a flourishing environment for Isle of Man business".

Ireland

Ireland has completely transformed itself over the past 15 years enthusiastically embracing the benefits that EU membership can bring and proving a very attractive location for foreign companies, particularly from the USA. In 1987 the Government recognised the growth potential of the financial services sector internationally and that Ireland had the capacity to develop a strong international financial service. It was against this background that the Government decided to establish the International Financial Services Centre <<http://www.ifsc.ie/>>. The principal regulatory authorities are the Department of Finance <<http://www.irlgov.ie/finance/>> (which oversees overall policy and fiscal issues relating to the IFSC), the Department of Enterprise Trade & Employment <<http://www.entemp.ie/services.htm>> (which regulates the insurance industry) and the Central Bank of Ireland <<http://www.centralbank.ie/>> (which regulates all insurance related activities). Investors should also be aware of the country's Stock Exchange site <<http://www.ise.ie/>> where listing requirements and statistics can be found amongst a range of sources.

Luxembourg

The Commission de Surveillance du Secteur Financier (CSSF) <<http://www.cssf.lu/fr/index.html>> is the regulatory authority for all types of financial institutions in Luxembourg. The site is mainly in French and includes links to publications, statistics and legislation. Investors in funds domiciled in Luxembourg should be aware of the requirements of the Luxembourg Stock Exchange <<http://www.bourse.lu/english/index.shtml>>. It has all the standard information found on most Stock Exchange sites: share prices, admission to listing rules and press notices.

International Organisations

There are a number of international organisations responsible for setting standards in the financial sector; their supervisory and monitoring role is of particular relevance to offshore centres who must be seen to be transparent and open in their transactions. The International Organisation of Securities Commissions (IOSCO) <<http://www.iosco.org/iosco.html>> proclaims on its website that one of its aims is "to co-operate together to promote high standards of regulation in order to maintain just, efficient and sound markets". There is also the Financial Stability Forum <<http://www.fsforum.org/>> which was convened in April 1999 to "promote international financial stability through information exchange and international co-operation in financial supervision and surveillance". Both sites list documentation and guidance.

Money Laundering

Money laundering is the process whereby money gained through criminal activity is controlled so as to confuse its distribution or origins. All offshore jurisdictions place great emphasis on anti-money laundering legislation and the prevention of financial crime; there are a number of initiatives in place to assist them.

In response to mounting concern over money laundering, the Financial Action Task Force on money laundering (FATF) <<http://www1.oecd.org/fatf/>> was established by the G-7 Summit in Paris in 1989 to develop a co-ordinated international response to the money laundering problem.

The FATF have drawn up 40 recommendations which set out the basic framework for anti-money laundering efforts encouraging a co-ordinated response across all jurisdictions.

Other organisations who have worked on anti-money laundering initiatives are the International Association of Insurance Supervisors who published their 'Anti-Money Laundering Guidance Notes for Insurance Supervisors and Insurance Entities' in January 2002, <<http://www.iaisweb.org/1/pasc.html>> and the Bank for International Settlements who published the 'Prevention of criminal use of the banking system for the purpose of money laundering' in December 1998, <http://www1.oecd.org/fatf/pdf/basle1988_en.pdf>.

The UK has a strong commitment to anti-money laundering legislation; HM Treasury is currently consulting on amending the 2001 Money Laundering Regulations <http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/Newsroom_and_Speeches/Press/2002/press_48_02.cfm?>. The JMLSG (Joint Money Laundering Steering Group) gives practical assistance in interpreting the UK Money Laundering Regulations <<http://www.jmlsg.org.uk/>>. The EU has also produced a directive on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purpose of money laundering (1991/308) plus an amending directive (2001/97) both of which can be accessed via Europa's Eur-Lex site <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/search/search_lif.html>.

Trevor Harvey is Information Officer for the Financial Institutions Group at City law firm Clifford Chance <<http://www.cliffordchance.com>>. He has previously held posts at St Quintin property consultancy and the RICS. He writes here in a personal capacity.

The author's article on Investment Funds was published in Free Pint, Issue 86, April 2001 <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/260401.htm>>.

Related Free Pint links:

- "Finance and Business" resources in the Free Pint Portal <<http://www.freepint.com/go/p50>>
- Post a message to the author, Trevor Harvey, or suggest further resources at the Free Pint Bar <<http://www.freepint.com/bar>>
- Read this article online, with activated hyperlinks <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/050902.htm#feature>>
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Free Pint Bookshelf

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

"Inside Yahoo! Reinvention and the Road Ahead"

Written by Karen Angel

Reviewed by Duncan Parry

The story of Yahoo is the story of the dot com dream; a multi-million dollar company that grew out of the hobby of two Ph.D. students and soared on the stock market. But it also embodies the flip side of the dot com dream; shares in the company fell steeply in 2000 as investors became nervous about dot coms, and the closures of high-profile websites like Pets.com and boo.com led to a steep fall in Yahoo's main revenue stream, advertising. As the books' author, journalist Karen Angel points out, now may be the best time to take stock of where Yahoo has come from and where it is going.

'Inside Yahoo!: Reinvention and the Road Ahead' tells the story of Yahoo from its humble beginnings as a distraction for students Jerry Yang and David Filo from their dissertations (and yes, the popular myth is true, they did once run the site from a trailer), through the heady days of the growth of the dot coms, the so-called portal wars between Yahoo, Lycos, Excite and others; through to the fall in technology stocks and the economic realities of 2002.

Although Yahoo declined to contribute to the book - a fact Angel notes contrasts to the company's past enthusiasm for the media - she has drawn on sources around the former and current management of Yahoo, former Yahoo staff members and Wall Street analysts to tell the story of the company and assess what the future may hold.

These contacts and Angel's own research provide interesting insights in the culture of many of the dot coms that existed in the mid 1990s. These provide startlingly examples of the virtual 'land grab' that was taking place between portals including Yahoo, Excite, Lycos and AOL. For example, Excite.com paid \$780m for e-card website Blue Mountain Arts in 1999. At the same time, Yahoo's then director of e-commerce, Elizabeth Collet, hired an intern to build an e-card service for Yahoo - at a cost she estimates of about \$10,000. Excite filed for bankruptcy early in 2002; Yahoo has struggled on, posting a profit of \$21.4 million in the second quarter of 2002.

However, as Angel discusses, Yahoo has faced its own challenges since the heady days of deal making in the late 90s. The company's diversification away from relying on advertising for revenue has resulted in changes that have been controversial with some users - for example the annual fee for listing a commercial website in the Yahoo directory, and the company's partnerships with pay-per-click search engines.

'Inside Yahoo!: Reinvention and the Road Ahead' is an accessible, interesting read for anybody interested in the story of one of the companies that shaped the Internet into how we know it today. It paints a clear picture of the rapid-fire deal making, acquisitions and entrepreneurial spirit that characterised the growth of the dot coms, and the painful reality which hit in 2000. It will be interesting to see what form Yahoo exists in when the author writes an updated edition of this book.

Free Pint Data Protection Exchange

Thursday 26th September 2002, West London, UK

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

This workshop will look at setting up data protection and privacy statements, tracking users, securing and processing client data.

"Paul Pedley is an excellent speaker. Very knowledgeable. Would definitely come to another event. Price was reasonable as well."

Duncan Parry works in the UK editorial team of European pay-per-click search engine Espotting <<http://www.espotting.com/>>, whose partners include Yahoo! Europe and Ask Jeeves in the UK. When time permits he writes for EuropeMedia about the UK Internet industry <<http://www.europemedia.net/editors.asp?EditorID=113>>, and is studying for a degree with the Open University. Previously he worked on the directory of Lycos UK <dparry@lycos.co.uk>.

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- "Inside Yahoo: Reinvention and the Road Ahead" ISBN 0471007935 published by John Wiley & Sons written by Karen Angel
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Feature Article[<http://www.freepint.com/issues/050902.htm#feature>](http://www.freepint.com/issues/050902.htm#feature)**"From Fortune 500 to Handelsblatt's European 500 one year on - another look at some useful European and International Rankings"****By Helen Clegg****Introduction**

Readers may remember my article on web rankings, which appeared in issue 95 of Free Pint on September 6th last year [<http://www.freepint.com/issues/060901.htm>](http://www.freepint.com/issues/060901.htm). In this article I looked at European and International company rankings on the World Wide Web and reviewed their functionality and coverage. As change is the only certainty in today's world, I've taken another look at the rankings one year on to see whether they have been updated, superseded by others or deleted from the Web altogether.

Europe**UK**

Sure enough, the Financial Times has produced its rankings survey for 2001. I started to search for it by going to the home page of the FT, at [<http://www.ft.com>](http://www.ft.com), which is where I found a link to it last year, but no joy this time. Instead, I kept getting directed to the new special subscription-only section of the site, so I decided to substitute last year's URL of [<http://specials.ft.com/ft500/may2001/global.html>](http://specials.ft.com/ft500/may2001/global.html) with [<http://specials.ft.com/ft500/may2002/global.html>](http://specials.ft.com/ft500/may2002/global.html) and it worked! I'm sorry to report, however, that upon reconstructing this "trick" a few weeks after I discovered it, I found that the FT has obviously discovered it too and removed the hyperlink. So surfers have no alternative but to subscribe to FT.com. The Global FT 500 covers all major industry sectors and the rankings are by market capitalization. There are tables for Japan and Asia, the USA, Latin America and Canada, Europe and the UK. Other regions covered include Eastern Europe, the Middle East, South Africa and top sub-Saharan companies. However a subscription to FT.com doesn't come cheap. The cheapest option is priced at GBP 65 per year, the more expensive one is GBP 150 per year. You can get round this by taking out a trial subscription for a few weeks, but the site doesn't make it particularly easy or obvious how to do this. It's a real shame that the FT can't provide the rankings on a pay-as-you go basis, as so many people find them extremely useful. My suggestion is therefore to buy a copy of the FT each day through the second week in May, when the rankings survey usually appears - that way at least you'll have the rankings for a fraction of the subscription price. Come on FT, make your rankings accessible once more, even on a pay-as-you go basis!

As well as the Global 500, the FT also compiles an interesting European Performance League ranking, which this year appeared in July. It ranks those companies that offered shareholders the most profitable investments over one and five years. Sure enough, it's only available to subscribers of FT.com.

Germany

Last year I drew attention to the German daily newspaper, Handelsblatt [<http://www.handelsblatt.com>](http://www.handelsblatt.com), which published a number of good rankings for Germany. This year I couldn't find them anywhere on its own web site, but Handelsblatt's ranking of Europe's Top 500 companies

is available through the web site of the German business magazine WirtschaftsWoche, as both the newspaper and the magazine are published by the same publisher. The Handelsblatt/WirtschaftsWoche ranking of Europe's Top 500 is reviewed later in this article.

Manager Magazin [<http://www.manager-magazin.de>](http://www.manager-magazin.de), one of Germany's stalwart business magazines, has updated its rankings this year and even added a couple more:

- E-100 im Internet - what Germany's Top 100 companies are doing with regard to the Internet
- Web Test - how the 100 best German companies leverage Internet technology
- Euro 500 - ranking of the top European quoted companies
- Top 100 Banken - Top 100 German banks
- Die besten Unternehmen Amerikas - the best American companies

To locate the first two rankings, click on the "E-business + Medien" hyperlink at the top of the home page, then choose E-100 or Web Test at the top of the following page. The E-100 is an interesting ranking, it lets you search for the name of a company and find out how it's incorporating Internet technology in its corporate strategy. I checked out the publishing giant, Bertelsmann, and found that it has a very comprehensive Internet strategy. You can also search this ranking by industry sector, so if you want to find out which are the top German companies in the construction industry making the most innovative use of the Internet within their businesses, this is the place to search. In the construction industry for example, it's Bilfinger + Berger.

The Web Test ranking basically lets you rank those German companies which have excellent web site capabilities. So if you want to find out which company has the best navigable web site, or best interactive web site, check this ranking out. I used the default settings and found that Fresenius came top with the best web site, scoring 373 points.

To pinpoint the Top 100 German banks and best American companies, simply type in the word "ranking" into the "Archiv" search box on the home page. These two rankings appeared in different issues of the magazine and haven't been given their own web page, so you'll only pick them up by doing a keyword search through the articles in the archive. The Top 100 German banks list was published on June 28, 2002 and the best American companies on April 7, 2002.

If you navigate to the "Geld + Boerse" hyperlink at the top of Manager Magazin's home page, you'll find a link to the Euro 500 ranking. Scroll down the page to "Ranking: Direkt zum Euro-500 Vergleich" and follow the link. With this European ranking you can rank the companies by shareholder value performance, revenue growth, market capitalization, number of employees and industry sector. What's new this year is the addition of sixteen other European countries, making this site a real treasure-trove.

In last year's article I commented that if you're looking for rankings for smaller European countries, probably the best option was to use the Corporate Information web site [<http://www.corporateinformation.com>](http://www.corporateinformation.com). Well, now you have a choice. Granted, the Manager Magazin web site is in German, but it's worth getting to grips with some basic vocabulary just to use this ranking. So if you're looking for the top quoted companies in Belgium, Spain, Ireland, Greece, Denmark or Italy, I'd recommend picking the appropriate country in the filter box in this Euro500

ranking. Here are the countries you can choose from, followed by the number of quoted companies available:

Austria (02), Belgium (11), Germany (48), Denmark (11), Finland (08), France (65), Greece (08), Great Britain (177), Ireland (08), Italy (46), Luxembourg (01), Netherlands (29), Norway (07), Portugal (09), Sweden (26), Switzerland (27), Spain (24).

If you want to refine your search further, and limit by an industry sector, go to WirtschaftsWoche <<http://www.wirtschaftswoche.de>>, another leading German weekly business magazine. As mentioned earlier, here you'll find the following useful ranking:

- Europas Top 500 - die 500 Groessten Unternehmen im Vergleich - a comparison of Europe's Top 500 companies

From the home page, choose "Unternehmen", you'll then see a hyperlink to "Europas Top 500". This is a dynamic ranking, as you can decide which information you want to display in the four available columns. Choose from market capitalization, change in stock price, revenue, number of employees. The ranking covers seventeen European countries. Perhaps you're looking for the top transport/logistics companies in the UK? Then pick this sector from the industry list and combine it with the UK from the drop-down country pick list. Exel Logistics is ranked Number One and Stagecoach as Number Five.

France

Last year I recommended the rankings provided by one of France's leading business newspapers, Les Echos. The rankings are available this year too, in a similar format. On the home page of Les Echos web site <<http://www.lesechos.fr>> you'll see a number of broad industry categories towards the bottom of the page. Clicking on one of these will take you to a page dedicated to that particular industry category. Now all you have to do is to click on the "Classements CA" hyperlink, which is in the boxed column on the left and choose "Palmares", which will take you to the ranking. The functionality of the rankings offered by Les Echos has improved over last year. Although the default ranking is by revenue, you can also rank by net profit, export value or number of employees and limit by French "department" or county. And there's a new type of ranking on offer too - check out the hyperlink called "Dynamisme". Here you can find out the number of companies that have been created or that have collapsed in a particular industry sector from 1999 through 2001, for example, the number of bankruptcies in the advertising sector in the Ile de France from 1999 to 2001. The only annoying thing about the rankings posted by Les Echos is that you have to keep returning to the home page, in order to choose a different industry category.

You'll notice that when you generate a ranking from using Les Echos, it appears as a separate frame, which has a different URL - <<http://www.cofacerating.fr>>. My curiosity got the better of me and so I navigated to <<http://www.cofacerating.fr>> to find a real gem of a rankings site. It's one of the web sites belonging to the Coface Group, whose businesses are credit management and credit insurance. From this site, you can generate rankings on really specific industry sectors - I have never seen anything like it and had a field day testing these rankings out. I generated a list of shoe manufacturers, aerospace manufacturers and a list of the top demolition companies in France!

The more unusual rankings offered by L'Expansion last year <<http://lexpansion.com>>, such as the Top 250 European companies which have implemented good corporate governance and the Top 10 companies ranked by number of patents, don't seem to be available this year. Instead you can find more general rankings for French companies, split into four broad categories:

- Les 1423 groupes industriels et de services - 1423 industrial and service companies
- Les 238 entreprises commerciales - 238 commercial organizations
- Les 159 banques et instituts financiers - 159 banks and financial institutions
- Les 41 compagnies d'assurance - 41 insurance companies

You'll find the rankings under the hyperlink "Fiches d'entreprises - les 1000" on the left-hand side of the home page. Don't be put off by the odd numbers! The numbers simply refer to the number of companies in each database. So if you want the Top 50 French industrial companies ranked by turnover, simply choose the first option from the list, as the default ranking is by turnover. Once you've got your list on screen, you can retrieve more detailed information on specific companies by clicking on the company name. This will include some financials, the number of employees, percentage of sales derived from abroad as well as hyperlinks to the last three articles on the company from L'Expansion. If you want to generate your own rankings from within each of these four categories, you can do. For example you can limit by geographic region or rank by sales from abroad. If you want to manipulate the data further and access even more company information, then it's best to buy the rankings diskette, available from L'Expansion.

Luxembourg

If Luxembourg is your point of interest, navigate to the web site of Luxembourg's official statistics office at <<http://statec.gouvernement.lu>>. As is always the case, I came across this great resource while doing an enquiry. The Luxembourg Statistics Office has compiled a couple of company rankings that are available for free. The easiest way to locate them is to open the site map and scroll down to "Download files", where you'll find the following lists in pdf format:

- 2002 - Les principales entreprises par taille (Top companies ranked by number of employees)
- 2002 - Les principales entreprises par branche (Top companies by industry sector, ranked by number of employees)

For comparison purposes, the previous lists for 2001 are also available to download. If you're looking for a ranking of companies in Luxembourg by turnover, you'll be disappointed by these lists, because they don't include any financial data at all, but you do get the full company name and address, and if it's a group of companies, all the subsidiaries are also listed.

Spain

Last year I reported that Spanish rankings were available from the web site of one of Spain's leading business magazines, Actualidad Economica, but not for free. This year is no different. You can find the rankings at <<http://www.actualidad-economica.com>>. Scroll down to the section called Servicios and click on the hyperlink called Bases de datos. Here you'll find information on how

to access the rankings. It seems that publishers are now starting to classify rankings as premium content and moving to either a subscription-based model or pay-as-you-go model for supplying such data.

Sweden

While doing some serious surfing a couple of months ago, I came across some Swedish rankings, compiled by the Swedish business magazine, Affarsvarlden <<http://www.afv.se>>. The lists give data from 2000, but hopefully they will be updated in the near future to include 2001 figures. This is the place to go for a list of the top Swedish companies or the top IT companies in Sweden. To reach the rankings, click on the tab marked "Research" at the top of the home page. The rankings available are:

- 500 Storsta - Sweden's top 500 companies
- Tema IT - Top IT companies in Sweden
- Tema Affarsjuridik - Top commercial lawyers in Sweden
- Tema Regioner - Regional ranking

The default ranking of Sweden's top 500 companies is alphabetical, but you can rank by turnover (Oms.) or number of employees (Anst.) as well. In the top IT companies listing, there's an additional option to limit by sector, but you really need to be able to read Swedish to make use of this feature. The regional ranking gives details of salaries in the different regions of Sweden. You can also download this ranking into Excel for further manipulation. The above rankings are all in Swedish - if you know a little German, then you'll probably be OK, but otherwise it's worth getting someone to help with translating the basic headings.

Switzerland

Since last year, the Handelszeitung of Switzerland has also decided to classify its rankings as premium content. At <<http://www.handelszeitung.com>> you'll find a hyperlink to the "Top 2002: Die groessten Unternehmen in der Schweiz" on the left-hand side of the home page. Prices range from CHF 1 for a simple query, CHF 5 for a fixed table, to CHF 40-100 for generating a ranking based on your own criteria. However, if all you're looking for is the Top 10 Swiss companies, check out the Swiss magazine Bilanz <<http://www.bilanz.ch>>. The magazine produces an annual ranking of the Top 100 Swiss companies each July, but only posts details of the Top Ten on its web site. You'll find these at <<http://www.bilanz.ch/service/ratings/index.cfm>>.

International

Russia

My best find this year has to be a comprehensive ranking for Russia, which is lurking on the RA Expert web site at <<http://www.raexpert.ru>>. It's a bit tricky to locate, as you need to thread your way through the English language version of the site and the sectoral classifier. For some reason, the actual hyperlink to the rankings only seems to work for the Russian version. So here's the quickest way I found of locating the rankings - go to the English language version, click on "Sectoral Classifier", choose "Industry" and then scroll down to "Expert 200" - this is the name of the rankings database. Now just follow the links to the database. I came across this great source while searching for something else, which happens to me all the time. Expert 200 provides historical rankings too, starting at 1995 making it a double-bull's eye in my opinion!

These Russian rankings are compiled by the Expert RA

Ratings Agency, based in Moscow. According to its web site, "Expert RA is an authorized agent of the Central Bank of Russia and the Federal Securities Commission". It was founded in 1997 by Expert Weekly. The agency aims to provide information and analysis for companies conducting business on the Russian market." On this basis, I would dare to trust the rankings that it produces, which are:

- 20 largest Russian companies by net sales
- 20 most profitable companies * 20 largest companies by market capitalization
- List of the 200 largest companies by net sales
- List of the 200 largest companies by market capitalization
- 20 companies with the greatest productivity

These rankings give financial information in roubles and US dollars. I was curious to see the ranking of the 20 companies with the greatest productivity. Interestingly, ranked Number One is Severnaya Verf, a shipbuilding yard; but Mars, the confectionery giant, comes in at Number Two. If you click on the company name, you'll get more details, including growth rate (51.3% for Mars in Russia), net sales, pretax profit, net profit, net margin, personnel in thousands and labor productivity measured in thousands of roubles per person.

USA

Fortune magazine <<http://www.fortune.com>> is still the most famous source for US rankings and its rankings this year are much the same as those on offer last year. The nice thing about Fortune is that it's easy to navigate to the rankings and they're free. From the home page there are hyperlinks to the following rankings:

- * Fortune 500 * Global 500 * 100 best to work for * Global most admired * 100 fastest growing * Small business 100 * 50 best for minorities * Washington power 25 * CEOs

The ranking of the 100 best companies to work for is worth checking out, as it includes a list for the USA, a list of the best companies for women, and new this year is a Top list of 10 great companies to work for in Europe. This list includes Skandia, ING Group, Pret a Manger as well as L'Oreal and Morgan Stanley. It will be worth watching this list to see if Fortune adds other companies to it in the future. Staying with Europe, if you check out the Global 500 ranking you'll find a European section. True to form, Fortune offers a number of different ways of ranking the companies under the Top Performers hyperlink, such as by growth in profits, growth in revenues, revenues per dollar of assets, total return to shareholders and return on revenues. You can also generate rankings by industry. For example according to Fortune, the fastest growing industry in the USA by revenue growth is the energy industry, followed by the food production sector.

The other notable American magazine which publishes a number of rankings is Forbes <<http://www.forbes.com>>. This year's offering from Forbes has changed little from last year but the web site itself has been completely revamped. The best way of finding the rankings is to scroll down to "Lists" from the sectors in the "jump to" box on the home page. You'll find:

- * Forbes 500 * Forbes Global 500 * 200 best small companies * 400 best big companies * 500 largest privates

However, this year you have to register with the Forbes' web site in order to access any of the rankings, but at least registration is free. Once you've registered, you can view

the Top 25 companies in each list. If you want to see the complete list, you have to pay, as Forbes seems to be moving toward the premium content model. Ranking options include market value, assets, profits or sales.

If you're looking for the top IT companies, then Business Week <<http://www.businessweek.com>> is a good source to use. The best way to find Business Week's rankings is to check out the "investing" section of the web site. As well as the Info Tech 100/200 scoreboard, there's the annual BW50/Standard & Poor's Top 500. New this year are the Standard & Poor's Mid Cap 400 and Standard & Poor's Small Cap 600. Unfortunately last year's rankings on the Top 40 best places to be single and Best value bosses seem to have vanished from the site.

Australia

The best place to start looking for Australian rankings is Business Review Weekly at <<http://www.brw.com.au>>. Most of the rankings are the same as last year's offerings, but the Top New Zealand companies list seems to be new. BRW's rankings include:

* The BRW 1000 * Top 500 public companies * Top 500 private companies * Rich 200 * The 100 fastest growing companies * State of the nation - lists Australia's best and worst performing industries * Top 20 law firms * Top 100 accountancy firms * Top 50 entertainers - brand new stars * Top 50 sports earners * Top 50 advertisers * New Zealand's biggest companies

To retrieve the rankings, navigate to the "Lists" section on the home page. The Top 500 public companies list is dynamic, so you can sort by company name, ASX code, market capitalization, revenue or net profit. With the Top 500 private companies list you can sort by revenue, number of employees and company name. The BRW 1000 ranking is also dynamic and lets you generate rankings by net revenue, profit after tax, shareholder funds or total assets. Furthermore, you can refine your ranking to a specific industry sector. In each case, you'll need to choose the "Search the list" option in order to generate your preferred ranking. New Zealand's biggest companies are tucked away under the "Fact files" hyperlink on the BRW 1000 web page.

If you're a fan of the inimitable Steve Irwin, presenter of The Crocodile Hunter TV series, then have a look at this! Australia's Top 50 entertainers - brand new stars ranking shows that the highest-placed newcomer on this year's list is none other than Steve Irwin, together with his producer-manager, John Stainton - they enter the list at Number Five, with gross earnings of AU\$16.3 million. As Steve himself says, "It's insane, mate. I'm bigger than 10 bears. I reckon you'd be pretty right if you said I'm the best known Aussie in the world" [Bigger than 10 bears, mate. By Chris Johnston, Melbourne, The Age, August 20, 2002].

Conclusion

Well, that's it on rankings for another year. As well as the rankings recommended in this article, remember to check out Gary Price's List of Lists at <<http://www.freepint.com/gary/listof.htm>>, a great resource if you're searching for all sorts of rankings. It does tend to have a US bias although there are sections on Japan, Saudi Arabia and Canada. Price's List of Lists is currently being overhauled and rebuilt.

If you're looking for rankings for the smaller European countries like Belgium, the Netherlands or Luxembourg,

don't forget the German Manager Magazin web site at <<http://www.manager-magazin.de>> mentioned earlier in this article or you could also check out the Corporate Information web site <<http://www.corporateinformation.com>> maintained by Wright Investors' Service, an investment management and financial advisory firm based in the USA. It will give you the Top 10 companies for most countries of the world.

Finally, it will be interesting to see whether the stealthy move towards classifying rankings as premium content continues during the coming year. Let's hope not!

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I hope you've picked up some valuable sites to check out in today's Free Pint. A lot of effort goes into producing each issue, and so we hope you've got a lot out of it. Do send us your feedback and any thoughts you've had about anything you've read.

See you in two weeks!

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