Free Pint ®

Helping 57,000 people use the Web for their work

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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 a substantial archive of articles, reviews, jobs & events, with answers to research questions and networking at the Free Pint 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

When it comes to running a community Web site, nobody has all the answers. Generally, the only way you can find out if a new feature is going to work for any particular group of people is by trying it out.

The FreePint Bar is one such example of a feature which has taken a lot of work to provide, but with whose take up I've been thrilled. There are now 20,000 research questions and answers, and 10,000 FreePinters receive the Bar Digest twice a week.

There's been a lot of work behind the scenes to get this far, of which you may not be aware. For instance, every posting triggers an alert for us to moderate the message. We make no bones about removing dodgy postings and correct obvious spelling mistakes (e.g. 'teh' instead of 'the'). This helps to keep the quality high and averts any embarrassment for the poster. If we see a message on a particular topic and know an expert in that area, then we notify them. We've been doing this every day (including evenings and weekends) for four years, and moderated over 2 million words.

We've added lots of utilities to the Bar in this time, mostly in response to user feedback. 'Preferences' let you add a default signature to postings, choose how many items to view per page, the format of dates, etc. In the Bar you can easily send a posting to a friend, jump to a particular message or run a quick search.

You can now receive the Bar Digest in HTML format so that Table of Contents links work. Also, after the gruelling project of adding categories to all postings, the 'Bar Browser' now provides browsing by subject <http://www.freepint.com/bar/browser>.

Of course, none of this matters if you don't actually have anyone using the service. We're extremely grateful to everyone who has provided their expertise at the Bar. I'm sure you'll join me in thanking Factiva too, for their continuing sponsorship.

So, let's raise a virtual glass to the FreePint Bar. Here's to all its contributors and supporters. <http://www.freepint.com/bar>

Cheers
William

William Hann BSc(Hons) MCLIP
Founder and Managing Editor
Email: <william@freepint.com>
Tel: +44 (0)1784 420044
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FREE PINT JOBS

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

As well as the selected listings below, check out the weekly Bar posting which lists the latest additions to FreePint Jobs. This week's can be found at <http://www.freepint.com/go/b22664> and last week's at <http://www.freepint.com/go/b22513>.

Here are some of the latest featured jobs:

Consultants Roster
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j2322>
Trade Services Consultants
Recruiter: International Trade Centre

Communication Manager
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j2324>
Government department requires communication manager with strategic and creative communications expertise
Recruiter: Recruit Media

Researcher (Birmingham)
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j2328>
Information Researchers (qualified) for Birmingham and Milton Keynes
with 1-2 years business research experience.
To 25,000 pounds
Recruiter: Glen Recruitment

Deputy School Support Services Manager
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j2330>
A deputy role in academia, ensuring support services (structure, strategy and integration) are developed, implemented and managed
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment

[The above jobs are paid listings]

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

FreePint Deep Linking & Website Evaluation Exchange

13th March 2003, Central London

"Looking at the question of how to measure the quality, credibility and trustworthiness of web sites; and minimizing the potential legal risks involved in 'deep linking'."

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

The **International Trade Centre (ITC)**, the focal point of the United Nations system for technical co-operation with developing countries and transition economies in relation to trade development, is seeking applications for its roster of consultants for future short-term assignments to support and develop Trade Information services within trade support institutions. Applicants should have: a professional qualification in library/information management, at least 5 years relevant work experience, knowledge of information environments in developing countries and transition economies and fluency in English, French and/or Spanish. Applicants should complete a Personal History form available at www.intracen.org/jobs and forward this to HRSRoster@intracen.org

MY FAVOURITE TIPPLES
from Duncan Parry

Duncan Parry works in the UK editorial team of European pay-per-click search engine Espotting <http://www.espotting.com/>, creating advertising campaigns for the websites of leading UK brands.

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

- MailWasher <http://www.mailwasher.net/> - Sick of spam? This free software downloads your emails from POP3 accounts and allows you to bounce spam emails back to their senders, as if your email address doesn't work - hopefully convincing them to delete you from their lists.

- Trillian <http://www.ceruleanstudios.com/> - Sick of having to switch between MSN Messenger, Yahoo! Messenger, ICQ, IRC and AIM to talk to friends and colleagues? Trillian lets you use all these IM networks from one application. Free and commercial versions available.

- NEC by Clay Shirky <http://www.shirky.com/> - A thought provoking mailing list "about Networks, Economics and Culture". Past topics have included the effects of P2P technology and weblogs.

- The Microcontent News Blogging Software Roundup <http://www.microcontentnews.com/articles/blogware.htm> - A useful discussion of weblog software for both personal and community use, including free, hosted services and solutions you can put on your own server.

- Metapad <http://www.liquidninja.com/metapad/> - Windows Notepad is often too simple for editing text or html files, and Word too cumbersome. Metapad is a free text editor that offers features like a recent files list, find and replace, and easy text case changing options.

FREE PINT BAR
In Association with Factiva
a Dow Jones & Reuters Company

Need help with a research question? Post it alongside the 20,000 others at the FreePint Bar. Help is free and usually comes from other FreePinters very quickly <http://www.freepint.com/bar>.

If you're studying on an information-related course, then make the most of the Student Bar <http://www.freepint.com/student>. Great for help with projects, career suggestions, etc.

To get a digest of postings twice a week, modify your account online at <http://www.freepint.com/member> or email <subs@freepint.com>.

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<http://www.factiva.com/infopro>

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

The FreePint Exchanges taking place in London have proved to be very popular. Here are a few more coming up in the near future:

The FreePint Deep Linking & Evaluation Exchange looks at "how to measure the quality, credibility and trustworthiness of web sites; and minimizing the potential legal risks involved in 'deep linking'". It is taking place on the 13th March and is lead by Paul Pedley <http://www.freepint.com/go/e175>.

The FreePint Intranet Governance Exchange looks at the organizational aspects of intranet management and governance. It is taking place on the 20th March and is lead by Martin White <http://www.freepint.com/go/e177>.

The FreePint Search Tools Exchange "will cover the latest search engine news and features, specialised research tools and gadgets". It is taking place on the 27th March and is lead by Gary Price. <http://www.freepint.com/go/e178>.

On a different note ...

Total Library Solutions, organised by Imark Communications is in Birmingham on the 26 - 27 March. "Up to 70 exhibitors will be showcasing hundreds of the best library solutions" <http://www.freepint.com/go/e179>.

On the 18th March in London, the STN Chemical Biology Forum is taking place. "A guest speaker from Pfizer will talk about their particular usage of chemical biology sources online and on the web, as well as the practicalities and pitfalls of information gathering in this specialist area" <http://www.freepint.com/go/e176>.

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

Penny <penny@freepint.com>

TIPS ARTICLE
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/060303.htm#tips>

"And the winner is... Our experience with selecting a CMS"
By Briget Lander

Briget Lander is currently part of the IT Innovation and Development group of the Delft University of Technology Library in the Netherlands <http://www.library.tudelft.nl>.

She holds a B. Engineering and a M. Library and Information Studies from New Zealand universities. This has proved a useful combination of qualifications when working variously as knowledge manager, project leader, business researcher and IT trainer in private and public (academic) environments.

If you would like to know more about the Delft University of Technology Library's CMS project, perhaps you are about to undertake such a project in your organisation, please feel free to contact the library at info@library.tudelft.nl.

The Delft University of Technology Library has just completed a selection process for a Content Management System (CMS). The system will soon be used to manage our websites and our scientific publishing activities - and is likely to have a profound impact on how we do this!

This article should not be read as a generic 'How to select a CMS' piece (there are lots of those already available on the web), but is offered as a case study of what we did and what we learned on the way. The whole process from realising we needed a new system, to signing a contract with a vendor took just over a year and we are only now ready to start the real work of implementation.

So why a CMS...? Well, quite simply, the library had outgrown our out-of-the-box html editor/website management tool. Outgrown it both in terms of capacity and functionality. The size of our main website and the number of specialist websites being managed by the library has grown considerably in the last two years and our old system just wasn't designed for multi-site, multi-lingual content management. Compounding this, our local product supplier had gone out of business and we were left without any support to handle problems that arose more and more frequently.

Everyone involved in making or managing the library's websites was crying out for a new system, so there was no difficulty drumming up support for such a project.

Apart from website management issues, our scientific publisher, Delft University Press, which is part of the library, was investigating ways of improving their publications and their efficiency by using XML. A good CMS that supported XML publishing would be well received.

Before I go too far, it might be useful to give a quick definition of what I mean by a CMS - a quick search of Google will give you loads of material with more detail. Unfortunately, each article will give a slightly different definition - I suggest reading a number of articles and as a team, come to your own working definition which you can then also use for internal communication.

In this article, a CMS is a software system which helps collect/author content, store/manage it and then publish it. And these three tasks are controlled by an integrated workflow tool.

The first step was to form a project group of stakeholders from around the organisation - marketing, subject librarians, publishers and IT support. A group of about 8-10 people initially met three times with the aim of listing our content types and analysing our current content management processes. This was difficult for our website activities because there was, in fact, very little in the way of defined process.

For our scientific publisher, the processes were much more well defined because of the rigorous requirements of scientific peer review. The

processes were well defined but entirely manual and sucked up a lot of administration time.

The project group drew current content processes on simple flow charts and this helped to identify where the problem areas were and where things were working just fine. Then the group listed different content types that were in use in the library - mainly Office documents, html files and images plus some content stored in a couple of Access databases.

The next step was more fun - envisaging what we could do when we had the CMS of our dreams! The ideas at this stage came from our imagination and from what other organisations were doing. The project group were also informed by product literature.

The result of this project phase was a very detailed list of wishes and requirements. The main headings for this 'Wishes and Requirements' document were: Input/Authoring; Storage; Publishing; Workflow; Webserver services; User management; Technology (system requirements); Supplier.

The last one, Supplier, was of special importance for the library after previous bad experience. This section included requirements on the number of local technical staff and local support staff, stability of the company and client references.

Now that we had an idea of what we needed, it was time to look at what was on offer.

Where to start in such a large and fluctuating market!? Our 'long list' of products was built up from many sources but there were two particularly useful starting points. One was a report from the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) on CMSystems which includes a very lengthy list of products. The other good starting point for us was a report entitled 'Content Management Systems Guide 2002' - a Netherlands market scan produced by a consulting group called entopic. The products listed in these two publications, plus products that recurred in background reading and on the CMS-List (a CMS users email discussion group) all found their way onto our long list of about 30 products. The only criteria for getting onto our long list was the system must be:

- Open (built in non-proprietary language, able to integrate with many databases, not limited to any one operating system)
- Able to support XML content storage and publication
- Scalable

The first criterion proved to be the most effective at weeding out many products which otherwise sounded fine.

An aside: To Buy or To Build? While scanning the CMS market, we also considered building our own system - from open source or Oracle components. We did a bit of reading and visited another university who had built their own system. However, we decided that in our situation, with limited capacity for developing and then maintaining a complex system, this was not the option for us.

With the long list more or less complete, the next step was to collect product literature from vendor websites, product reviews, white papers, news articles and opinions. It was important to vary our sources to get a mix of marketing guff, professional (but not necessarily un-biased) opinion and user opinion. Independent information is always the best but is difficult to find. Information about price is like hens teeth - hard to find and not very useful when you do! Although price information could be useful for grouping products into 'low' or 'high' end, it is unlikely to indicate how much you'll end up paying.

The long list was whittled down to about ten products by comparing what was known about the product with our list of requirements. After quite some discussion, the list was further reduced to a short list of just four products. Each of these vendors was asked to respond to our detailed list of requirements and we arranged for demonstration visits.

With hindsight, our list of requirements should have been less detailed and more open ended. Although we did leave room for some explanations, we didn't leave enough room for the vendor to expose their opinions and biases.

In preparation for the demonstration visit, each vendor was sent a small sample of our content and some use scenarios. They were asked to structure the demo like so: up to half hour on company/product overview, up to 2 hours working through our scenarios, finishing with half hour for follow up questions. This worked better with some vendors than others! At each demonstration, a number of stakeholders were present and after each presentation we listed plus/minus points and tried to draw some conclusions.

During the demonstrations, some important differences emerged about the focus of vendors - did they pitch their product towards content aggregation/syndication or e-transactions or web formats or something else? Did their product have a bias towards whole-document (unstructured) content? Or atomised content components (structured content)? Did they know anything about publishing on paper?

After all the demos it was crunch time. Fortunately, although all four short listed products basically met most of our requirements,

the choice was easy. One vendor had a particularly solid background, the product supported XML well and was designed to manage more than just web content. Equally important, the project group all had a good 'feeling' for this vendor - not very scientific and rather difficult to document, but nevertheless crucial. This vendor stood out as being more understanding of our situation, more responsive to our questions and more knowledgeable and open. Thankfully they were not the most expensive and they had good local representation. We had a winner!

The final step in our selection project was to document our process and present our recommendations to the management team. They had been kept well informed of our progress throughout and the project had also been subject to an external process review part-way through - which meant we had no last minute hurdles to overcome.

Before finally signing a contract with the vendor, the library undertook a six weeks Proof of Concept project which proved to be helpful in establishing a good relationship with the vendor and allowing us to get some hands on experience with the product before making that final commitment.

So that is the story so far. The library (not least our project team members) has learnt a lot about content management as we progressed through the selection process, but as I say, the hard work is only just beginning as we start to implement our new system. Eventually, we see the CMS playing a pivotal role in all our university library functions - from publishing and document delivery, to information mediation and archiving.

Useful resources

By no means an exhaustive list, but here are a few resources which were particularly helpful:

- CMS-List - searchable archives are found at <http://cms.filsa.net/archives/cms-list/> but have not been updated for 6 months

- JISC TechWatch Report - Content Management Systems, Sept 2001, download from <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/techwatch/reports/>. Note that the list of products is not updated and will be largely out of date by now because of a very dynamic CMS market

- CMS Guide 2002 - Gids Content Management Systemen, published by entopic <http://www.entopic.com/>, ISBN: 90-806653-1-2

- CMS Watch <http://www.cmswatch.com/> - a good source of reviews, news articles and market overview

- ZDNet <http://www.zdnet.com/> - quite a good source for product reviews, technology overviews and there is even some prized price information!

- PC Magazine <http://www.pcmag.com/> - another source for technology and product reviews, lists and comparisons of products

- Metatorial.com <http://www.metatorial.com/> - Articles, clear diagrams and simple definitions from a CMS consulting company in the US.

FREE PINT GOLD

Last year, electronic storage of information was a key topic (and still is) in the information profession and Zena Woodley explained how her company did this on a shoestring. Ian Wells' Feature covered "providing employees (or even customers or business partners) with their own personalised corporate portal".

- FreePint No.107 7th March 2002. "Fossicking for Information ... or ... What to do on Sixpence" and "The Death of the Intranet. Long Live the Corporate Portal Quantifying ROI" http://www.freepint.com/issues/070302.htm

Two years ago, Anne Ku "introduces several useful energy information sources, topics of interest, and evaluation considerations". "There are over 180,000 charities in the UK alone", so John Wood listed a few helpful tools that you could use when searching for charities online.

- FreePint No.82, 1st March 2001. "Electric Power Information Sources on the Web" and "Putting your money where your mouse is - online charities" http://www.freepint.com/issues/010301.htm

In 2000, Lynn Temple looked at travel Websites and John Buckingham and Jenny Drey wrote a feature about online chemistry information.

- FreePint No.57, 2nd March 2000. "Travel related websites" and "Chemistry Webzines - How to find the right news for you" http://www.freepint.com/issues/020300.htm

Four years ago, Nikki Pilkington showed us how to promote your Website, offline. Martin White covered protection of data privacy.

- FreePint No.33, 4th March 1999. "12 Offline Ways of Promoting Your URL" and "Data Privacy Web Sites" http://www.freepint.com/issues/040399.htm

In 1998, Ian Watson's tips article was about famous predictions that turned out to be spectacularly inaccurate. Jill Bradley wrote a feature about online and offline market research information.

- FreePint No.9, 5th March 1998. "But what is it good for?" and "Market Reasearch Information On The Internet" http://www.freepint.com/issues/050398.htm

Penny <penny@freepint.com>

FreePint Intranet Governance Exchange

20th March 2003, Central London

"This Exchange will provide delegates with an opportunity to consider some of the organizational aspects of intranet management and governance."

www.freepint.com/exchange/ig200303.htm

FREE PINT BOOKSHELF
<http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf>

"Research Methods for Business - A Skill Building Approach"
Written by Uma Sekaran
Reviewed by Crystal Sharp

Crystal Sharp is Owner/Director of InformAction, CD Sharp Information Systems Ltd, a contract research company specializing in knowledge transfer and project management in health services research in Canada. She can be contacted at crystal@cdsharp.com.

Related links:

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- "Research Methods for Business - A Skill Building Approach" ISBN 0471384488, published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., written by Uma Sekaran
- Search for and purchase any book from Amazon via the FreePint Bookshelf at <http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf>

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

Research Methods for Business, now in its fourth edition, is an extremely comprehensive, yet readable (yes, really) textbook on research methods. While it is directed towards students of business - all its examples relate to business situations and problems - it can be an extremely useful reference book for almost any consultant, manager or decision-maker.

The organization of material is effective in its intended "skill building approach". The earliest chapters have a general discussion of what research is - its purpose, different approaches to conducting research, and issues related to the use of technology in research. The middle section focuses on the research process - preliminary data gathering (literature review, background statistics), problem definition, theoretical frameworks, hypothesis testing and research design. The later chapters discuss methods - measurement of variables, operational definition and scales, quantitative and qualitative research issues, reliability and validity, data collection methods, questionnaire design, ethics, and data analysis and interpretation. An entire chapter is devoted to the construction of research reports and the final chapter draws all the material together in presenting two case studies illustrating the use of research in managerial decision making. Wherever possible, explanations of concepts are enhanced with "real world" examples. Each chapter begins with a listing of the main topics and chapter objectives and ends with a summary, discussion questions and points to ponder. Some chapters include practice exercises or projects (it is a textbook after all).

The major strength of this book is its clear and concise presentation of the complex and wide range of topics relevant to research, while constantly stressing practical considerations, ethical issues and the need for sensitivity in cross-cultural research. It is comprehensive enough to give readers a solid grounding in research methodology and applications, even though it does not present formulae and mathematical derivations of individual tests. For those who need it, there is a module (sort of appendix) which is a refresher overview of some statistical terms and tests.

One aspect that can be developed to greater depth in future editions is the technology section which presents a fairly cursory overview of the increasing possibilities and uses of technology in research.

While techniques, concepts, and methodology can be taught, there are aspects of research that one only develops with experience and understanding of the problem under study. Intelligent design, use and analysis of research is essentially an art. This book attempts at capturing that tacit knowledge in its presentation of case studies and examples. It is worth keeping on the reference shelf and consulting from time to time, even after one has ceased being a student.

Instructors of research methodology can use a teaching resource for this book from the publisher's website in the form of a resource manual and PowerPoint slides for each chapter at: <http://www.wiley.com/college/sekaran/0471203661/wave_i.html>.

Free Pint Forthcoming Articles

* Vendors * Systems Librarian * Charities * * Prospect Research * Children and the Internet * Radio * Genetically Modified Foods * UK Freedom of Information Act 2000 * Comics * Scenario Planning * Alternative Search Strategies * Internet Resources on IT * Military History *

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>.

FEATURE ARTICLE

<http://www.freepint.com/issues/060303.htm#feature>

"Information Literacy in a Corporate Environment"
By Jane Macoustra

Jane Macoustra started her career at British Petroleum, and has subsequently worked for Norton Rose, and Credit Suisse First Boston in London and Hong Kong, at Assistant Vice President level. She is currently working for Clifford Chance in Hong Kong, as an Information Officer - Research. During this time, she has covered every aspect of librarianship and library and information services, finds working in Asia Pacific an interesting challenge and loves living in Hong Kong with her family. She is currently serving as Director of the Asian Chapter of the Special Librarians Association.

The concept of Information Literacy (IL) recently reared its head as part of a project I was working on. As an Information Professional, IL is a competency that I have taken for granted, because it is a natural part of what being an IP is all about. However, others in a corporate organisation may not possess these skills. IL has been around for a long time and is a well documented subject - especially in an academic context (7), but there is very little information available when it is translated across to a corporate or workplace environment. I have not specified putting IL into practice in any particular type of organisation, to enable the reader to understand the broad concepts that can be put to use. Due to length restrictions, this article is a brief outline of the main issues, and therefore is by no means fully comprehensive.

What is Information Literacy?

"Information Literacy is defined as the ability to know when information is needed, and ability to locate, evaluate and effectively use that information for the issue or problem at hand" Empire State College Online Study about IL <http://www.esc.edu/ESCONLINE/ACROSS_ESC/LNS0ES.NSF/d48590b0a6487d33852565a10073c9f6/f80218ae67e9570685256b1e005d1dea?OpenDocument>

The Association of College & Research Libraries <http://www.ala.org/acrl/ilstandardlo.html> created a set if IL standards for higher education, which have been approved by the American Library Association.<http://www.ala.org/>. The ALA has a Presidential Committee <http://www.ala.org/acrl/nili/ilit1st.html> dedicated to Information Literacy.

IL is one of the competencies of librarianship and is also an important part of knowledge management concepts. IL has been described as the following:

- "Finding, managing and sharing information and knowledge" [1]

- "Executives have become computer-literate. The younger ones, especially, know more about the way the computer works than they know about the mechanics of the automobile or the telephone. But not many executives are information-literate. They know how to get data. But most still have to learn how to use data.

  "Few executives yet know how to ask: What information do I need to do my job? When do I need it? In what form? And from whom should I be getting it? Fewer still ask: What new tasks can I tackle now that I get all these data? Which old tasks should I abandon? Which tasks should I do differently? ...

  "A 'database,' no matter how copious, is not information. It is information's ore. For raw material to become information, it must be organized for a task, directed toward specific performance, applied to a decision. Raw material cannot do that itself ...

"This knowledge society requires that its members learn how to learn." Peter Drucker, 1992. [2]

- "Information Literacy implies that an individual be able to determine when information is needed and define the information needs in searchable terms. He/she is familiar with the vast array of information resources available and proficient at accessing and using them to locate desired information". [3]

- In her 2002 White Paper, Bonnie Wai-Yi Cheuk highlights the issues, best practices and challenges for IL in the workplace and makes recommendations that highlight the cost to businesses if employees lack information literacy skills. She also addresses IL from a knowledge management context. [4]

Information Literacy Competencies

- Knowing when information is needed [5]
- Identifying the information needed to address a given problem or issue
- Finding the needed information
- Organising the needed information
- Using the information effectively to address the problem or issue at hand

Key characteristics of an information-literate person [6]

- Engages in independent, self-directed learning
- Uses information processes
- Uses a variety of information technologies and systems
- Has internalised values that promote information use
- Has a sound knowledge of the world of information
- Approaches information critically
- Has a personal information style that facilitates his or her interaction with the world of information

Implementing Information Literacy in a Corporate Environment

These concepts can be introduced into an organisation by implementing some of the following ideas:

- Introducing the concept of IL to management as part of a knowledge management initiative, demonstrating how IL can save money in the organisation, with efficient use of research skills and better-trained staff.

- Teach the teachers - training staff who are responsible for the induction of new employees and continuing education within the organisation about the concepts of "learning to learn", "lifelong learning", "knowing what you know", and also effective teaching and communication skills.

- Use induction courses to demonstrate the use of the corporate internal databases and systems - including e-mail and intranet. Provide hard-copy quick reference sheets showing how and where

to get information within the organisation for future reference. Laminate the reference guide - it is less likely to be lost or thrown away.

- Include in the induction courses how to submit different types of information, such as know how within the organisation for sharing with colleagues, demonstrating that this concept is part of the organisation's culture.

- As another part of the induction process, have Library & Information Services ("LIS") staff train employees on library orientation and how to use the Internet. Assess if the employees know what the most appropriate tools are for certain types of research. Teach employees about how to retrieve accurate, timely and reliable information, how to analyse their results and about "information overload" and how to avoid the pitfalls. Demonstrate ways to present the findings of research to add value to the data.

- Compile an electronic questionnaire to assess the IL level of employees. Use the results of the questionnaire to select group levels and specific criteria for different types of training, depending on the individuals learning style.

- Include in the questionnaire a "needs assessment" section that evaluates what employees need to do their work each day and the satisfaction level of the information retrieved to do that work.

- Arrange "managing information" courses for all employees and train all staff how to define a request for research that will give enough information to the researcher to enable them to retrieve the answer quickly and efficiently. Design electronic enquiry forms that can be

used for requesting the research and for the completion of the research. The form could be useful for compiling analysis statistics on LIS use and by whom, and the type of research requested, the tools used and the outcome of the research. Examples of the type of fields that can be used to compile the information would be: requestor name, cost centre or department code, date & time of request, deadline, time taken to undertake the work, who the work was completed by, and details of the request. Other useful fields to use could be the sources used, the sources where the information was located and any acronyms or synonyms used.

- Train LIS staff by giving them "refresher" courses on updated techniques on proprietary databases and Internet training to keep their skills honed, and ensure they are using the most appropriate resources in relation to their research.

- Assess the validity of the proprietary databases the organisation is currently using. Are there new products on the market that could provide a better service? Approach vendors for demonstrations and make detailed assessments of the new products. Use a matrix to compare them.

- Circulate a "recommended" list of web sites for use in the organisation, which are industry specific. Publish a regular updated list on the intranet to all employees that would include details of new search engines and the search syntax required for the effective use of them. Market the research products regularly on the intranet to keep them in the minds of the employees, and offer tips for using them.

- Arrange external continuing education courses, seminars, conferences and distance education <http://www-icdl.open.ac.uk/> for employees, to enable them benefit from progress in their field of speciality. They in turn can demonstrate new ideas and initiatives to their colleagues.

- Encourage employees to join professional memberships and to network with their peers from other organisations.

Conclusion

Companies need to start implementing IL processes into their organisations. It is apparent from the studies that those who have introduced IL into the workplace have a more efficient, and cost- effective organisation. Those organisations that have implemented IL, can also assist other companies to understand this subject and how it can work for them, by speaking at conferences and sharing ideas.

Information Literacy is now being taught as a discipline in universities and is becoming recognised as a valuable skill. Those who are trained in IL will therefore be recognised by a prospective employer as being a potentially valuable asset to the organisation. Eventually IL may become a core essential skill that an employer would expect every employee to be qualified in. The importance of IL in the workplace is still underestimated. Those organisations that have started to use the IL concept will already be reaping the benefits financially and culturally. It is time for the others to catch up.

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