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Plus ...

Jobs,
Discussion,
Tips, Reviews
and Events

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About FreePint

FreePint is a global network of people who find, use, manage and share work-related information. Members receive this free twice-monthly newsletter, which is packed with tips, features and resources.

Joining FreePint is free at <http://www.freepint.com/> and connects information practitioners around the world with resources, events and answers to their tricky research and information questions at the FreePint Bar, our free online forum: <http://www.freepint.com/bar/>.

The FreePint Newsletter is available online in several formats and can be read, saved and forwarded at <http://www.freepint.com/issues/>.

Editorial

My father's story is sad but not uncommon. He worked for a printing company for 30 years before it sold out to a new company that promptly let him go just months before his retirement. Dad was of the generation of loyal employees who figured that in exchange for a lifetime of servitude, a company would provide a gold watch and generous retirement package.

That was many years ago, and now Dad is happily living out his retirement watching old John Wayne movies. But it marked the dawn of a new age of super-fast mergers, takeovers and new ventures. As you read this, hundreds - thousands - of companies are shape-shifting with surprising speed.

Just in the last few months, two of the most prominent in the business information industry - Thomson Business Intelligence and Factiva - have surprised insiders with split-ups and pull-outs. Pam Foster, editor of VIP <http://www.vivaVIP.com/>, tries to make sense of it in her feature "Business Information Trends: The Times They Are a-Changin'".

While companies are breaking apart and re-forming faster than ever, business owners are chewing their fingernails and wondering how the next shake-up will affect them. At least, the smart ones are. And for them, we have two articles that will help them mitigate risk.

Richard Morris explains how to navigate and avoid red tape in his article "All Tied Up? Escaping the Tangle of Red Tape". Frequent FreePint contributor Mandy Webster reviews Jela Webb's new FUMSI report "Risk Management Report and Tool Kit". And, of course, you can keep your eyes on the FreePint Bar <http://www.freepint.com/bar/> for water-cooler chat that may give you an indication of what's next for information companies.

Meanwhile, we'll do our best to report what we hear in this newsletter. Keep reading.

Sincerely,

Monique Cuvelier Editor, FreePint
e: monique.cuvelier@freepint.com
w: <http://www.onopoly.com/support/team/>

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—*The Financial Times*

Ekta has an MBA from Goa Institute of Management in India and is a Senior Business Analyst with Evalueserve <http://www.evalueserve.com/>. She has been working with Evalueserve for nearly three years, handling multiple client relationships in the UK and US, managing business research projects ranging from financial benchmarking to market entry and feasibility studies.

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

My Favourite Tipples

by Ekta Sapra

- ChemIndustry.com <http://www.Chemindustry.com/> is a website directory that gives the latest goings-on in the global chemicals industry. It has links for chemical suppliers, lab and scientific equipment, software, industrial equipment and more.

- The statistics guide at StatSoft <http://www.statsoft.com/textbook/stathome.html> is an exhaustive site for all the tools and information required for statistical analysis.

- Finance Site List <http://fisher.osu.edu/fin/journal/jofsites.htm> is a long list of finance-related sites, such as finance journals, papers, investments and assets pricing.

- GeoHive <http://www.geohive.com/> is useful for researching geographic and country data, demographic info and global trends.

- Infomine <http://infomine.ucr.edu/> is a scholarly Internet research collection of business and economics topics, medical sciences, e-journals and government information.

www.lishow.co.uk/conference

Library 2.0 Forum — Engaging Users and Delivering Innovative Library Services
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Join us for this new 1 day Library 2.0 Forum running alongside this year's Library + *i*nformation Show.

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- How library services will change in the future and why libraries need to act now
- Implementing Library 2.0 on a shoestring
- Getting buy in from senior management and from library staff

- De-mystifying the technologies available and which to choose
- Understanding the benefits of Library 2.0
- The future for libraries — what services will be available and who will be the libraries' customers?

The Forum will be chaired by **John Dolan OBE**, MLA, plus expert speakers include **Richard Wallis**, Talis; **Linda Berube**, Co-East Libraries and Information Service; **Marieke Guy**, University of Bath; **Karen Blakeman**, RBA Information Services; **Phil Bradley**, Independent Consultant; **Mark Baxter**, Q2 Ltd and **a case study** from The University of Huddersfield.

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Country: United Kingdom
<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j6489>>

Assistant Knowledge Manager

Experienced information worker to support the Knowledge Management
team as they develop, implement, drive and champion KM activities.
Recruiter: MDU Services Ltd
Country: United Kingdom
<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j6516>

Graduate Trainee Librarian/Information Assistant

Graduate Trainee required by Ruskin College, Oxford, to spend one year working in the Library in preparation for Postgraduate Lib.
Recruiter: Ruskin College
Country: United Kingdom
<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j6530>

KM Officer

Legal research experience for specialist research, current awareness and general knowledge management support for a practice group.
Recruiter: Instant Library Recruitment (Tribal Group Plc)
Country: United Kingdom
<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j6532>

Senior Researcher - Consultancy

Newly created vacancy to provide in-depth research for global Consultancy based in Central London offices.
Recruiter: Glen Recruitment
Country: United Kingdom
<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j6535>

Records Officer

A government agency for 6 months. The role will involve dealing with case records, inputting data as well as retrieval and archiving.
Recruiter: TFPL Ltd.
Country: United Kingdom
<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j6543>

NB: These are just a selection of information-related jobs in the Jinfo database <http://www.jinfo.com/>. Receive the latest job listings weekly with the free Jinfo Update. Free to subscribe at <http://www.jinfo.com/>

FreePint Bar
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Monique Cuvelier is Editor of the FreePint Newsletter. She has served as editor of several publications and her writing has appeared in Publish, USA Today, Bankrate and many others. Learn more about her at <http://www.onopoly.com/support/team/>..

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

Finding answers to tricky research questions is ordinarily a challenge - just try finding a directory of German national standards translatedinto English on your own. But the job is made easier with the FreePint Bar <http://www.freepint.com/bar>. Highlights from current conversations below.

- DIN standards, a list of German national standards published by Deutsches Institut fur Normung, aren't always available in English translation - at least not at a reasonable price. While not all documents are translated into English as a matter of course and would need to be commissioned, a few Bar members share some worthwhile resources <http://www.freepint.com/go/b109474>.

- You may live in Nappy Valley or Twixt the Commons, but that doesn't mean your neighbourhood will appear on any official map. These informal local names for areas are causing grief for one Bar-ista who's having difficulty finding a listing of council and local areas. But a few members have inventive advice on how one might uncover these regions. Read more: <http://www.freepint.com/go/b108990>.

(Government agencies are notorious for hiding all types of data - not just maps. You can learn how to cut down on red tape in this issue's feature "All Tied Up? Escaping the Tangle of Red Tape", by Richard Morris.)

- More and more libraries are setting up free wi-fi networks for patrons, but finding documented details on benefits and drawbacks are hard to come by. Share your ideas about financial commitments, security issues, increased custom and logistics <http://www.freepint.com/go/b107374>.

- New interest is suddenly sparking in an old conversation about a company called N2 Check that provides credit check and company report information <http://www.freepint.com/go/b83417>. FreePint's sister publication VIP <http://www.vivaVIP.com/> presents evaluations of similar products and services on a monthly basis. Check in for in-depth reviews.

- FreePint has covered issues surrounding deep linking in the past ("Deep Linking", by Paul Pedley <http://www.freepint.com/issues/230103.htm#tips>). But one FreePinter is looking for any new research on the subject so that he might complete a review for an information production department. Share your thoughts <http://www.freepint.com/go/b109153>.

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"All tied up? Escaping the Tangle of Red Tape"

Written by Richard Morris

Richard Morris has worked with a vast range of companies across the country, and has been involved with the formation of laws from their inception in consultation. At this point he was responsible for advising government departments on how to tailor new laws to ease the impact on business. He developed his skills working for one of the largest Chambers of Commerce in Europe, before being involved in consultancy and finally landing with the Red Tape Team. Find out more from <http://www.red-tape.org/> or 0845 050 0080..

'It doesn't affect me.'

'If I ignore it, maybe it will go away.'

'I don't have time for it.'

These are just a few of the claims that I have been treated to whilst working with this most unpopular of topics, handling policy and compliance for a number of organisations. Unfortunately none of this is actually true, regardless of the size, type or purpose of your business.

For those who haven't caught on, I'm talking about one of businesses' least favourite issues: red tape.

But there are three realities you must accept when facing bureaucratic entanglements:

1. Regulations are necessary. You wouldn't intentionally discriminate against an employee because of their sex, disability or race, but sometimes people can feel discriminated against even if no offence was intended. Regulations protect them.

2. Red tape is here to stay. This is the hardest message to get across. The government should be praised for its pledge to reduce red tape, but regulations will never completely disappear. Many pieces of legislation may be simplified but few will be removed.

3. The only way to avoid getting tied up in red tape is to deal with it. Wishing it away, ignoring it or pretending it isn't there will only cause you problems in the future.

Understanding these three points will help you to beat the burden of red tape. However there are two more obstacles to your dealing with legislation.

The first is to be aware of the regulations that affect you. This is crucial. If you don't know that laws exist then how are you supposed to comply with them?

The second is to understand how the regulations affect your business and what you need to do to comply. It is vital to know what laws apply to you, but useless if you don't understand any of them.

Fortunately, free help is at hand. Our mission at Red Tape Team < http://www.red-tape.org/> is to provide free, impartial advice and guidance for businesses on issues of red tape.

So what do we do?

We do the work that no one else wants to do. Our aim is to help businesses fight their way through the maze of red tape. What is red tape? Red tape is the form-filling, the changes in law, the requirements put on your back by government and other organisations that take your time away from running your business. Whether it's the new equality law protecting workers from discrimination on the grounds of age, or new regulations putting responsibility on businesses for their own fire safety, red tape is the legislation that must be followed.

We research the legislation that affects businesses and produce free, easy-to-read fact sheets that outline what you need to know.

Here's one anecdote that shows how we help businesses: a small business owner contacted us several months ago and requested fact sheets on discipline and grievance procedures. From this the company made sure that their policies were up to date.

We got a phone call a few weeks ago from the same owner thanking us. He had just had to discipline and ultimately sack a member of staff who had repeatedly stolen from the office. The member of staff had tried to take the company to a tribunal, and if the policies had not been put in place, the dismissal could have been automatically unfair. This would have left the firm having to award the employee compensation, which could easily have been thousands of pounds.

A simple bit of information was all that was required to avoid a possible problem turning into a costly blow to the business.

How do we do it? When a piece of legislation is about to come into force, we read and research it so that we know how it will affect businesses. Instead of writing guidance filled with rhetoric and incomprehensible sentences, we write it in our own words, as we would want to read it.

Tips for avoiding red tape

Different regulations affect you in different ways, but by doing the groundwork from the word 'go,' you can make sure you are complying and save time, hassle and money in the future. Here are a few tips that get you started.

- Take a step back from your business and look at it as an outsider. You will find you can identify many potential problems before they get serious. Noticing things like possible health and safety risks, potential fire safety risks and stressed employees can help you to stop a risk becoming a problem.

- Don't do or say anything on impulse - think before you act. It is very easy to react to an explosive situation. Nothing demonstrates your power more than screaming, 'You're fired!' across the yard after Bill from the warehouse is late for the third time this week. But before you do this, think of the implications. Bill could actually take you to an employment tribunal for unfair dismissal, not because he didn't deserve it, but because you didn't follow the right procedure. All these procedures that you have to follow take time from the day to day running of your business and this adds up to red tape.

Through Their Eyes: CVs from a Recruiter's Perspective

Current Jinfo Newsletter feature: "Reasons why people don't get the job." Read it now & subscribe for free: <http://www.jinfo.com/newsletter/>

Get the Weekly update of the latest jobs, or search the online database at any time for great jobs at all levels of experience: <http://www.Jinfo.com/>.

- Know the law. You would never dream of making a decision on a five- or six-figure contract without all of the available information, so you shouldn't make decisions without knowing what to do when dealing with legislation. Although understanding the law won't make you any money, early preparation and understanding will save you time and money in the future. The costs of failing to know the law can be far higher than you think. When you are making decisions about employees or your company, make sure you know the law behind your decision first. This will protect you if anything goes wrong.

- Treat employees as you would want to be treated. As a general rule if you treat those who work for you as you would want to be treated, you are likely to find far fewer problems cropping up.

- No jokes please! Although 'banter' in the office may be an everyday occurrence that you take as part of the daily routine, you could be offending someone. Even if jokes are not meant to cause offence and are not directed at a person, they could be construed as discrimination. People often say 'I didn't mean it to be offensive,' but it is the person who feels discriminated against who decides what is and what is not offensive. The law covers employees against direct and indirect discrimination.

Reinforcements for battle

No matter how prepared you are to deal with red tape, you'll eventually have to face some part of it. But the battle can be more bearable with help. Below is a list of free resources that can give you support conquering it. You can access all of the guides below from <http://www.red-tape.org/initiatives.php?id=2>.

- Get a copy of The Acas Model Workplace, which 'provides you with a yardstick against which you can measure the effectiveness of your employment relationships and can help you to identify areas for development.' Ninety per cent of the queries that businesses come to us with surround employment issues such as discrimination, and maternity and paternity rights. The Model Workplace is an excellent reference source if you employ staff.

- Download Business Link's "The No-Nonsense Guide to Government Rules and Regulations for Setting Up Your Business". This is a very useful guide when starting out in business. It covers in simple terms those things a business needs to know about taxes, health and safety regulations, data protection and more.

- Read HM Revenue & Customs' (HMRC) new guide for employers thinking of taking on a member of staff for the first time, outlining their tax obligations.

- A tool kit giving guidance and advice on how to avoid online business crime from the Fraud Advisory Panel.

- Get your hands on "The Lights are On", the free training DVD offered by the Information Commissioners Office (request it here: <http://digbig.com/4rgnb>). The DVD can help you comply with the Data Protection Act and also educate your staff.

- Companies concerned about computer security can now get free advice on protecting their IT systems. The Fraud Advisory Panel and the Institute for Chartered Accountants for England and Wales (ICAEW) have launched a guide entitled "Protecting Your IT Systems: A Guide for SMEs" <http://www.fraudadvisorypanel.org/cheker/cheker.php?idmk=30>.

- Do you have problems with staff taking unauthorized time off? The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), working with HSE and Acas, have launched a free online toolkit to help managers with absence management. Find the Absence Management Toolkit here <http://www.cipd.co.uk/absencemanagementtool/>.

Moving targets

Free support helps deal with red tape, but it is a moving target. Several significant changes in legislation over

the past 10 years ensure there are always new issues to deal with. We have made over 60 fact sheets on the most common regulatory problems faced by businesses. We keep records of how many fact sheets people download from our website and request over the phone, which gives an indication of regulatory changes.

The following is a list of the items that have caused the highest number of requests for fact sheets.

- Changes to fire safety legislation. Major changes have removed the need for fire safety certificates, and put the responsibility on the owner of a company/management to ensure a premises is safe from fire.

- Age discrimination. This new regulation is there to prevent people getting less favourable treatment because of their age. Thinking of taking your team out to the pub to celebrate a good month – think again if you employ someone under the age of 18!

- Changes to maternity, paternity and adoption pay. Fathers are now entitled to more paid leave dependent on how long the mother takes off work.

- Carrying out a risk assessment. Guidance on how to carry out a risk assessment in your premises helps you make sure you comply with health and safety laws and protect your staff from illness and injury.

- Changes to National Minimum Wage. Are you paying your staff enough? You could be fined if you aren't.

- Holidays and holiday pay. Just how many holiday days are your staff

Related FreePint links:

- "Home Pages: Websites for the Homeworker" By Sara Ellis <http://www.freepint.com/issues/121202.htm#tips>

- "Small Business Websites that Work: Get Online to Grow Your Company" Written by Sean McManus. Reviewed by Clive Hawkins <http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf/work.htm>

- "Business Information for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises" By Diana Grimwood-Jones <http://www.freepint.co.uk/issues/161100.htm#feature>

entitled to, and how much pay should they get? Are you ready for the changes in October? At the moment you only have to give your staff 20 days holiday and this can include bank holidays. From October this goes up to 24 days, with a further rise to 28 days set for October 2008.

- Discipline and grievance procedures. Claims to employment tribunals are increasing every year. What would you do if you want to discipline a member of staff? What would you do if an employee said that they thought their supervisor was being overly strict on them and not anyone else? This might be a grievance!

- Disability discrimination. Just how far do you have to go to make your premises accessible for disabled staff and customers? Regulations came into force in 2005 and affect all usinesses

- Changes to asbestos regulations. Did you know that if your building was built before the year 2000 you have to assume that it contains asbestos (unless you know differently)?

- Employing workers from abroad. Bulgaria and Romania have become the newest additions to the European Union (EU), joining another 24 countries. Citizens from EU countries can apply to work in the UK, but their right to work here depends on whether they joined before or after 1 May 2004.

Here for help

At the start of this article I mentioned three things that you must accept in dealing with red tape: most regulations are necessary, they won't go away and the only way to get round them is to tackle them head on.

We can't cut through the red tape for you, but this article will provide you with some of the tools you need to run your business more efficiently, and you can find more by checking in at <http://www.red-tape.org/>.

FreePint FUMSI Report -- Risk Management

Risk Management Report

ISBN 978-1-904769-11-X

Risk is an unavoidable part of doing business, and managing risk is part of everyone's job – from the board room to the shop floor. To manage risk effectively, organisations must process internal and external information on strategy, environment, regulations, competitive landscape and more. They must process that information through a systematic protocol for managing risk in a constantly changing environment.

This report provides a practical overview of risk management and can be used by executives, managers and staff to gain a solid understanding of the tools and processes of risk management. The included tool kit of 8 hands-on worksheets and activities helps users translate the information into an actionable risk management plan.

Author Jela Webb is a noted consultant, writer, speaker and trainer in knowledge management and risk management fields. In 1992, she was appointed to a new role, Risk Review Manager, in a UK bank, and she has further developed her expertise in the field through MBA studies.

View a sample from this report, including table of contents, introduction and one tool kit activity:
web.freepint.com/shop/report/

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"Risk Management Report and Tool Kit"
Written by Jela Webb
Reviewed by Mandy Webster

Mandy Webster is Library & Information Services Manager at Browne Jacobson and co-author of "BIALL Handbook of Legal Information Management" and "Knowledge Management: Social, cultural and theoretical perspectives", along with many articles and reviews.

Businesses have always faced varying degrees of risk, and either evolved their own strategies for dealing with those risks or paid the ultimate price of ceasing to exist for choosing to ignore them. Only since scandals such as Barings Bank and Enron has the idea of managing risk captured wider public attention. The increasingly litigious nature of society creates an imperative for minimising the risks of expensive claims as a central part of good business practice.

The FUMSI report "Risk Management Report and Tool Kit", written by Jela Webb, forms a highly-readable and practical introduction to developing and implementing a risk-management (RM) strategy. Tasks are given context throughout the report and then linked to the excellent tool kit, which gives exercises that can be used independently or as a refresher at a later date. It is often difficult for businesses to apply case studies, as all businesses face different risks or view them differently. But this report supplies short, helpful illustrations that could mitigate these issues, particularly in the Managing Risks chapter.

Risk management is closely allied with knowledge management (KM). The report provides practical advice on developing an RM strategy as a natural add-on to a KM strategy and a learning organisation culture of sharing experiences. Good communication lies at the heart of all of these initiatives, and illustrations of adapting techniques for RM work well, although a little more coverage of the problematic area of evaluating the effectiveness of RM policies would be helpful.

A minor omission is a checklist of features to look for in buying RM software. Different types of RM software are listed with single-line explanations of what they provide, but a checklist would help companies to build a specification. It would also complement the tool kit and the detailed job description for a Chief Risk Officer. The list of further reading and useful websites is brief but of good quality, yet surprisingly does not include the JISC overview and introduction to RM with its useful budgeting and business-case guides <http://www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/InfoKits/risk-management/>.

The most valuable part of the report is the 9-page tool kit because of the easy-to-use practicality and comprehensive checklists, such as the after-action review. The slight inconsistency of giving sample answers to illustrate how to use some parts and leaving others completely blank does not detract significantly from its usefulness.

Related FreePint links:

- "Risk Management Report and Tool Kit" <http://web.freepint.com/go/shop/report/riskmanagement/>

- "Risk Management: An Additional Axis For Information Professionals?" By Terry Kendrick <http://www.freepint.com/issues/010503.htm?#tips>

RM is a vital tool for any business, with implications for its customers as well as for regulators or insurers, who may give credit in reduced premiums or lighter regulatory regimes for a demonstrably robust RM policy. This report provides an excellent starting point for businesses seeking to implement such an important policy. The tool kit is a step-by-step guide to identifying, assessing and minimising risks in an easily adaptable and practical format and should be read by all senior managers.

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Current Issue

- IQ Test: Capital IQ aims to help lending financial and advisory professionals make more intelligent business decisions. We analyse how well it succeeds.

- Surprise Move: Business Intelligence Services, a division of The Thomson Corporation, announces it is realigning its flagship product. Find details on this and other news.

- Safety Net: Nowadays risk management is a necessity in any company. A new report from Jela Webb examines how to implement a strategy.

- Off Piste: Researcher Jill Fenton lends advice on how to think creatively when researching financial and M&A topics.

Coming in 2007: More product reviews each month, plus focused feature issues on Asia-Pacific, Middle East and more. What would you like us to cover? Share your thoughts at any time to support@vivaVIP.com, or post them to the VIP Lounge.

Forthcoming Reviews

- Feb 2007   Asia-Pacific
- Mar 2007   Euromonitor & Global Reports
- Apr 2007   Magpie & Brandwatch
- May 2007   World Investment Service and Newstin
- Jun 2007   Middle East/Africa

Testimonial

"VIP gives me an objective analysis of business information products and vendors as well as practical and informative advice on industry issues."
*Kerryn Dillon,
European Marketing Manager,
OneSource Information Services*

"Business Information Trends: The Times They Are a-Changin'"
By Pam Foster

Pam Foster is the Editor of VIP <http://www.vivaVIP.com/>, and has been actively involved in the business information industry as a writer and reviewer for nearly 20 years. Pam played a major role in Headland Business Information since its inception as editor of its newsletters and directories. More recently, she has acted as a consultant to several large information companies. She has an extensive network of contacts in the international business information sector amongst producers and users. A qualified information professional, Pam also has a social science degree. Contact Pam Foster <pam.foster@vivavip.com>.

There's something of a seismic shift occurring in the ownership structure of a couple of our best-known information companies. The news that Thomson Business Intelligence is to be broken up and that Reuters is pulling out of Factiva has rocked the business-information world. At the same time, information companies and information workers are increasingly entering parallel universes to peddle their wares and talents. If all this is slightly bewildering, take heart, because it seems that we still trust traditional media best.

Thomson breaks up Business Intelligence services

Thomson Business Intelligence is being split up with parts of it being sold off, discontinued or moved to another platform. News Research will be discontinued at the end of 2007, Market Research (Profound) and NewsEdge are to be sold off and Broker Research and Insite are to be aligned with Thomson Financial.

Providers of general business news are finding it an increasingly crowded space, and Thomson has always faced stiff competition from Factiva and LexisNexis, as well as from free Web services such as Google News Archive. Now that Dow Jones has 100 per cent ownership of Factiva, it presents an even greater threat to competing companies, bringing together, as it does, the content of Dow Jones with the technologies developed by Factiva - a powerful combination. While Thomson has embraced technology for offering workflow products to its scientific and financial communities, it has certainly lagged behind the likes of

Factiva and LexisNexis in developing products that integrate content into the business user's most critical decisions. It seems likely that Thomson wants to concentrate on growing its more specialised news services for the investment banking and investment management communities.

Profound is one of the best-known and oldest established sources of market-research data. It grew out of the MAID service, created by Dan Wagner who later went on to purchase Dialog in 1997, before selling it to Thomson in 2000. Looking back, it's fairly obvious that the service hasn't been a priority for Thomson for some years. A review in VIP, carried out last year, stated, 'Approximately 40 per cent of the overall content is more than two years old, which suggests that some sources are no longer updated and are retained for historical research only,' <http://web.vivavip.com/go/vip/28>. Thomson claims that discussions with potential purchasers of Profound are underway.

Broker Research provides insight from 800 analysts covering nearly 38,000 companies worldwide, while Insite provides premium content from more than 2,500 key trade publications, business and popular magazines, newsletters, newspapers, newswires, analyst reports and more. Customers of both are being moved over to Thomson Financial, which is puzzling as Broker Research comprises the same data as the well know Investext database which is available as a Thomson Financial product. Insite data will also overlap with Thomson Financial data.

The decision to break up Thomson Business Intelligence appears to be part of a large-scale realignment strategy. Last October, the company announced that it was selling its Thomson Learning businesses, and at the same time announced that from 1 January 2007 it was reorganising its operations into six existing Strategic Business Units: North American Legal, Financial, Scientific, International Legal & Regulatory, Tax & Accounting and Healthcare.

These units don't make much sense to the business-information community as they dump business information into either Thomson Scientific or the North American Legal Group. Once again, with the benefit of hindsight, maybe the signs were there - Thomson was concentrating on financial, rather than business information, in its overall future strategy.

Further analysis of Thomson's strategy is published in the January 2007 (38) issue of VIP <http://web.vivavip.com/go/vip/38>. VIP will continue to monitor and report on the future of the Thomson Business Intelligence products as and when they are sold.

One owner for Factiva

Dow Jones & Company has acquired Reuters' 50-per cent interest in Factiva, bringing Dow Jones ownership of Factiva to 100 per cent. Factiva has been integrated into the Dow Jones Enterprise Media Group, which is managed by Clare Hart, who served as Factiva's CEO from 2000 until her appointment as President, Dow Jones' Enterprise Media Group in February

2006. Reuters will continue to supply its news to Factiva under an agreement as a paid supplier, and will enter into or continue a number of commercial arrangements with Factiva and Dow Jones.

Factiva was founded in 1999 as a 50/50 joint venture between Dow Jones and Reuters. Originally known as Dow Jones Reuters Business Interactive, it brought together two of the best known business information products of the time - Reuters Business Briefing, which was renowned for its European content and Dow Jones Interactive with its emphasis on US content. The companies changed the product name to Factiva later that year.

The acquisition will ultimately benefit both Dow Jones and Reuters. It will remove certain joint venture conditions that limit Factiva's business opportunities in its core enterprise market and enable it to develop licensing deals with Reuters' rivals. Reuters too is now free to pursue other markets and compete with Dow Jones in developing specialist products for professionals.

Further news and analysis of the Factiva change of ownership and Dow Jones restructuring, including news of job losses, is published in the January 2007 (38) issue of VIP <http://web.vivavip.com/go/vip/38>.

Parallel universes need information too

We're all aware of the impact China and India are likely to have on the world economy, but what about Second Life,

one of fastest emerging markets that isn't even real? Second Life is a three-dimensional, multi-user online digital world that is being created by its residents, who create characters (known as avatars), scenarios and living situations. It has its own virtual economy for transacting millions of dollars worth of virtual goods and services, using the Second Life virtual currency, known as Linden Dollars, which can be sold for real US dollars. It already has a couple of stock exchanges, banks and other financial institutions.

Businesses, retailers, universities and others are moving into Second Life, acquiring land, building offices, holding office hours, providing services, and treating Second Life as seriously as the real world. Next month (March 2007) there's a conference planned, in New York, for Fortune 500 companies who need helping devising a virtual world strategy. Virtual Worlds Conference 2007 is aimed at businesses seeking to understand and maximise marketing and business strategies within virtual worlds.

The number of organisations involved in Second Life grows each day and currently includes Reuters, Talis, IBM, Nissan, Wall Street Journal, Coca-Cola, Wells Fargo, Sun Microsystems, Adidas, Toyota, American Apparel, MTV, US Centers for Disease Control, the State Library of Kansas and many others. For some, the benefits are in marketing, while others benefit from the ability to collaborate. IBM has 1,000 of its senior executives involved and is using Second Life as a mentoring community.

The company has built a connection environment, a social- networking tool, where avatars profile themselves, then meet in Second Life.

All universes, whether real or parallel, need information, and Reuters was quick to jump in to open what it claims to be the world's first virtual-news bureau <http://secondlife.reuters.com/>. Reuters' tech and media reporter Adam Pasick, who is known as Adam Reuters in Second Life, serves as a virtual bureau chief covering financial news that transpires within the online virtual world. Second Life residents can keep up with the latest news by using the Reuters News Center, similar to a real world mobile device. In addition, residents can visit a virtual Reuters building - the Reuters Atrium - a town hall community centre, where they can meet to discuss events, see the latest images and videos of the day, or just chat with their friends.

There is a strong presence from the library and information community in Second Life. Libraries have purchased two land masses (Info Island and Info Island II), built several libraries and created services. Talis has spearheaded the development of Cybrary City, which provides services to Second Life residents and to librarians. You can follow some of the activities of librarians through the Second Life Library 2.0 Blog at <http://infoisland.org/>.

Corporate interest in virtual universes, as well as other Web services such as MySpace.com is part of a second

Internet boom. Second Life may seem a bizarre choice for traditional companies like Reuters, but it offers a great way for the company to get involved in a 3-D virtual world and connect with a new generation of users. It's too early to assess the full impact Second Life will have on the real world but, in the meantime, it's safe to say that it will have an impact on you, either directly or indirectly.

Jill Hurst-Wahl of Hurst Associates <http://www.HurstAssociates.com/> is an information consultant, speaker, author/blogger and avatar. Read about her experiences in Second Life in the article 'Why Second Life Matters', published in the December issue of VIP < http://web.vivavip.com/go/vip/37>.

And yet ...

Traditional news media are the most trusted for reporting significant events. According to a survey conduced by LexisNexis < http://digbig.com/4rmwf>, it seems that people would prefer to turn to newspapers, magazines, television and radio, rather than emerging media sources created by citizen journalists, including Internet-only publications, blogs and podcasts, to get the latest news and analysis of important events.

Half of those surveyed said that they would turn to network television for immediate news information in such situations, while the next most popular source was the radio (42 per cent). Findings show that approximately a third of consumers (37 per cent) would use daily local newspapers or cable news or business networks (33 per

cent), and a quarter of those interviewed would rely on Internet sites of print and broadcast media. In contrast, emerging media like Internet user groups, blogs and chat rooms would be used by (6 per cent) surveyed.

Before traditional publishers become too complacent, however, responders also said that emerging media is beginning to play an increasingly important role in people's lives. In the future, more than half (52 per cent) of the consumers surveyed anticipate they will continue to mostly trust and rely on traditional news sources. However, more than a third (35 per cent) expect they will trust and rely on both emerging news and traditional news in the future, and more than one in 10 (13 per cent) anticipate they will trust and rely mostly on emerging media.

A reliance on print has been further borne out by WAN, the World Association of Newspapers, which has announced that global newspaper circulation is growing, and that new newspapers are being launched at a remarkable rate. Even in North America and Europe, where negative assumptions about the industry are widespread, both circulation and the number of new titles have increased. What's more, Larry Page and Sergey Brin, co-founders of Google, have endorsed the claim that newspapers have a bright future and will not be killed off by the Internet. The pair were speaking at the World Economic Forum, held in Davos in January 2007.

- VIP <http://www.vivaVIP.com/>

- My Favourite Tipples, By Pam Foster <http://www.freepint.com/issues/240806.htm#favourites>

- "Online Business Sourcebook 2003" Edited by Pam Foster Reviewed by Arthur Weiss <http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf>

Google is helping newspapers sell print advertising to bidders. Advertisers log into Google AdWords which offers a list of participating papers and the sorts of ads that are available. Advertisers then enter a bid for an advertisement and newspapers in turn accept the ones they want. Advertisements are restricted to small display ads. Google certainly has a large network of online advertisers, plus the project aims to attract small advertisers, many of whom have been priced out of newspapers. But analysts are cautious about the outlook for print advertising and research suggests that online ad spending is set to increase at the expense of traditional print adverts. Further reporting and analysis of the future of newspapers is published in the February issue of VIP.

There's no doubt that the future of news organisations will be largely dependent on their attitudes towards digital media. Those who embrace it and adapt will still be around in years to come; those who refuse to take it on board will eventually die.

Events

Premium listings

These events are hosted by our partner organisations and/or advertisers:

- "SIIA Content Forum" - Gain the tools, tactics, and best practices necessary to build, enable and sell content at the 4th annual Software & Information Industry Summit (SIIA) Content Forum & Codie Awards Gala in San Francisco on 15 - 17 April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e847>

- "Library + information Show" - LiS is the only national event designed specifically for the library community. Taking place at the NEC in Birmingham on the 18 - 19 April. <http://www.freepint.com/go/e848>

- "PI Conference 2007 - Staying Relevant in a Constantly Evolving Environment - What's Next for the Information Professional? Organised by Perfect Information. Taking place at the MacDonald Bath Spa Hotel, Bath on 1 - 3 May <http://www.freepint.com/go/e786>

Free listings

Spain:

- "7th ONLINE EDUCA MADRID" 7 - 9 May <http://www.freepint.com/go/e812>

Sweden:

- "The 13th Nordic Conference on Information and Documentation 2007" 18 - 19 June <http://www.freepint.com/go/e703/>

United Kingdom:

- "JISC Conference 2007" 13 March <http://www.freepint.com/go/e708/>

- "WIFI in Libraries Conference 2007" 13 March <http://www.freepint.com/go/e823/>

- "STN Patent Forum" 28 March <http://www.freepint.com/go/e799/>

- "Property Information managers Society Conference" 3 April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e839>

- "UKSG Conference 2007 and Exhibition" 16 - 18 April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e794>

United States:

* "ASIDIC Spring 2007 Meeting" 11 - 13 March <http://www.freepint.com/go/e784/>

* "AIIP 21st Annual conference" 18 - 22 April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e841>

NB: This is just a selection of information-related event listings in the FreePint Events database <http://www.freepint.com/events/>.

Gold

- FreePint No.201 2nd March 2006. "Purchasing and using market research services: some starting points on the Web" and "MP3s, Podcasts and all that"
  http://www.freepint.com/issues/020306.htm

- FreePint No.178 10th March 2005. "Health Information Sources for Non-Health Professionals" and "Tracking Youth Trends On The Web"
  http://www.freepint.com/issues/100305.htm

- FreePint No.155 4th March 2004. "Taking control of your PC" and "Librarians and The War On Terror"
  http://www.freepint.com/issues/040304.htm

- FreePint No.132 6th March 2003. "And the winner is ... Our experience with selecting a CMS" and "Information Literacy in a Corporate Environment"
  http://www.freepint.com/issues/060303.htm

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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>

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

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[Provisional]

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