

Blogging

The NextGen Librarian's Survival Guide

Distance Learning

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Editorial By William Hann | 2 |
| My Favourite Tipples By Vivian Cohen-Leisorek | 3 |
| Jinfo :: Jobs in information | 6 |
| FreePint Bar | 8 |
| Tips Article "Distance learning as a collaborative enterprise: Tips on teamwork to make the class work" Reviewed by Robin Neidorf | 10 |
| Review "The NextGen Librarian's Survival Guide" Reviewed by Kim Dority | 15 |
| Feature Article "Q&A with Christopher Barger, IBM's Blogger-in-Chief" By Tim Buckley Owen | 17 |
| Events and Gold | 21 |
| Contact Information | 22 |
| HTML Version http://www.freepint.com/issues/080606.htm | |
| Fully-Formatted Acrobat Version http://www.freepint.com/issues/080606.pdf | |

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



I've talked a lot recently about 'change', particularly that brought about by technology. New technology has a habit of creeping up on you, sneaking past unnoticed, and then leaving you behind, giving gadget-savvy people the annoying ability to say "Oh, aren't you using that technology yet? It's invaluable, and we've been using it for ages".

But at least with technology there are lots of places where you can get a heads-up, such as TV shows, magazines and newspapers. This is not so true with regard to changes in job function and employment, especially within the information sector.

One way to get a heads-up on how the job market is changing is to keep an eye on people's job titles. Tim Buckley-Owen today brings us an interview with a 'Blogger-in-Chief' -- Christopher Barger, to be precise, IBM's Blogger-in-Chief. Barger is not a traditional 'info pro' but his work is completely enmeshed with information and, what's more, influences others' interactions with, and use of, information. It shows how social media is forcing different functional areas of information work to merge.

A job title we had difficulty in thinking of was 'General Manager', the title given to Robin Neidorf in her new role of managing Free Pint Limited (the publisher of FreePint, VIP, ResourceShelf, etc.). Robin writes for FreePint today with tips on developing effective distance-learning programmes. You can see how the different parts of Free Pint Limited fit together on the Onopoly site <<http://www.onopoly.com/>>.

More signs of how today's information professionals are quite different from even 10 years ago, are evident in today's FreePint review of Rachel Singer Gordon's new book "NextGen Librarian's Survival Guide". This is required-reading for information workers who want to ensure that they have the right skills for a role in the fast-changing world of information work; the book's reviewer Kim Dority also wrote the recent FreePint article on resilience for an information career <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/130406.htm>>.

Whatever your job title, we hope you're embracing the exciting opportunities in information work. We're trying to do that here at FreePint, and if you like the improvements we're making then please do tell your colleagues. Why not forward this issue to them now?

William Hann
Managing Editor and Founder, FreePint
E: william.hann@freepint.com
FreePint is a Registered Trademark of Free Pint Limited (R)



Vivian Cohen-Leisorek leads CI Focus <<http://www.ci-focus.com/>>, a business intelligence and strategic marketing consultancy specialising in high-tech companies in Israel, Europe and the U.S.

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

My Favourite Tipples

by Vivian Cohen-Leisorek

Some people learn by hearing, while visual thinkers have a clearly developed sense of spatial orientation. The tipples below are geared towards the latter, although each provides a unique experience for searchers and fun-seekers alike.

- Visual Thesaurus <<http://www.visualthesaurus.com/>> is part thesaurus, part dictionary and shows a relational map of words. The free trial search is good for brainstorming, writing and exploring the English language.
- Grokker <<http://live.grokker.com/>> lets you visualize your search results from Yahoo!, Wikipedia and/or Amazon in a categorized and completely new way.
- FlightAware <<http://flightaware.com/>> flight tracker maps civil flights in U.S. airspace at any time. Search trajectory, real-time position of commercial flights, and play around with country, city and area maps.
- Search Engine Relationship Chart <<http://www.ihelpeyou.com/search-engine-chart.html>> graphs syndications, partnerships and other relationships among search engines. It's a useful illustration for researchers or search engine optimization.
- Wayback Machine <<http://web.archive.org/>> is a great shortcut to view a website through the lens of history, and especially useful for resurrecting dead pages.



Act Faster with Business News from Factiva

Discover how search results that include visualisation can help you find, analyse and understand information faster.

Download the IDC paper "A Picture is Worth a Thousand Documents" today and learn how Factiva can reduce the amount of time you spend looking for information: <<http://www.factiva.com/ad/2006/freepint/jun>>



Verdict and Business Insights reviewed in VIP

See the May 2006 issue of VIP for in-depth reviews of Verdict's Retail Knowledge Centre and Datamonitor's Business Insights. June's issue will publish a detailed review of Silobreaker.

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



Try a fresh approach to company information with: MINT UK

A leading business information tool from Bureau van Dijk Electronic Publishing

Click here to register for a free trial <<http://www.mintforbusiness.com>>



Jinfo :: Reach over 4,000 job seekers

Advertise an information-related vacancy with Jinfo, and reach 4,000+ Jinfo Newsletter subscribers and the entire FreePint membership.

Cost-effective agency accounts, or pay-as-you-go. Find out more about listing a vacancy today: <<http://www.jinfo.com/>>



Sue Hill Recruitment Team - Experts in Information Recruitment

Put yourself in safe hands when seeking staff or job searching. The team at Sue Hill Recruitment are knowledgeable on both information and recruitment matters, and professionalism is their byword. If it is time to recruit or time to move, it is time to talk to one of the Sue Hill team. Go on. You know it makes sense! Call: 020 7378 7068 e: jobs@suehill.com see:

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



Researcha :: Immediate pay-as-you-go company data

Access hard-to-find data on UK company directors, original company filing images and company data for Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland.

Researcha is free to search and view basic details, with convenient report delivery. Try it now:

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

{ the ugly truth }

**THREE OUT OF
FOUR BUSINESS
PROFESSIONALS EAT
LUNCH AT THEIR
DESKS.**



Get out of the office with Factiva.

The average professional wastes about five hours a week looking for business information in all the wrong places. Factiva can help you reclaim your lunch hour.

When you look for business information on Factiva Search 2.0, you can reduce the amount of time you spend looking for information by up to five hours a week. You'll quickly discover the insight you need because search results are displayed in graphs and charts that show trends, article timelines and much more.

Download the paper ["A Picture is Worth a Thousand Documents,"](#) today and learn how Factiva's visualisation tools can make large quantities of information easily digestible.



Jinfo :: Jobs in information

www.jinfo.com

The Jinfo service enables you to search and advertise information-related job vacancies.

The Jinfo Newsletter is published free every two weeks, and contains a list of the latest vacancies along with job-seeking advice. The latest article is entitled "Combating Job Burnout".

Read it online and subscribe free at [<http://www.jinfo.com/newsletter/>](http://www.jinfo.com/newsletter/).

These are just a selection of the jobs in the current edition of the Jinfo Newsletter [<http://www.jinfo.com/newsletter/>](http://www.jinfo.com/newsletter/) and over 130 in the Jinfo database

Jinfo -- the best place for information-related job vacancies.

- **JOB SEARCHING?** -- Free search and sign up to the Jinfo Newsletter.
- **RECRUITING?** -- Complete the form and advertise a vacancy for just GBP195 [<http://www.jinfo.com/recruit/>](http://www.jinfo.com/recruit/).

50% discount for registered charities.
10% discount for agencies.

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



Onopoly: Information about the whole FreePint network

Whether you want to advertise with FreePint, write for Jinfo, or sponsor VIP, full details about all the sites in our network can be found at Onopoly:

[<http://www.onopoly.com/>](http://www.onopoly.com/)

Researcher

Calling all financial researchers - ongoing temp role at investment bank, need online skills & exp in financial setting.

Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment
[<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5262>](http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5262)

Corporate Content Manager

Intranet Content Specialist required in newly created developmental role in central London.

Recruiter: Glen Recruitment
[<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5311>](http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5311)



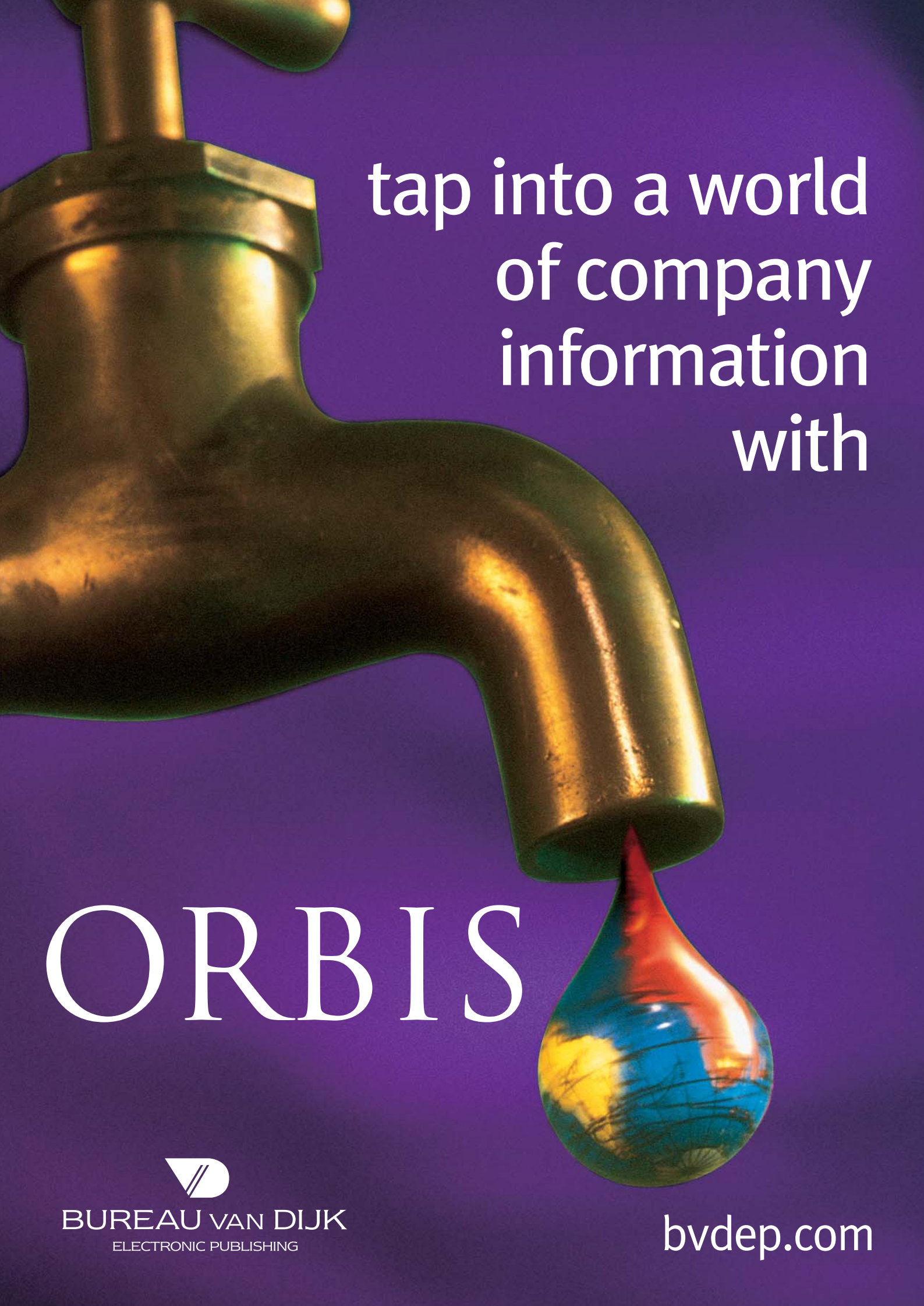
VIP: Unbiased reviews; insightful analysis

Over 1,000 senior information workers read it, with information budgets from GBP 45k to GBP 1.7m. If you fit this profile and you don't read VIP, then you're at a disadvantage.

Every month, editor Pam Foster brings VIPs:

- VIP: monthly in-depth reviews of business information products
- VIP Eye: twice-monthly analysis of the latest news and trends

[<http://www.vivaVIP.com/>](http://www.vivaVIP.com/)



tap into a world
of company
information
with

ORBIS



BUREAU VAN DIJK
ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING

bvdep.com

FreePint Bar

In Association with Factiva
a Dow Jones & Reuters Company



Monique Cuvelier serves as editor of the FreePint Newsletter. She has contributed to dozens of publications in the UK and US, including her time working for The Western Mail, Wales' national newspaper. She can be reached at <monique.cuvelier@freepint.com>.

The FreePint Bar is where you can get free help with your tricky research questions <<http://www.freepint.com/bar>>

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

Work, words and copyright have been dominating the FreePint Bar, with active discussions about the shelf life of library and information professionals, and a closer examination of word definitions. Read on for highlights, or jump into a discussion at <<http://www.freepint.com/bar/>>.

- Age may bring wisdom, but it won't necessarily help you find a job. The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 are aimed at combating ageism in the UK, but anecdotal evidence on the Bar suggests older professionals still face discrimination <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b37690>>. For some, freelancing has been an alternative to permanent employment, but diligence is necessary for anyone who wants to boost their pension fund. Keep hunting for jobs on Jinfo <<http://www.jinfo.com/>>.
- Students new to the profession are discussing graduate trainee posts. For practical information visit the Student Bar <http://www.freepint.com/go/s5393>, and then read Kim Dority's review below of "The NextGen Librarian's Survival Guide."
- If the job hunt becomes truly daunting, you can always resort to looting and pillaging. Not sure what these two closely related words mean? The consensus at the Bar is that looting is a showing of civil disobedience while pillaging is military-led robbery. Weigh in on the linguistic nuances <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b41551>>.

- Visual thesauri can help you see how words and themes relate in a new way. One Bar member is looking for a tool that can 'generate its own taxonomy/thesauri from any given set of documentation'. Lend your suggestions <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b40665>> and read above for Vivian Cohen-Leisorek's contribution to My Favourite Tipples.
- Discussion surrounding copyright issues on scanned images continues to generate chatter <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b39869>> as information professionals decompress this blurry issue. When do you have permission to reuse the image? Does it matter if the image is used for material gain? If an image is substantially altered, is it still a breach of copyright?
- In the maze of company research markets, there are a few shafts of light, as some Bar participants have pointed out <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b41331>>, from company accounts to public-sector contract information. Anyone new to the field might even consider taking a short course on researching companies and markets online.

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



Researcha Limited

4-6 Station Approach
Ashford, Middlesex
TW15 2QN

T: 0870 141 7474
I: +44 870 141 7474
E: support@researcha.com

Researcha

Researcha gives you immediate pay-as-you-go access to company data from the UK, Ireland, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland.

Get the benefits:

- One-stop access to company reports from many countries
- Hard-to-find data on company directors
- Free to search and view basic details prior to purchase
- Convenient delivery of reports - email to yourself or others

Search today at:

www.Researcha.com



"Distance learning as a collaborative enterprise: Tips on teamwork to make the class work"

By Robin Neidorf



Robin Neidorf recently joined Free Pint Limited full-time as General Manager. This article is adapted from her recently published book, "Teach Beyond Your Reach: An instructor's guide to developing and running successful distance learning classes, workshops, training sessions and more", a CyberAge book from Information Today, Inc. Learn more about the book and access helpful worksheets at <http://www.electrilmuse.com/tbyr.asp>, or visit the publisher's website at <http://digbig.com/4ftwk>. Robin can be reached at robin.neidorf@freepint.com.

If you haven't yet been asked to run, participate in or support a distance-learning programme, you will likely get the call (or the email) sometime soon. Organisations, ranging from professional associations to corporate entities to consultancies to universities, are pushing more and more of their learning into online environments.

Distance learning dramatically changes the terms of engagement for students, instructors and institutions. In a traditional classroom, most of us share an understanding of who sits where, the flow of information and how to maximise the learning experience. Move into a virtual environment, however, and all the rules change. New students and instructors may find it difficult to access the 'lecture', figure out how to participate in discussion and get their needs met while mastering new material.

The foundation for an effective distance-learning programme is laid in creating a strong collaboration for planning, implementing and running a distance classroom. Before a single assignment can be posted or discussion threaded, a team of people need to work together, including:

* Content expert * Instructor * Instructional designer * Technical developer * Project manager

Depending on the size of the project (not to mention its budget), several of these roles may be filled by one individual. Once launched, a distance-learning programme will also have yet another important collaborative team-mate: the student. Whether two, three or more individuals are involved in any given project, it's critical to success that they share an understanding of project goals, desired outcomes, technical, learning requirements and a host of other variables.

It's all about interaction

Effective distance-learning programmes are built on a foundation of carefully designed interactions. The most powerful distance-learning programmes capitalize on three kinds of interaction: with content, with instructor and with peers. In this model, students are not just passive recipients of information; rather, they are the active centre of their own learning experiences. To master new skills and knowledge, they must engage with the content of a course, interact with an instructor who can help them make personal meaning of the material, and validate and deepen their new knowledge through peer dialogue.

Before any of these interactions can occur, however, a different kind of interaction needs to happen: between the collaborative partners who design, develop and implement the programme. Because interaction is critical to the success of a programme, an interactive approach to development builds that orientation right into the foundation.

The collaborative work that goes into a successful distance-learning programme has similar requirements to other kinds of collaborative projects. Individuals who are part of the collaboration must have:

* Clear roles and responsibilities * Shared understanding of goals * Appreciation for how each contribution fits into the big picture * Awareness of challenges * Tools and processes with which to overcome challenges * Ability to communicate * Orientation toward problem solving * Roles and responsibilities

Students and instructors are the primary actors in the distance-learning drama, but there are plenty of supporting parts to go around. Some roles and the tasks associated with them occur in sequence, while others occur simultaneously. All of

Related FreePint links:

'Education ' articles in the FreePint Portal
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/p39>>

Post a message to the author, Robin Neidorf or suggest further resources at the FreePint Bar
<<http://www.freepint.com/bar>>

Read this article online, with activated hyperlinks
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/080606.htm#tips>>

Access the entire archive of FreePint content
<<http://www.freepint.com/portal/content/>>

these roles and tasks have elements that support both the instructor and the student, though some may have greater direct impact on one or the other.

Depending on the size of a project, the nature of the sponsoring institution, budget and course platform, the different roles may be taken up by entirely different people, or some people may play multiple roles. For instance, in many cases, the instructor is also the topic expert, and sometimes the instructional/designer as well. An administrative department or individual may serve as project manager, as well as support the back-end needs of students and instructor alike.

The unique way each distance-learning project team comes together can create challenges, if members of the team are not entirely clear on what their specific responsibilities should be. Teams run the risk of launching a project while missing critical skill-sets if they do not start by establishing a clear understanding of who is at the table and what tasks each will be performing over the course of a project.

Content roles

Prior to the launch of a course, a distance-learning team must first design, create and test the content for the course. During and following delivery of a course, the team must assess the efficacy of the content, its usability and its practical value to students and instructors. Team members responsible for content of a course include:

- Topic expert: Individual(s) with expertise in the material students will be exposed to during the course
- Resource expert: Individuals(s) with expertise in gathering, organising and sharing resources and supplementary information to support students and instructors
- Instructional designer: Individual(s) with

expertise in the design and craft of instructional experiences, based on learner needs

- Instructor: Individual(s) who will present the content and help students interact with it to maximise their learning
- Development: Individual(s) responsible for packaging the content so that it is accessible to students and instructor during the course
- Administration: Individual(s) charged with the task of overseeing content development and implementation tasks, maintaining overall quality and consistency standards, reporting on progress, and identifying process components that need to be improved, changed or enhanced.

Administrative and support roles

Prior to course launch, team members in administrative and support roles document and market the course offering, handle registration and arrange access to the course. During the course, administrative and support individuals manage any technical support or access issues that arise, may monitor attendance and grading if relevant, and gather and compile all formal feedback regarding the course. Following the course, the work of administrative and support personnel includes recording grades and credit, performing any kind of course shut-down (including archiving) required, and distributing course feedback to other members of the team.

Team members with administrative and support responsibility may include such titles as:

* Academic counsellor * Registrar * Faculty/Instructor development/trainer * Communications or marketing specialists * Information technology specialists * Student support services * Department chair

Shared understanding of goals

With so many individuals participating in the collaborative work of building and launching a distance-learning course, it is critically important for everyone on the team to have a shared understanding of the overall goals for the project. Each project will have its own specific goals, but distance-learning programmes must include these among their primary goals:

Goals: To create learning experiences that are relevant, engaging and challenging for students; to enable student interaction with content, instructor and peers; to foster student learning so that they can achieve the learning objectives.

It's easy, in the midst of the myriad tasks that occur during distance-learning project development, to forget about the students and their learning experiences. Keeping these fundamental goals in mind, though, can make the difference between courses that work and those that have terrific content and fabulous interfaces but fail to make a difference for students.

Project-specific goals

Beyond the fundamental goals, a distance-learning team must have a shared sense of the specific goals of its immediate project. Developing goals requires knowledge of the student population: What do they need to be able to say, think or do as a result of completing the course? What are the specific challenges the learner population may face in completing the course? What outcomes would be perceived as success by the sponsoring institution? The team may want to consider any and all of the following:

- Research: Is there a need, prior to developing the course, to conduct additional research about the needs and interests of the students?
- Enrolment: Does a successful outcome involve a specific level of enrolment? Would the course be considered successful if five students completed it? If 25 students completed it?

- Capacity: What scope of course complexity and student population are you equipped to handle?
- Use of distance methods: Are there particular methods and tools you are required to use to build and implement this course? Are there methods and tools you would like to try? What additional information do you need in order to be able to make sound decisions about your methods and tools?
- Establishing goals for the project on the front-end enables the team to evaluate its own success. Without knowing what you set out to accomplish, it's impossible to know if you achieved it!

Where are the challenges?

Any collaborative project will face challenges -- timing, budget, communication, technology, contrary needs and perspectives. Some of these challenges will be ones that members of the team have control over, but many of them will not. At some level, the budget cannot be budged; the technology can be manipulated only so far; project deadlines often have external triggers, such as the date that the new class of students is scheduled to show up and expect a functional classroom.

When in conflict or just plain stuck on an intractable problem, return to the fundamental goals: relevant, engaging and challenging learning experiences that meet the needs of students. Next to those goals, everything else is secondary. With that as a priority, reconsider the problem:

- Does this problem interfere with the fundamental goals of the programme? If not, is it really a problem?
- Is this problem under the control of a member of the team? If so, how can that team member resolve it? If not, how can the team as a whole neutralize its effects?
- What's missing that, if it were present, this problem would be mitigated or eliminated?

Communicate

Team approaches to challenges can only be successful if team communication is successful. Establishing and maintaining clear and open lines of communication enable members of a team to access each other's creative resources when needed. At the same time (and not incidentally), good communication keeps a project on target for deadlines and budget, and helps a team feel like a team.

Enable communication by establishing protocol for use of email, teleconference, shared online workspace and other resources that draw members of the team closer together. Over the course of a long project, periodic update meetings keep everyone feeling connected and provide opportunities for group brainstorming around any challenges or issues that have arisen.

Distance learning is in beta testing

Despite impressive developments in the past several years and deep inroads on college campuses, in association offerings and within corporate training and knowledge-management efforts, distance learning is still in a cultural testing phase. Many distance-learning programmes are designed and launched without much careful thought given to what their educational role should be -- or even if the students are able to learn in this way. Organisations have a sense that distance learning can benefit them, but they haven't quite quantified (or even qualified) what that benefit could be. Cost-saving is always high on their wish lists, as is the ability to reach a larger audience than other forms of learning.

On top of the other challenges inherent in any distance-learning programme, then, collaborative development teams face the overall challenge of focusing on this project, and tuning out the noise. A team



Tap the Wire of Information Industry News

Latest press releases in the information industry are found at the VIP Wire. Post for free and share your news with a targeted audience:

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

"VIP Wire is a great news distribution outlet for my clients in the information industry", Theresa Horscroft, Managing Director of Eureka Communications, UK PR agency for OneSource

can become distracted by the next hot thing -- external or even internal pressure to go with a solution or move to a distance format because that's the direction in which the lemmings are rushing these days. Or a team can become distracted by the voice of the loudest skeptic in the room, declaring that it can't possibly work, that this educational problem can only be solved with a traditional learning environment.

The 'distance' in distance learning describes geography; it does not require technology to be successful. It does, however, require a process-driven approach, a team of people who are willing and able to pool their collective wisdom and skill, sound instructional design, a method of packaging and delivering content, a student population motivated to learn, and instructors dedicated to connecting with students and establishing a classroom culture of learning. It requires dedicated support and creativity. Interaction with content, instructor and peers. Everything else is extra credit.



Onopoly is a network of sites of interest to people working in information-related roles around the world.

Use Onopoly to find out about powerful sponsorship and advertising opportunities, review press coverage of our sites, visit sites within the network, and learn how you can disseminate your news and information through the network.

www.Onopoly.com

The screenshot shows the Onopoly website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Sponsor, Author, Update, Press, and Contact & Terms. Below this, a 'Network' section lists several member sites with their logos and brief descriptions:

- FreePint**: Newsletter and community for people who find, use, manage and share work-related information.
- researcha**: Purchased reports on companies in the UK and 10 European countries.
- VIP**: Reviews and news analysis for the business information industry.
- willco**: Technology hosting for online communities.
- jinjo**: Advertise and search jobs in information.
- digbig**: URL shortening service.
- ResourceShelf**: Daily newsletter with resources of interest to information professionals, educators and journalists.

Additional sections include 'Sponsor & Advertise', 'Press', and 'Onopoly Update'.



VIP
In-depth, unbiased reviews of business information products.



VIP Eye
Insightful current-awareness analysis of business information trends.

VIP Wire
Post your business information press releases for free.

www.vivaVIP.com



Researcha gives you immediate pay-as-you-go access to company data from the UK, Ireland, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland.

Search today at www.Researcha.com



Jinfo is **the** place to find and advertise jobs in the information industry.



The Jinfo Newsletter contains advice from recruitment consultants and a list of the latest vacancies in Jinfo.

Search jobs, advertise and subscribe at www.Jinfo.com



Join over 78,000 people around the world who find, use, manage and share work-related information. Free membership gets you:

- Twice-monthly newsletter with practical tips
- Full access to the member forums
- Notice of in-depth reports

Visit today and join at www.FreePint.com



Willco enables publishers to manage web-based communities, distribute e-newsletters, update web content, push information out to audiences, and publish controlled-access documents through a single, scalable, powerful system.

Read about the Modules at www.Willco.com



DigBig is a free service that shortens long Web addresses (URLs) to make them easier to communicate.

You simply paste in a long URL and it gives you a much shorter one back.

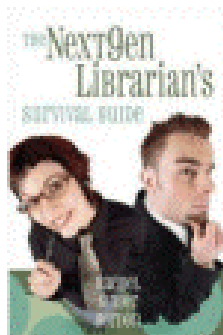
Try it out at www.DigBig.com

To advertise on this page, visit www.Onopoly.com

"The NextGen Librarian's Survival Guide"

Written by Rachel Singer Gordon

Reviewed by Kim Dority



Kim Dority is an information consultant specialising in information strategy and content development. She teaches a course in alternative careers for LIS professionals in the University of Denver MLIS program <<http://www.du.edu/LIS>>. Kim can be reached at <kimdority@gkdority.com>.

Related links:

- Buy this book at Amazon.co.uk <<http://www.amazon.co.uk/exec/obidos/ASIN/1573872563/freepint0c>> or Amazon.com <<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1573872563/freepint00>>
- "The NextGen Librarian's Survival Guide" ISBN 15738725635, published by Information Today Inc.

The young librarians' profession is no longer defined by stable institutions or predictable career paths. Instead, NextGens -- those in their 20s and 30s -- face a world of budget cuts and decreasing opportunities. Older generations may not welcome their ideas and leadership. They must deal with changing expectations of what libraries will be in the future.

Enter 'The NextGen Librarian's Survival Guide', Rachel Singer Gordon's excellent guide to surviving the early years of professional engagement. Her credentials as a successful NextGen professional are well-documented: 'The Librarian's Guide to Writing for Publication' and 'The Accidental Library Manager' are two of her most recent books, and she's the creator of LISjobs.com and the Info Career Trends newsletter.

Survival Guide describes the parameters of NextGen librarianship: the unique characteristics of this demographic and its issues and opportunities. It also considers approaches to graduate school, the job hunt, entry-level positions and 'moving forward'. Overall, Gordon addresses image, stereotypes and diversity; building professional connections; work/life balance; and taking leadership in transforming the profession. She concludes by asking library administrators to address the 'big three' NextGen issues: "a lack of entry-level opportunities, a lack of sustainable salaries and a lack of opportunity to be a full participant in the profession".

Profiles, resources and statistics are woven throughout, adding counter-balances or opposing viewpoints. Many quotes are excerpted from a 2005 survey identifying attitudes and experiences regarding NextGen librarianship from two vantage points: one for librarians, library workers and MLIS students under 40, and one for those over. An appendix brings together all referenced websites, and her recommended reading list goes beyond the expected. She includes such non-LIS thought leaders as Warren Bennis

(leadership), Don Tapscott (the 'Net generation) and Ron Zemke (intergenerational workplace issues).

Gordon acknowledges the difficulty in drawing generalized conclusions from a diverse group. They 'share a certain commonality of experience that affects how they view the profession, how their colleagues view them and their experiences in trying to break into the library field'. At the same time, some NextGens have had years of experience working in libraries while others have had none, radically influencing their individual employability. Nevertheless, for its primary audience, i.e., NextGen students and new professionals, this guide provides invaluable, practical information -- and lots of it.

Going beyond insider how-to tips, the guide's strategy-and-tactics focus is buttressed by wise counsel to take responsibility for one's actions, attitudes and outcomes. Gordon notes:

We can think about our overlapping experiences and outlooks as real-life Venn diagrams, looking both at where they intersect and where they differ. This helps us avoid the trap of either thinking all of our experiences are unique to our age or of overemphasizing age.

In her chapter 'Transforming the Profession', Gordon points out that 'the critical mass of next-generation librarians moving into the workplaces, combined with changing user expectations, changing technology and a changing institutional image, translates into both the ability and the responsibility to drive change'. This balanced, positive approach will help any NextGen navigate early career challenges and become a leader.

The NextGen Librarian's Survival Guide should also be required reading for those who manage and teach NextGen employees. Those people are on the forefront of the developmental work necessary for effective succession planning. As Ms. Gordon points out, if we don't start finding ways to acknowledge and integrate our NextGen colleagues now, our best and brightest may take their energy, tech savvy and passion elsewhere.

What is Jinfo?

Jinfo is a database of information-related job vacancies.

Jinfo is a great place to find information work and advertise information job vacancies.

Search and advertise the latest jobs at:
www.jinfo.com

Jinfo Newsletter

The twice-monthly Jinfo Newsletter contains a list of the latest vacancies and free careers advice and tips from experienced professionals.



Subscribe free at: www.jinfo.com/subs/

Recent Job Titles

- Director
- Information Manager/ Web Coordinator
- Researcher
- Human Resources Researcher
- Internet Research Analyst
- Graduate Research Assistant
- Senior Information Manager
- Legal Information Officer
- Business Process Analyst
- Research Partner
- Business Information Researcher

Search the database and find out about advertising vacancies at: www.jinfo.com

Recent Articles

- "What does your Web site say about you?"
- "The Nature of the Beast"
- "The Emotional Side of Career Transitions"
- "How to leave gracefully"
- "What salary should you be getting?"
- "At the Interview"

Read these articles and more at: www.jinfo.com/newsletter/

"Q&A with Christopher Barger, IBM's Blogger-in-Chief"

Reviewed by Tim Buckley Owen



Tim Buckley Owen is an independent information industry commentator. He's held policy and communication posts at the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, the Council for Museums, Libraries & Archives and the Library & Information Commission. Before that he was Principal Information Officer at the London Research Centre, and he began his career at the City Business Library and Westminster Reference Library. Tim runs training courses for Aslib and CILIP, writes regularly for 'Library & Information Gazette' and 'Managing Information', and edits 'Business Information Review'. He's also the author of the popular textbook 'Success at the Enquiry Desk'.

Christopher Barger has a tough job: keeping track of thousands of blogs for one of the world's largest corporations. But when Tim Buckley Owen caught up with him at VNU's Blogs and Social Media Conference in London last month, he found him relaxed -- and remarkably candid -- despite his responsibilities.

Tim Buckley Owen: Most of the conference speakers that I've heard from say that corporations have to embrace social media because they can't afford to ignore them if they want to survive. I'm sure your view is much more positive.

Christopher Barger: Any corporation or any organization that recognizes a shift and decides that it wants to act -- that's a positive thing that means you're changing not for change's sake but because it's going to empower or help your business. So I don't think that's necessarily a threat. If you want to survive, if you want to keep reaching your audiences and having a relationship with them, you have to embrace this medium because this is how the audience now wants to be talked to.

TBO: It sounds as if it's a disagreeable corporate necessity though.

CB: If you think about organizations that communicated with their audiences for the last one hundred years, the messages are controlled. And because of the high barrier to entry, not everybody's had a voice. Shifting that model to one where you're embracing open communications -- in IBM's case where 300,000 people are engaged with audiences and it's not necessarily going to be your media people any more -- that's a big shift. From a media perspective, we are no longer the gatekeepers. That's threatening when you first think about it.

But when businesses think about the benefits of being able to engage directly with their audiences, and take the people inside their organisation that actually have

the knowledge that the audiences want, and get those folks together, it will stop feeling like a 'have to' and start feeling like a 'want to'.

TBO: So it's the culture of the environment in which you operate? If you're a high tech firm, it makes it that much easier?

CB: I think the high-tech industry has been among the earliest adopters of this in the same way that we were with the Internet. But I don't think it's a technology-based evolution. I think that audience shift is independent of that and other industries are going to catch up rather fast, just like other industries quickly adopted the Internet when that started to blow up.

TBO: What do companies need to do if they are to embrace social media? What questions do they need to be asking in order to succeed?

CB: It depends if you're talking blogs or wikis. From a blog, the first questions are: 'Why are we doing this? What do we hope to get out of it?' You don't want to be doing it just for the sake of doing it. You want to have a specific goal in mind. Do we want to raise the profile? Are we trying to engage with a very specific audience?

Success is measured very differently in this world than in the old. If you were doing a media campaign in the 'old' media -- a 1.0 -- you measured success on how many readers did we get, how many people saw this? In this world, you can have a blog or a wiki or podcast that's targeted at 70 people, because there is no cost to entering. So if you do this for free, and if you reach 70 people and it's the right 70, it's a huge success. And that in itself is a little bit of a change for us in corporate communications: to realise that niche is OK.

TBO: So it's hearts and minds, not volume?

CB: Absolutely. I would much rather have a

Related FreePint links:

- 'Publishing' articles in the FreePint Portal <http://www.freepint.com/go/p121>

Post a message to the author, Tim Buckley Owen, or suggest further resources at the FreePint Bar <<http://www.freepint.com/bar>>

Read this article online, with activated hyperlinks <http://www.freepint.com/issues/080606.htm#feature>

Access the entire archive of FreePint content <http://www.freepint.com/portal/content/>

blog that reaches and starts a conversation among the 200 right people than 20,000 at random. I am aiming for the audience that I want to influence, not a broad audience any more.

TBO: Almost everyone has talked today about the social rather than the technological impact of social media. How intrusive is the technology?

CB: I think wikis are not intrusive at all. They make things faster, they aid collaboration, they bring groups together quickly. If you had a group of 15 or 20 people who have to collaborate on a document, in the old way you end up with an e-mail chain of 15 or 20 notes long. And if you're the poor sucker who's trying to manage this version control, it's extremely difficult.

If you put a wiki together you get everybody coming in, collaborating on the same thing, and within a much shorter period of time, you've got a document that everybody's had the opportunity to edit. Everybody signs off on it; you come to consensus more quickly.

You have to get over the attitude adjustment, because people fear this is going to be disruptive. It's disruptive but in a good way. If we're breaking up some of the old processes, that's a good thing. So defending or fearing the change in what we've got established isn't always right.

TBO: But, with blogs, aren't most bloggers at the moment doing it simply because they can? Is there enough structure to it?

CB: You don't want too much structure, otherwise you're going to inhibit the medium. But that is the motivating factor for a lot of bloggers, because they want to be heard. But that's not a bad thing. Using my own company as an example, we have 300,000 people. Every one of them is smarter than somebody else in the company at something. If they want to be

heard, if they want to share that with all of us, it benefits them because people start to recognize their expertise. It benefits me as their colleague, because now I know somebody who knows more about something than I do.

TBO: One can see plenty of internal benefits, but can you really have a corporate blog in terms of how the outside world views you? Isn't that a contradiction in terms?

CB: You've got to do it carefully. If you recognise that this is a different medium, that the rules are different, that the expectations of the audience are different, it is possible for a corporation to do this well. If companies are looking at this as just another way for us to do what we've always done, then it's not only going to be impossible to pull off but it's worse than to do nothing -- because this audience has the voice to talk back and they will hammer you for doing this the wrong way.

I would recommend to a big organisation: think very carefully about what you want to accomplish and do your research. Know the medium and know what the audience expects. There are lots of examples of companies that have flushed this up, and you get hit for it.

TBO: Have you hit problems with defamation or damaging rumours?

CB: We've had occurrences where there have been things said that weren't necessarily accurate or we thought fair. But the benefit of this medium is that you have a chance to address issues as they come out, rather than letting them fester, rather than letting them gather steam. Defamation or damaging things have always been said. The difference is now we have a chance to see them happening and influence them.

TBO: But, with more and more blogs

coming onstream all the time, and most of them not worth the screen they're written on, won't they eventually collapse under their own weight?

CB: The number of blogs -- not the number of active or good ones -- doubles every five months, and, where there were less than 2 million in 2003, there are now more than 32 million. One per cent of them might be, 'worth the screen that they're written on', but that's 320,000 channels that didn't exist two years ago that may or may not impact your business, so I don't think the inflated numbers are reasons to ignore them.

You're going to see a lot of organizations just experimenting and getting their feet wet, having a couple of test blogs out there to see what kind of response they get, then tying it to the business strategy and making it part of the communications plan. 'There's a specific area of the business that matters to us; we'll be thinking, "What kind of outreach do we do to our customers on this? Do we have anybody blogging on this? What are the other important blogs who are outsiders that are talking about this?"'. They'll incorporate this as another piece of corporate communications. That said, it's not going to be traditional corporate communications.

TBO: You were previously an executive speechwriter, drafting set-piece communications. Did you allow for the possibility of awkward questions? Is speechwriting to corporate blogging a transferable skill?

CB: Well you allowed for it in the sense that you were prepared for it. You're saying: 'Here's your speech, but when you go into the Q&A, if you get this question, don't get caught flat-footed. Have an answer ready'. But we were still in control. If we didn't like a question we could very easily just say, 'Next question'.

You don't have that luxury in a blog role. If somebody wants to ask you a question that you'd rather not discuss, they're going to keep coming back to it. It's harder to avoid the things you don't want to talk about. But rather than looking at that as something to be afraid of, it forces you to have the answers to the potentially difficult questions. I think this makes a company, or any organization, a lot more responsible and accountable.

TBO: As you speak, blog and publish, what questions do you hear over and over? What do you find yourself saying over and over?

CB: The time-allotment issue is one that happens quite frequently. 'How is it that you expect, when everybody's already got their plates ridiculously full, that they're going to have time to do this?' Or: 'How on earth -- even if you assume that only 320,000 out of the 32 million blogs are worthy of our attention -- do you expect that we're going to read even a 10th of that in one day?'.

TBO: What's your answer?

CB: Work time now leaks into personal time; the traditional definitions of the work day have changed. If we're going to expect people to log on from home at 11 at night after the kids are in bed, or have the Blackberry with them when they're on vacation, then we should also expect that they're going to do a little bit of non-traditional work things during the work day. But this is work related. How is engaging with your audience a waste of time? This helps people do their job. This is a paradigm -- it's something new. But it's still part of the job.

TBO: In your case, your hobby actually became your job.

CB: I started a personal blog as an aside, and what I didn't realise was that my

bosses had been among those people who had been reading it. And when the company decided: 'There's something bigger happening here, we need to embrace this', they called me in and said: 'We know that this is a new role, and we need somebody who knows the role and isn't going to approach it from the old media standpoint. You're going to lead this initiative for us'.

And that was the moment when you realise that -- beside the personal impact -- there's something really big happening here. If a company of the size and importance of IBM understands that we can't approach this the way we used to, so we're going to reach down into the organization and pull somebody out who we think has the right knowledge to lead it -- that's an indication of change. It's not a hierarchical system; it's democratisation.

FreePint Forthcoming Articles

[Provisional]

- Business information systems
- Observatory project - web accessibility
- Linking real-world local communities with online communities
- Content enrichment
- Innovation resources
- Writing for the Web

If you have a suggestion for an article topic, or would like to write for FreePint, then please contact <penny.hann@freepint.com> or read the notes for authors at <<http://www.onopoly.com/author.htm>>.



Do you use DigBig to shorten long Web addresses?

DigBig is a fast and free way to shorten long URLs, so that they're easy to include in newsletters and other communications.

Find out more, and provide a brief testimonial at: <http://www.digbig.com/testimonial.html>

Events

Canada:

- "The International Conference on e-Learning" 22nd - 23rd June
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e564>>

France and Territories:

- "The European Conference on IT Management, Leadership and Governance" 12th - 13th July
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e562>>

United Kingdom:

- "Maximising Your Quantitative Research Skills and Results" 22nd June - 23rd November
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e671>>
- "Managing your career - a Career Development Group event" 28th June
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e700>>
- "Online Communities and Social Marketing - Changing the Rules of Marketing" 29th June
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e695>>
- "An Instructional Design Masterclass" 4th July
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e666>>
- "Market Research on the Web" 6th September
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e643>>
- "AUKML 2006 - The 21st Century Information Professional" 22nd - 24th September
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e688>>
- "Report Writing: easing the process of written communication in the organisation" 27th September
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e642>>

Gold

A look back at what FreePint covered at this time in previous years:

- FreePint No.184 16th June 2005. "Two Views of the SLA Conference, Toronto, June 2005" and "Setting Up as an Independent Consultant"
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/160605.htm>>
- FreePint No.161 17th June 2004. "The Impact of the US Sarbanes-Oxley Act on Records Management World Wide" and "RSS: Less hype, more action"
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/170604.htm>>
- FreePint No.138 5th June 2003. "Professional Qualifications in Information and Knowledge Management" and "Writing for the Web – How to Write Web-Friendly Content for your Site"
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/050603.htm>>
- FreePint No.114, 13th June 2002. "Web Site Usability Resources" and "War & Peace, Famine & Disaster - Finding Work in International Development"
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/130602.htm>>
- FreePint No.89, 7th June 2001. "Conference Information and the Internet" and "Dyslexia Resources"
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/070601.htm>>
- FreePint No.64, 8th June 2000. "Understanding Insurance" and "The Invisible Web"
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/080600.htm>>
- FreePint No.40, 10th June 1999. "Weather Sources on the Web" and "Searching for Mammon - Search engine business models"
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/100699.htm>>
- FreePint No.16, 11th June 1998. "Web Site Marketing - How do they do that?" and "How to run a survey on the Net"
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/110698.htm>>

Contact

Web: www.freepint.com
Email: support@freepint.com
Subscriptions: support@freepint.com
Authors: www.freepint.com/author.htm
Advertisers: www.onopoly.com
ISSN: 1460-7239

Free Pint Limited

4-6 Station Approach
 Ashford, Middlesex
 TW15 2QN, United Kingdom
 Tel (UK): 0870 141 7474
 Tel (Int): +44 870 141 7474

Technology by Willco
 <<http://www.willco.com/>>

Contributors to this issue

William Hann (Managing Editor, FreePint),
 Penny Hann (Production Editor, FreePint),
 Vivian Cohen-Leisorek, Monique Cuvelier,
 Robin Neidorf (General Manager, FreePint),
 Kim Dority, Tim Buckley Owen, Plain Text
 <<http://www.plain-text.co.uk/>>
 (proofreading).

Advertisers/Sponsors of this issue

Factiva, Bureau van Dijk, VIP, Sue Hill
 Recruitment, Glen Recruitment, Willco.

© Free Pint Limited 1997-2006

FreePint®

Free Pint Limited
 1997-2006

FreePint is a Registered Trademark of Free
 Pint Limited (R)

To subscribe, unsubscribe, change your
 subscriptions or password, visit
 <<http://web.freepint.com/>> or email
 <support@freepint.com>. For details about
 contributing, advertising or to see past
 issues, please visit the Web site at
 <<http://www.freepint.com/>>.

Please note: FreePint (ISSN 1460-7239) is a
 registered trademark of, and published by,
 Free Pint Limited. The publishers will
 NEVER make the subscriber list available to
 any other company or organisation.

The opinions, advice, products and services
 offered herein are the sole responsibility of
 the contributors. Whilst all reasonable care
 has been taken to ensure the accuracy of
 the publication, the publishers cannot
 accept responsibility for any errors or
 omissions.

This publication may be freely copied
 and/or distributed in its entirety. However,
 individual sections MAY NOT be copied
 and/or distributed without the prior
 written agreement of the publishers. Write
 to William Hann, Managing Editor,
 <william.hann@freepint.com> for more
 details. Product names used in FreePint are
 for identification purposes only, and may
 be trademarks of their respective owners.
 FreePint disclaims any and all rights in
 those marks. All rights reserved.