

Contents

| Editorial By William Hann | 1 |
|---|----|
| Jinfo :: Jobs in information | 2 |
| Sector Specialist / AnalystRecords Manager | |
| My Favourite Tipples From Adrian Janes | 4 |
| Tips Article "Analysing User Behaviour: A Case Study" By Chris Kutler and Ray Devaney | 6 |
| Bookshelf "Delivering Digital Services: A Handbook for Public Libraries and Learning Centres" Reviewed by Michael Corkett | 9 |
| Feature Article "The Slow Movement" By Alison Scammell | 11 |
| Events and Gold Forthcoming Articles | 13 |
| Contact Information | 7 |
| | |

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http://www.freepint.com/issues/080905.htm

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ISSN 1460-7239

Editorial

My last Editorial talked about the importance of nurturing the talent of those people who can clearly and succinctly communicate complicated messages

http://digbig.com/4emgk#editorial.

It is one thing to be able to communicate something clearly so that it is correctly understood ... but it is another thing entirely to convince the recipient to 'buy in' to the message, and change their behaviour as a result.



In traditional 'sales', market forces tend to set the price of things. If a potential purchaser thinks the price represents good value then they are more likely to buy. It's relatively easy for, say, a housebuyer to compare the available properties in their area and work out how to get the most living space for their money.

But what if you provide more 'fuzzy' products, like 'information'. How do you put a value on 'information'?

I've been thinking about this as I work on my talk for the second day of the upcoming Online Information conference here in London in December http://www.online-information.co.uk/conference.html. As an information business that is growing globally, how do we make sure that our opinion of the value of services we provide matches the value as perceived by our members and customers?

Think of those who work in commercial information services. They have the unenviable task of getting agreement with customers (both internal and external) on the value of the services and information they provide. The FreePint Bar thread on this topic has certainly provided a lot of food for thought on this topic http://www.freepint.com/go/b33197.

So what can we, as purchasers and users of 'fuzzy' products, do to demonstrate to suppliers that we value what they do? We can spend more money with them of course, but there are plenty of other ways: spread the word to colleagues and friends; communicate with other customers and members to create a sense of community; nominate the provider for an award; say thank you; or give constructive feedback.

Providing this kind of fuzzy, non-financial support to valued organisations has a tremendously positive effect as they grow through promotion, producing better products with enhanced moral.

As I say, nurturing gifted individuals is one thing; but letting a provider know you share their sense of 'value', through some of the ways suggested above, can make a *really* big difference.

William Hann Managing Editor and Founder, FreePint

e: william.hann@freepint.com

t: 0870 141 7474

i: +44 870 141 7474

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Here are some of the latest featured jobs:

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Recruiter: Glen Recruitment http://www.jinfo.com/go/j4358

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Pharmaceutical co. seeks enthusiastic Records Manager to redesign existing system & Preservations & Disaster Management system. Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment http://www.jinfo.com/go/j4366

[The above jobs are paid listings]

NB: There are 44 other jobs in the current edition of the Jinfo Newsletter http://www.jinfo.com/newsletter/ and over 80 in the Jinfo database http://www.jinfo.com/.

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The latest issue of VIP features an in-depth review of Hemscott's CoreReference product which provides financial and executive data on 10,000 active public companies trading in the US. A second review examines the Member's Area of SCOTBIS, the national business portal for Scotland.

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

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My Favourite Tipples

by Adrian Janes



Adrian Janes is a librarian with the Information Services Library of the London Borough of Havering http://www.havering.

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

- Euroguide http://www.euroguide.org/euroguide/subjectlisting>. Useful gateway to sites on all aspects of the European Union and its members.
- UK Public Libraries on the Web http://digbig.com/4dskx>. Quick route to the catalogues of British libraries and local library information. Librarians in some areas have also categorised free Internet resources.
- Phil Bradley https://www.philb.com. Offers a great directory of international search engines plus practical articles and presentations on key Internet topics, e.g. "Which search engine when?".
- TSO Bookshop http://digbig.com/4dsxb.
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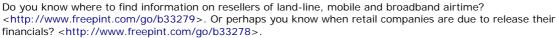
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FreePint Bar

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Is there a company that you would like to see get the recognition they deserve? Well now is last your chance to nominate them for the Online Information/FreePint Customer Service Award. There are only 17 voting days left http://www.freepint.com/go/b33458>.



This FreePinter needs basic data of Jersey registered companies http://www.freepint.com/go/b33255 and this one is trying to find average salary data at a 'local authority' level http://www.freepint.com/go/b33255 - can you help?

A fascinating posting has been made at the FreePint Student Bar about library and information services (LIS) within commercial companies http://www.freepint.com/go/s4505. Can you add anything to help with a dissertation covering topics such as downsizing, the future of LIS in commercial organisations and how valued your information service is to your company?

Or perhaps you have some ideas on how to create revenue for a library and information service? http://www.freepint.com/go/b33197.

Can you help this FreePinter create a feasibility report on establishing a local museum? http://www.freepint.com/go/b33450. Or do you know where to find information on movies shown on American television? http://www.freepint.com/go/b33302.

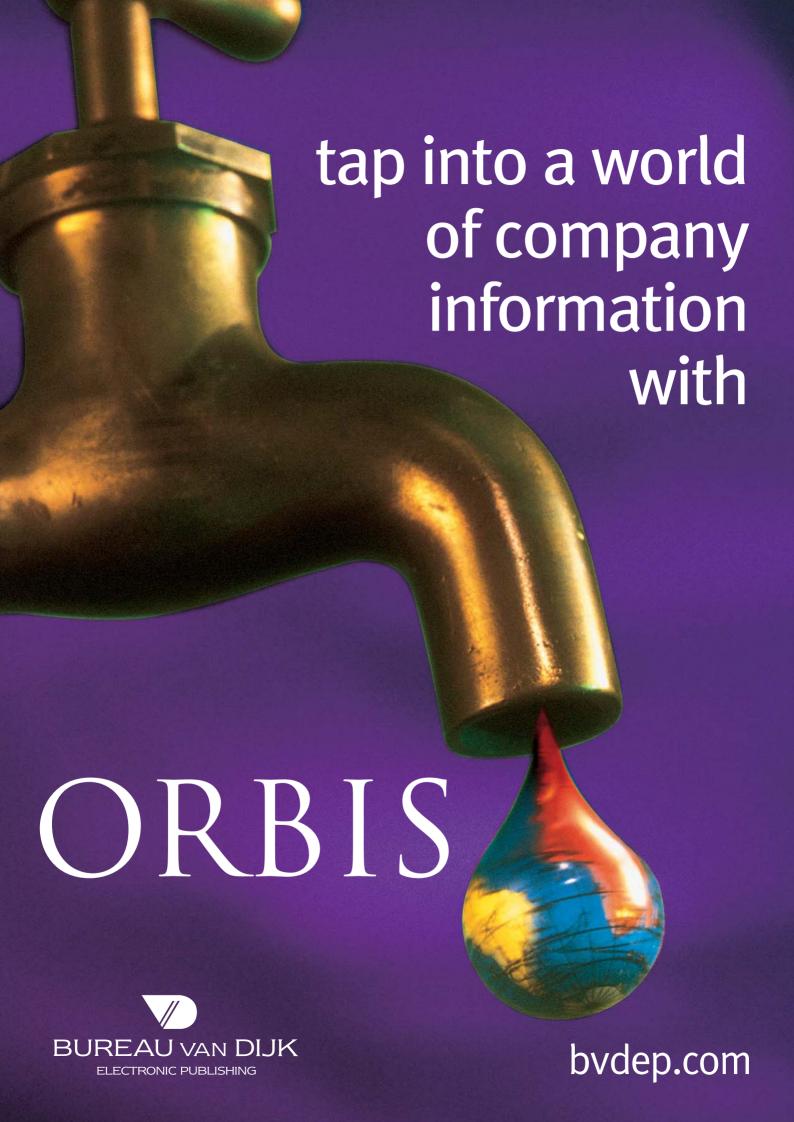
Finally, are you attending Internet Librarian International 2005? We are seeking two FreePinters to report on the conference in London http://www.freepint.com/go/b33477.

That's it for this week. Thanks to all.

Penny Hann, FreePint <penny.hann@freepint.com>

The FreePint Bar is where you can get free help with your tricky research questions Twice-weekly email digests of the latest postings can be requested at http://www.freepint.com/subs/>.







Tips Article

"Analysing User Behaviour: A Case Study" By Chris Kutler and Ray Devaney



Chris Kutler's first degree is in the Biological Sciences and he holds a Masters degree in Applied Computing Technology. He works as a Perl/XML developer for the National Archives, UK, and also runs the Archaeology UK website at <http://www.archaeolo gy-uk.com>. His technical interests include the development of computer programs able to interpret data in a semantic context and the development of GIS-aware search engines. He will be presenting the work outlined above at the 'Humanities beyond Digitisation' conference in London http://www.freepint.c om/events/>.

Ray Devaney has been a programmer for LexisNexisUK for the last 7 years. He also works as a freelance technical writer specialising in knowledge management. His technical expertise focuses on the development of XML parsing systems.

As keen researchers with wide varieties of interests, we welcomed the advent of the world wide web - we could find information in seconds, which, prior to the internet, would have taken days if not weeks to locate. However, as the pool of online information has grown, a paradoxical situation seems to have arisen. It seems that whenever we initiate a search these days we are confronted with endless lists of hyperlinks to often irrelevant information.

So, even though we are fairly sure that the information we need is 'out there', in many cases it is becoming more difficult to find. Many can be forgiven for abandoning their search when faced with this kind of 'information overload', and until more intelligent search facilities are available to us, the problem is likely to get worse.

In order to address the above, various organisations have been looking at ways of 'helping' us locate the information we are really looking for. One method is to develop systems which attempt to 'second guess' the nature of our research and present the results as a list of hyperlinks ranked according to how the system has interpreted the keywords entered by the researcher.

Work on this theme has taken place at The National Archives (TNA) at Kew, Surrey, UK http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk, which houses the Public Records of England and Wales. The online collection of public records exceeds eight million records and summaries of these are available via one of TNA's web-enabled databases called 'The Catalogue'.

TNA also hosts other databases, one of which is the database called 'Access to Archives' (A2A) http://www.a2a.org.uk. This is an electronic catalogue of records held outside of Kew at the various County Record Offices and other repositories. This database also lists in excess of eight million summaries of records held by these offices.

As with many public organisations, TNA is currently looking at ways to improve the intelligence of its search engines with a view to making it easier for users to locate records they are interested in.

One of the initial projects was to use computer programs to analyse search patterns entered by researchers into these and two other databases between 2001 and 2005.

It was anticipated that the results generated from these programs would enable the development team to gain an idea of the kind of information users have been looking for, how complex their searches have been and whether or not there has been a trend towards more sophisticated searches over time. Data was analysed from the web log files generated from four web- enabled databases hosted by The National Archives, using an inhouse word analysis program written in the Perl programming language, using dictionaries of personal and place names built in-house. The program was designed to interpret data in a semantic context and the data analysed represented more than six million searches across the A2A, The Catalogue, Documents Online and the search facility on TNA's home page.

The initial analysis concentrated on determining the frequency of keywords per search. The underlying basis of the approach was a commonly held view that users have tended to restrict their searches to one or two words. However, it was also suspected that when users become more comfortable with the technology or more familiar with the database's contents, they may start to construct more sophisticated search phrases.

The results of the analysis suggest that users tend to restrict their searches to one or two words. Inspection of the results show that over 70% of searches where composed of two words or less.

Year-on-year data since 2001 was available from the A2A web logs and inspection of the results supported the belief that users become more sophisticated over time. Keyword frequency analysis revealed that since 2001, A2A users have increased the number of terms they use in a search - there appears to have been a shift from single word searches to two word searches.

User behaviour, therefore, does not appear to be static. It has become more complex over time and will, subsequently, create further demands on the technology researchers use.

As many of TNA's database users are interested in Family History, one might have expected a large proportion of searches to comprise of personal names or personal names in association with place names. Given that, at this stage, most ideas of user behaviour were simply 'gut feelings', it was important to demonstrate this with real data. Therefore, the list of previous search words and phrases was subject to a frequency analysis of personal names by the program.

With respect to place-names, a place-name frequency analysis was done to determine whether many users had been looking for information on places. If so, then this may influence any future decisions to put resources into the development of a geographically enabled search facility. Such a facility might be a tool which enables the user to search through the databases using a geographic co-ordinate, instead of, or as well as, a keyword.



Related FreePint links:

- 'Internet Webmaster' articles in the FreePint Portal http://www.freepint.c om/go/p183
- Post a message to the authors, Chris Kutler, Ray Devaney, or suggest further resources at the FreePint Bar http://www.freepint.c om/bar
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Programmatic semantic analysis of all the datasets suggested that the majority of one, two and three word searches were for personal names, place names or personal names in association with place names.

To determine the accuracy of all the findings, 200 item samples were inspected and it was confirmed that the program was able to recognise personal and place names with a high level of accuracy operating between 88% and 92.5%.

With respect to personal names, when an average was taken across the four databases, it was found that 47% of single keyword searches were for a personal name; this figure rose to 54% for a two keyword search and for a three keyword search the figure was still high at just over 40%.

The results and their interpretation would benefit from the introduction of more rules to enable personal and place-name identification. This would require inspection of the reports that list rejected, personal or place-name searches and identifying errors. It is anticipated that there will be an increase in the recognition of place names or searches with a geographic context.

Further work has already begun on the development of additional programmatic rules, capable of identifying other popular areas of interest, which could serve to segment and categorise the catalogues hosted by TNA. This work has focussed on interrogation of the lists of searches which the program rejected as place or personal names.

It is hoped that the approach outlined may provide a starting point from where developers can begin to construct more intelligent search facilities which deliver more relevant results to users.

FreePint Forthcoming Articles [Provisional]

- Mentoring
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FreePint Bookshelf

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"Delivering Digital Services: A Handbook for Public Libraries and Learning Centres" Written by David McMenemy and Alan Poulter Reviewed by Michael Corkett



Michael Corkett studied at the University of Kent and City University (London) before embarking upon a career in informatics. He has worked in the voluntary, commercial and public sectors, and sits on the council of the UK Council for Health Informatics Professions (UKCHIP). He is currently Senior Information Specialist for a health research organisation.

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- "Delivering Digital Services: A Handbook for Public Libraries and Learning Centres" ISBN 1856045102, published by Facet Publishing.

Public libraries exist in perpetual dichotomy. Justly regarded as gatekeepers to valuable resources and services, there never lacks a voice accusing them of being out-of-date and failing to serve the needs of the communities they serve. Capable of attracting individuals passionate about their profession and contribution to society, detractors readily serve up the cliche of cobwebbed spinsters and bachelors demanding perpetual silence in the reading room. Worthy of multi-million pound investment from government and Lottery funding to advance information and communication technologies, public libraries remain capable of generating headlines about declining user numbers and the fall in resource utilisation.

Having been raised in a community where the public library was the focal point of learning resources, my respect for public libraries and their staff is tremendous. This is, perhaps, why 'Delivering Digital Services' left a sour taste in my mouth.

Described as an "essential handbook [offering] practical guidance and expertise for public library and community network staff in setting up, running and developing an effective digital learning centre", I anticipated a compelling insight into how professionals at the front line of community information provision can realise technology's potential. Profound disappointment followed.

The objective of this book is to do something about the increasing divide between the information rich and poor, not only in the UK but in the global economy. A bold ambition, especially when what followed would struggle to bridge a hair-line fracture.

Discerning public librarians and students should avoid this book. Rather than provide meaningful guidance and advice, the reader is presented with lacklustre case-studies, ill-founded theory, and incorrect tutorials (errors exist in the HTML coding section). The price of this book alone demands quality should be paramount, but quality is sadly lacking.

The issue of wealth division within communities, be it in terms of monetary income, educational achievement or access to information, is frustratingly complex; yet the authors fail to pragmatically assess the role public libraries can play in overcoming fear, ignorance and poverty. Instead, a parochial mindset prevails offering little, if anything, of value. Vital issues relating to access to internet resources and copyright are dealt with in a shockingly incompetent manner; while the chapter dedicated to supporting electronic government sinks to unfathomable depths of worthlessness. Sections devoted to website design and portal solutions are pitched at such a level that school children would demand more testing content; and repeated signposting by the authors to their latest Facet published title is at best cynical.

No better than a poor collection of second-rate essays, questions should be asked of those behind this book. Why was it commissioned if the end result is so poor? Did the commissioning editor genuinely consider the content to offer something new? Do the authors consider themselves sufficiently in touch with the needs of a dynamic and progressive profession?

People working in public libraries deserve better than 'Delivering Digital Services'. Hopefully Facet appreciates this and will do their readers justice in the future.

FreePint

Contributors to this issue:

William Hann (FreePint Managing Editor), Penny Hann (FreePint Administrator), Pam Foster, Chris Kutler, Ray Devaney, Alison Scammell, Adrian Janes, Michael Corkett, Plain Text < http://www.plain-text.co.uk/> (proofreading).

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EMAIL: support@freepint.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS: support@freepint.com AUTHORS: www.freepint.com/author.htm ADVERTISERS: www.onopoly.com

ISSN: 1460-7239

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Feature Article

"The Slow Movement" By Alison Scammell

Alison Scammell is a freelance copywriter and communications professional with clients mainly in the IT sector. She has written brochures, white papers, newsletters, case studies, articles and web copy for some of worlds largest computer companies. Previously she worked as an information management consultant and has edited/written four books. Contact Alison

<alison@justbeforeda

wn.com>.

The starting point for this article is Carl Honore's excellent book 'In praise of slow: how a worldwide movement is challenging the cult of speed'. Honore investigates how the 'slow' philosophy is gaining momentum as more and more of us are seeking healthier, more fulfilling, less frenetic lifestyles. His central argument is not that speed is bad but that a balance is required to ensure we all have enough time to do things properly. He advocates living at our own pace by tuning in to our own inner tempo, or 'tempo giusto' - the right speed.

The slow movement (if in fact it can be called a movement) covers a very broad range of issues that touch every aspect of our lives. Honore discusses the slow approach in relation to food, the environment, health, medicine, sex, work, leisure and parenting. The following is a mere snapshot of some of these issues, along with some selective Internet resources.

For me, the slow philosophy embraces a number of important issues connected with sustainable living - less consumerism and materialism, more spirituality and the importance of enjoying the simple pleasures of life.

Slow Food

The current preoccupation with all things 'slow' is generally considered to have grown out of Slow Food <a href="Footnote-styl

Slow Cities

Closely affiliated with Slow Food, is the slow city movement, Citta Slow $\,$

http://www.cittaslow.net/world/. The Citta Slow manifesto contains fifty-five pledges aimed at improving the local environment and enhancing the conviviality of an urban area. To achieve the status of a Slow City, a city must agree to accept the guidelines of Slow Food, such as backing local farmers and preserving local culinary traditions. The movement comprises 100 towns and 10 countries working to improve the quality of life for its inhabitants and visitors.

Work

Attitudes to work are at the heart of the slow philosophy. Although the work-life balance debate is now firmly on the agenda, I am always surprised at how few organisations offer any kind of flexibility, even at the basic level of allowing employees to set their own start and finishing

times. An American company recently hit the news for piloting a scheme to allow employees complete freedom in deciding when, where and how long they want to work. Best Buy, an electronics retailer based in Minneapolis, has introduced a 'results oriented work environment' which, providing they get the job done, lets staff work the way they feel is best for them.

Over 13 million working days are lost every year in the UK due to stress. The UK has the longest working hours in Europe as well as the lowest number of public holidays. See the Health and Safety Executive's site for a wealth of statistics and other information on occupational stress: http://digbig.com/4emnk.

Thankfully, in terms of working hours, the UK is still a long way off from Japan, a country so notorious for its work culture that it even has a word to describe death from over work (karoshi).

Employers for Work-Life Balance http://www.employersforwork-lifebalance.org.uk/, run by The Work Foundation, sets out the business benefits of good work-life employment policies, which include increased productivity, improved recruitment and retention, lower rates of absenteeism, reduced overheads (through flexible working) and a more motivated, satisfied and equitable workforce. The site is rich in information on the subject, and includes case studies, advice on presenting an argument for work-life policies and an extensive set of links.

Other work-life balance resources

The Work Life Balance centre

http://www.worklifebalancecentre.org/ is an independent organisation which grew out of one researcher's work into the problem of executive burnout in the late 1980s and 1990s. The Centre is a source of expertise, support and comment on all of the wide and varied aspects of work life balance, both in the UK and overseas. It now has two distinct, yet complementary, areas of operation. The first is research and education (see the annual 24-7 survey into overworking and its effects on family life and personal health http://www.24-7survey.co.uk). The second area of activity is practical intervention work carried out with both organisations and individuals, wherever a work life balance problem has been identified, or is suspected.

'Changing Times' http://digbig.com/4emfw> is the TUC's free fortnightly email round up of news, resources and case studies on the work-life balance debate.

See also The Equal Opportunities Commission http://www.eoc.org.uk/>.



Related FreePint links:

- 'Health and Safety' articles in the FreePint Portal http://www.freepint.c om/go/p171
- Post a message to the author, Alison
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Play at Work

The Institute of Play

http://www.instituteforplay.com/7playing_at_w ork.htm> advocates play at work for maintaining well being and improving productivity. See also the Creativity at Work web site

http://www.creativityatwork.com for the top ten reasons to play at work and why creativity in the work place is so important.

Why work at all?

There are plenty of good arguments not to work at all. Read Bertrand Russell's 1932 paper 'In praise of idleness' for a radical critique of the work ethic and the proposition of a four hour working day:

http://www.zpub.com/notes/idle.html.

'The Idler' magazine http://www.idler.co.uk/ is compulsory reading for anyone seriously antiwork. The Idler's editor, Tom Hodgkinson, has also written an enjoyable book, 'How to be idle' billed as 'an antidote to the work obsessed culture which puts so many obstacles between ourselves and our dreams'. Although criticised for embracing smoking and anarchism, it is full of suggestions to slow down and enjoy life more. It has inspired me to take naps during the day (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siesta).

With no apologies for my own idleness, I have cut and pasted the following Amazon's 'customers who bought this item also bought' recommendations:

- Willing Slaves: How the Overwork Culture Is Ruling Our Lives by Madeleine Bunting
- The Hedonism Handbook: Mastering the Lost Arts of Leisure and Pleasure by Michael Flocker
- The Play Ethic: A Manifesto for a Different Way of Living by Pat Kane

CLAWS (Creating Livable Alternatives to Wage Slavery) http://www.whywork.org/ is a non-profit support group and resource clearinghouse providing 'access to books and other thought-provoking and inspirational materials'. The organisation's main purpose is 'to encourage people to value leisure, re-think the Puritan work ethic and critically examine other work-related legacies of industrial capitalism'.

Other anti wage slave sites

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty in Offices http://www.nspco.org.uk/nspco.htm

Citizens Income http://www.citizensincome.org/

It's been said that the average office worker spends about two hours a day in non-work related web surfing and personal emailing. The web magazine Anxiety Culture http://www.anxietyculture.com/ is worth a

look during those occasions. It offers a rich supply of anti work view points in the form of articles, jokes, rants, spoof ads and gimmicks. A typical article in the current issue is called 'How to stop worrying'

http://www.anxietyculture.com/worry.htm.

Actually, they could also have suggested buying some Guatemalan worry dolls from the following (Fair Trade) site http://digbig.com/4emfx.

Parenting

There is increasing evidence that children have too many extra-curricular activities and are losing out on the pleasures of unstructured play http://digbig.com/4emfy. Persil's recent 'dirt is good' advertising campaign, cleverly timed to reflect the current trend against children's over scheduling, lists 33 things children should be allowed to do before they are ten: http://digbig.com/4emga.

Health and well-being

Meditation is one of the most obvious ways of slowing down, providing enormous benefits for mind, body and spirit. Beliefnet provides a mixed faith menu of meditation techniques http://www.beliefnet.com/story/145/story_14571_1.html>.

Time

The Society for the Deceleration of Time is the English translation of the Austrian based Vereinzur Verzogerung der Zeit http://www.zeitverein.com/ whose declared aim is that 'Every member should, regardless of what kind of activity he or she engages in, prolong the time taken for that activity whenever it makes sense to do so. In this, members are assured of the solidarity of the Society as a whole. They should stand up for the right to pause for reflection in situations where mindless activism and vested interests produce solutions which are expedient rather than genuine. They should also do their best to recruit as many new members as possible, thus providing themselves with the necessary support in their immediate environment'.

The Society is at pains to point out that despite its name and the salutary amount of humour with which its members approach very serious matters, it is anything but a joke. The Society does quality research on the phenomenon of time, organises symposia and publishes regularly.

Finally have a look at the website of the Long Now Foundation http://www.longnow.org/, a fascinating project to build a 10,000 year clock to promote slower/better thinking.



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Events

China:

 "2005 China (Shanghai) International Multimedia Technology and Application Expo & Simposium" 26th - 28th September
 http://www.freepint.com/go/e466>

Denmark:

 "Building the Info Grid, Digital Library Technologies and Services - Trends and Perspectives" 26th - 27th September
 http://www.freepint.com/go/e536>

Finland

 "12th European Conference on Information Technology Evaluation" 29th - 30th September http://www.freepint.com/go/e482

United Kingdom:

- "When FOI Met PSI" 13th 15th September http://www.freepint.com/go/e572
- "Managing Change" 20th September http://www.freepint.com/go/e434
- "Measuring and demonstrating the value of knowledge management" 20th - 21st September http://www.freepint.com/go/e552

- "Managing IT services in the public sector" 20th - 21st September
 http://www.freepint.com/go/e553>
- "Instructional Design for e-learning" 20th September http://www.freepint.com/go/e568
- "Humanities beyond Digitisation" 20th 21st September http://www.freepint.com/go/e577

Greece

• "Libraries Without Walls 6" 16th - 20th Septemberhttp://www.freepint.com/go/e520

Australia and Territories:

"Designing a Business Focused Taxonomy" 28th - 30th September http://www.freepint.com/go/e565

United States:

- "ARMA International" 18th 20th September http://www.freepint.com/go/e531>
- "WebSearch University" 19th 20th September http://www.freepint.com/go/e458>

These are just a selection of the 61 global events listed on the FreePint Website at http://www.freepint.com/events.

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Gold

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

- FreePint No.167 16th September 2004.
 "Information Sources For Education On The Web" and "Copyright how to stay legal" http://www.freepint.com/issues/160904.htm
- FreePint No.144 4th September 2003. "Searching Free Design Databases on the Web" and "Informing the Asylum Debate" http://www.freepint.com/issues/040903.htm
- Free Pint No.120 5th September 2002. "Offshore Funds" and "From Fortune 500 to Handelsblatt's European 500 one year on – another look at some useful European and International Rankings" http://www.freepint.com/issues/050902.htm
- Free Pint No.95, 6th September 2001. "Railways Online in the UK" and "From Fortune 500 to Handelsblatt's European 500 - a look at some useful European and International Rankings" http://www.freepint.com/issues/060901.htm
- Free Pint No.70, 7th September 2000. "A Web of Mental Health" and "Top Sites on the Web for Aeronautics and Aerospace Science and Technology" http://www.freepint.com/issues/070900.htm
- Free Pint No.45, 9th September 1999. "File finding, file filing" and "Intranets and extranets" http://www.freepint.com/issues/090999.htm>
- Free Pint No.21, 3rd September 1999. "Tricks with local newsgroups" and "Legal Resources on the Web"

http://www.freepint.com/issues/030998.htm