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ISSN 1460-7239

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I'm not a great lover of shopping. I don't enjoy it through the year, and enjoy it even less in the run up to Christmas. Then there are the January sales, which this year seemed to start way back in December.

However, I don't mind shopping for things for Free Pint though, and now that we have much larger offices it's very easy to spend spend spend. We quite enjoy the sell sell sell as well, and so are having a "buy one get one free" January sale of our own.

The sale applies to a whole range of items. For instance, buy a UK company report and get a free Financial Report worth 24 pounds (about US\$35). Purchase a listing for your information-related vacancy in Free Pint Jobs and get a credit for another listing free. Buy a single advert in the Free Pint Newsletter and get another advert free, along with 60,000 free banner exposures. Sign up as a Free Pint Regular for a year and get an extra month free.

Details of all of these January offers are available in the Free Pint Shop at <http://www.freepint.com/shop>. But you'll have to hurry as they all end on the last day of this month. Free Pint Regulars also get their normal 10% discount off sale prices as well.

If January sales are renowned for bringing together a mixed bag of offers, then we've packed a particularly mixed bag of tips,

Editorial

articles and reviews into today's Free Pint. As well as looking at a mix of Web resources ranging from patents to livestock, I review a new eBusiness title and there's a competition to win one of three copies of a popular book on the Invisible Web.

Happy New Year to all Free Pinters, and here's hoping that 2002 isn't quite as eventful as 2001.

Cheers
William

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Online Version with Activated Hyperlinks

[http://www.freepint.com/
issues/100102.htm](http://www.freepint.com/issues/100102.htm)

Adobe Acrobat Version with Newsletter Formatting

[http://www.freepint.com/
issues/100102.pdf](http://www.freepint.com/issues/100102.pdf)

About Free Pint

Free Pint is an online community of information researchers. Members receive this free newsletter every two weeks packed with tips on finding quality and reliable business information on the Internet.

Joining is free at <http://www.freepint.com/> and provides access to the substantial archive of articles, book reviews, jobs, industry news & events, with answers to your research questions and networking at the Free Pint Bars. Free Pint Regulars (paid-up members) also receive a weekly current awareness newsletter, discounts and publicity.

Please circulate this newsletter which is best read when printed out.

To receive the Adobe Acrobat version as an attachment or a brief notification it's online, visit <http://www.freepint.com/subs>.

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[es1031]

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Free Pint Regulars

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

Our New Year competition for Free Pint Regulars gives you the chance to win one of three copies of Gary Price and Chris Sherman's extremely popular book "The Invisible Web".

If you're a Free Pint Regular then simply send an email to <invisible@freepint.com> completing the following phrase in 30 words or less:

"My favourite Invisible Web site is ..."

Tell us why it's your favourite site and Gary, Chris and I will pick our favourite three entries and announce the winners in a forthcoming edition of Free Pint. The closing date for all entries is just one week away, Friday 18th January 2002.

If you'd like some hints on Invisible Web resources then use the authors' free directory at <<http://www.invisible-web.net/>>. You can read sample chapters of the book there too, which got a great write up in Free Pint No.97 at <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/041001.htm>>.

If you're not sure what the invisible Web is yet then I would recommend you read Chris Sherman's introduction in Free Pint No.64 at <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/080600.htm>>.

Gary Price's sessions on the Invisible Web which Free Pint chaired at Online Information 2001 in London in December were absolutely packed. We expected about 60 people and welcomed over 160 to each session. He proved a very popular speaker indeed.

If you're not a Free Pint Regular but would like to enter the competition then please sign up at <<http://www.freepint.com/regular>>. It's a good time to do so as our January Sale adds an additional month free to the end of your subscription. Simply use the discount code "round-house" when signing up.

William Hann, Managing Editor
<william@freepint.com>

[If you are not currently a Free Pint Regular and would like to find out more about the benefits of membership, then please visit the Regular homepage at <<http://www.freepint.com/regular>>. Regular membership is just 60 pounds per year (US\$85, AUS\$169 or 97 Euros) and Regulars receive the weekly "Pub Crawl" current awareness newsletter, discounts and publicity.]

www.freepint.com/issues/100102.htm

My Favourite Tipples from Sam Vaknin

- <<http://www.brightplanet.com/>> - In their own words: "... the first and only search technology capable of identifying, retrieving, qualifying, classifying and organizing 'deep' and 'surface' content from the World Wide Web."
- <<http://www.enfish.com/>> - A personalized portal; instead of juggling dozens of windows, a single interface provides the user with access to all their applications: e-mail, contacts, documents, intranet or network, the Web, etc.
- <<http://www.everymail.com/>> - A multi-lingual e-mail application. It converts text typed on a virtual keyboard to images (of characters) in any language.
- <<http://www.ebookmap.net/maps.htm>> - E-Book Industry Maps to "reflect the evolving business models" among publishers, conversion houses, digital distribution companies, eBook vendors, online retailers, libraries, library vendors, authors, and many others.

Free Pint Gold

This time last year we looked at how the Web is transforming the radio industry. There was also an article about careers information sites - not job boards, but sites with information about different careers.

- Free Pint No.78, 4th January 2001 "Radio Industry Web Sites" and "Careers Information Resources". <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/040101.htm>>

Two years ago, Free Pint's Simon Coltery provided a case study of how the Web has successfully facilitated communication and project management between a collective of programmers working from home. Martin White used 2000's Online Information conference to take a look back and forward at the information industry and make some predictions about 2001. You can decide for yourself if he was right.

- Free Pint No.53, 6th January 2000 "PanEris: a model for the virtual establishment" and "Online Information - The past and the future". <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/060100.htm>>

- <<http://www.cybergeography.org/atlas/atlas.html>> - "An atlas of maps and graphic representations of the geographies of the new electronic territories of the Internet, the World Wide Web and other emerging Cyberspaces."

Sam Vaknin is the author of "Malignant Self Love - Narcissism Revisited" and a published and awarded author and columnist
<<http://samvak.tripod.com/>>.

Tell us about your top five favourite Web sites. See the guidelines at <<http://www.freepint.com/author.htm>> and email <simon@freepint.com>.

Free Pint Fact

Only 48% of Free Pinters have told us what country they're in. Surprisingly, a greater number of you (54%) have told us what your occupation is.

We'd really like to know where you are and what you do. We can then tailor Free Pint more to your needs. So why not click on the "Modify Your Account" link at <<http://www.freepint.com/subs>> and fill in the details. It will only take seconds.

Cookies are as much a contentious issue today as they were in 1999 (see

<<http://www.zdnet.com/zdnn/stories/news/0,4586,2823996,00.html>>), and three years ago Jonathan Eaton gave us a much needed introduction to what they're all about. Charles Oppenheim wrote an invaluable piece about copyright and linking, which is still a must-read for all Webmasters.

- Free Pint No.29, 7th January 1999 "Understanding 'cookies' on the Web" and "Internet, copyright and linking". <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/070199.htm>>

Four years ago a number of information professionals provided their top 5 favourite sites, most of which are still going strong today. Coincidentally, Martin White also wrote for that issue, about computer industry Web sites.

- Free Pint No.5, 8th January 1998 "Top Five Web Resources of 1997" and "Finding IT on the WWW". <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/080198.htm>>

Free Pint Bar
In Association with Factiva
a Dow Jones & Reuters Company
Reviewed by Simon Coltery

<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/100102.htm#bar>>

Free Pint Bar <<http://www.freepint.com/bar>>

[Note: To read a posting enter the message number in place of XXXXX in the address
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/bXXXXX>>]

Happy New Year to all our Bar customers! It's sad to start the year with the demise of the free version of a useful tool, Mind-it, which allowed you to track changes made to selected Web sites. It sounds as if a lot of Free Pinters used it. But it's nice to know that there are other similar resources available (14788). And don't forget, there was a recent Free Pint article on Web site monitoring and current awareness tools:
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/100102.htm>>.

Resources and tools do come and go on the Web. Some disappear altogether and others start charging for their services. I've just heard that Northern Light, a very fine search tool, will stop providing free search facilities from the middle of this month. Thankfully some of their free resources will be continued. And there are plenty of good search tools around, so if you need alternatives, just post a message in the Bar.

But good quality, free resources have been plentiful in the Bar, as usual, covering FTSE 100 company directors (14812), UK local government data (14871), Swiss newspapers (14776), contact details for world government leaders (14762) and online clipping services (14731). We are still waiting to hear from anyone who knows about online courseware and resources (14868), so do get in touch if you know of such things.

In the last few weeks I reviewed a recently updated online encyclopedia (14770) and a site that lists the best online sources of business information (14875). And the latest issue of the Internet Resources Newsletter was announced in the Bar (14882). If you don't already use it, you should start now. Make it a new year's resolution.

Researchers have been applying themselves assiduously to subjects as diverse as the broadcast mast marketplace (14849), European attitudes towards the British (14822), the number of libraries in Europe (14798), how theories of community and technology are being applied to actual situations (14739) and the implementation of interactive features like discussion groups and bulletin boards on Web sites (14870).

Research is also being carried out into recent advances in bibliographical practices (14767), searching for European Union information (14874) and starting up an alumni association (14869). And one researcher is looking for a document delivery service that will allow him to find elusive journal articles (14810).

There have been several postings about funding, one looking for advice about applying for them (14800), another asking about finance available for social work projects (14726). There were also questions about UK top directors' salaries (14877) and UK bank sort codes (14857).

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Technical queries have arisen about allowing Web site visitors to send attachments with feedback forms (14814), a Windows Explorer folder that is not loading (14845), running Access on Windows XP (14866), problems with configuring Word (14830), speeding up a modem (14823), opening Excel documents online (14891), opening emails in a CompuServe browser (14742), choosing an ISP (14890) and getting listed by search engines (14787, 14756).

Miscellaneous speaking, we've had questions about non-electrical games (14763), selling domain names (14859), clapperboards (14702), finding email addresses (14741), music in TV ads (14743), information or knowledge work in the non-profit sector (14846), Latin translation (14856), sample flexi-time forms (14842) and equipment used in building marinas (14722).

Finally, at the start of a new year, I'd like to thank all the Free Pinters who have given of their knowledge, experience and wit so generously over the last twelve months. I trust that they also gain something from the exercise of their community spirit.

Free Pint Student Bar

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

[Note: To read a posting enter the message number in place of XXXX in the address
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/sXXXX>>]

Students have been looking into semiotics and discourse analysis (2081), English literature resources (2084), knowledge management case studies (2090), airline branding (2097) and the effects of food preservation on society (2098).

There have also been postings about securing internships (2073) and applying for scholarships (2078).

Simon Coltery, Content Developer
<simon@freepint.com>

If you have a tricky research question or can help other Free Pinters then do post a message at the Bar <<http://www.freepint.com/bar>> or the Student Bar <<http://www.freepint.com/student>>.

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[fa1033]

Free Pint Jobs

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

Free Pint Jobs is THE place for information-related vacancies. Whether you're job searching or have a position to fill, you should be making the most of Free Pint Jobs.

Here are some of the latest featured jobs:

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<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j1546>>

Experienced librarian familiar with Unicorn cataloguing for Solicitor of Inland Revenue. Will manage, market and develop service and manage staff.

Recruiter: The Solicitor of Inland Revenue

Assistant Records Manager

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j1531>>

Assistant Records Manager required for an investment bank to run electronic document management, and storage/retrieval systems.

Recruiter: Recruit Media

Information Specialist

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j1499>>

Redhill based Consultancy seeks Information Professional with Financial Services Knowledge and strong numerical skills.

Recruiter: Glen Recruitment

Assistant Records Manager

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j1541>>

Qualified Records Managers/Archivists - an excellent permanent role in banking and also others in charities and academia.

Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited

[The above jobs are paid listings]

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January Sale: Buy a report and get a Financial Report free

Purchase any UK company report (from 2 pounds) and get a full Financial Report (worth 24 pounds) totally free.

Take advantage of this great promotion before the end of the January at <<http://www.freepint.com/icc>>

Events

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

January seems to be a time for catching up, rather than actually attending any conferences. The Free Pint Web site has been very busy since the beginning of new year, but the events scene is very quiet. The end of February and beginning of March however make up for the lull with plenty of things to do ...

Pira International are looking at "key digital rights management issues" in their two day conference in The Netherlands. Competia are training public service managers and researchers in competitive intelligence and the sharing of best practices in Ontario, Canada.

The popular Association of UK Media Librarians (AUKML) group is holding its postponed annual conference in Liverpool and TFPL's European Business Information Conference (EBIC) is in Madrid this year.

If you are running an information-related get-together anywhere in the world then submit details at <<http://www.freepint.com/events>> for some free promotion. We've relaxed the rules on the types of event which can be added and so do check out the new guidelines.

Details of these and many other conferences and exhibitions in the information industry can be found on the Free Pint Events page <<http://www.freepint.com/events>>.

Submit details of your event for free promotion, and keep us informed about any changes to current listings.

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Free Pint Bookshelf<http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf>>**"Internet Prophets: Enlightened
E-Business Strategies
for Every Budget"**
Reviewed by William Hann

The last couple of years could be dubbed the "eBusiness book years". Everyone seemed to be publishing books about eBusiness and we've reviewed a lot of them here in Free Pint. In fact, we got so tired of them that we once reviewed four in one go

<<http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf/4in1.htm>>.

You know Free Pint. We believe in hands-on practical advice. Tips you can use straight away. We're not so interested in the high-brow strategy stuff. You can keep your kBusiness transformations based on mCommerce theoretical frameworks.

So when Information Today announced that they had published their first eBusiness title recently, we were very interested to see if it was as cliché-ridden as many of the titles we'd already covered.

We needn't have worried. Page one of the book introduced us to the four eBusiness prophets Eenie, Meenie, Miney and Moe (I kid you not). It looked like something of interest to my three and a half year old daughter. Even my nine month old son might enjoy looking at the pictures (see <<http://www.internetprophets.com>>). I wondered whether the author, Mary Diffley, had reacted so badly to the spate of dot-bombs with their failed high-brow strategies that the only solution was to write a book recommending eBusiness strategies based on a child's random selection game.

In fact, the four prophets turn out to be a useful and memorable way of categorising all the tips in the book by the type of company they might apply to. For instance, prophet Eenie presents "practical, quality ideas for small businesses ... [who] will most likely develop a Web site to be used as a complimentary marketing tool.". Meenie helps larger companies with a professional Web presence and

introduces them to selling online. Miney prefers transactional and interactive Web sites, whereas Moe prophesies full-blown large-budget solutions.

There are so many suggestions for practical eBusiness implementation in the book that it really is a tremendous resource. However I found myself saying "Yes, that's all very well but ..." to almost every suggestion. I have a reasonable amount of experience running an eBusiness with Free Pint and I think it's my experiences which make me want to add so much more to each prophecy.

For instance, in the "One-to-One Marketing" section, the Eenie strategy is simply to "Engage in a Viral Marketing Campaign" by visiting a certain site and setting up a Recommend Us utility. The Meenie marketing strategy is to "Launch a Sweepstakes" (again suggesting one site). Miney suggests reading what the experts have to say (single site recommendation again) and Moe tells you to "create your own branded promotional campaign using X's patent-pending technology, which customizes offers using demographics, geographic and profile information". That's it. One-to-one marketing sorted, depending on the size of your budget and a visit to one recommended site. Hmm.

The style of writing is therefore very much "Do this. Here's where to do it. Sorted". Running a business online isn't like that. It depends on what your objectives are, what you're selling, who your audience is, etc. You have to feel your way and try things out. That's the only way to find out what works and what doesn't for your organisation and its products, and the only way to find out what works for your particular audience.

That said, it is only the style of writing I had a problem with, and I'm not the target audience. So, if you approach the book differently, using it to get up to speed quickly with the different things you can do to get a successful presence online, then the book is actually very useful indeed. It's packed with suggestions, of the practical kind that Free Pinters appreciate. It's an overview. Read the whole book and you'll learn something about every aspect of site development, budgeting, marketing, design, and there's even a quick HTML tutorial at the back.

In my opinion this book is for Eenie Meenies, not Miney Moes. If you work in a small to medium sized company wanting to venture online then you should read it, all the way through. If you're in a larger organisation and responsible for a dedicated Web team then you won't learn a lot from the book. If you do, then you're probably not the right person to be doing your job.

William Hann used to train and consult on eBusiness strategy, but now spends all his time worrying about his own e-company, Free Pint <<http://www.freepint.com/go/r2>>.

Related Free Pint links:

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[gg1034]

Tips Article

<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/100102.htm#tips>>

" Searching Patents on Government Databases on the Web " By Ron Kaminecki

You have an idea that you wish to patent but are uncertain of how to conduct a proper search of the literature (a.k.a. a search of the prior art) so that you can determine if your idea is novel.

You may have heard that searching patents is difficult, but it is possible to do a reasonable search inexpensively on the Internet if you spend sufficient time at the appropriate websites and you know of some of the nuances of the patent system.

The Patent System

Patents protect you by preventing others from making, using, selling or importing your invention for a set period of time, usually twenty years. In order to obtain a patent, you do not necessarily need to conduct a literature search, but you do have to state all that you know about the invention and in doing so must distinguish it from similar known products and processes. This is called 'novelty' and along with 'obviousness' and 'usefulness', is one of the three criteria that must be satisfied in order to obtain a patent in the United States.

Major Treaties as a Source of International Information

International agreement compels a patent applicant to file a patent application in as many countries as desired within a one-year period starting at the date of the first application. To make this easier, there are several international treaties that allow an applicant to file one application and designate countries (called states) in which the applicant wants to reserve the right to file an application. Thus, filing through one of these treaties allows the applicant to reserve the date of the original filing as a priority date for all subsequent applications for that same invention.

Two major treaties, the European Patent Office (EPO) and the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) allow members to file such applications that then preserve the priority date. However, these organizations, like many others, including (as of 2001 for certain applications) the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), will publish the applications after eighteen months, although they have not yet been examined and thus are not yet patents. However, because the applicant filed eighteen months earlier, all others are precluded from filing for the same invention and only the original applicant can move forward to obtain patent protection in the countries that were designated.

Searching Patents

Searching the published applications from the EPO or the PCT is an excellent way of finding leading edge research that may develop into a patent. However, because these are international treaties, a searcher must be aware of the use of languages other than English in these documents, though English is the predominant language in documents from both of these treaties, followed by the German and French languages.

Searching for novelty can be difficult, because patents and

patent applications are legal documents and are not necessarily written for ease of searching; they are drafted to be defended in court. In the US, the words chosen are based upon over two hundred years of case law that has defined what words mean in a court of law. For example, the words "comprising" and "consisting of" seem to be nearly identical in normal English, but in patent law the former means having at least certain properties and the latter means having only these properties. As long as you are aware that what you are searching is not normal language, you may be able to get around these hurdles.

The Classification Code Systems

One way around the legalese language problem is to use either International or National Classification Codes which are used to group similar patents together under a common Classification Code. The search room at the US Patent Office in Crystal City, VA near Washington has for years placed paper copies of patents based upon these US Codes so that manual searchers could flip through similarly- indexed patents quickly. A similar search can be done online. US Classification Codes can be found at <<http://www.uspto.gov/go/classification/>> which allows searching by the Classification Code itself or words found in the definition. Be careful, though, as the definitions of the Codes do contain general terminology and some legalese. As an alternative, you can conduct a narrow search in a patent file and then use one of the Codes found on one of the retrieved patents that is on target.

US examiners prefer the US Codes to the International Codes, but other countries are the opposite. Thus, it is best to use the US Codes over the International Codes when searching the US files. International codes are available at <http://classifications.wipo.int/fulltext/new_ipc/index.htm>.

Reading a Patent

Don't be upset with the use of the word "said" as in "said lever attached to said spring". The word "said" is equivalent to the word "the" and is used after an element of the invention has been mentioned already by the word "a" as in "a spring attached to a pivoting arm, said spring urgingly holding said pivoting arm ...". It is best to mentally insert the word "the" whenever you see "said" and of course, never search the word "said."

Patent Nuances

Claims are the metes and bounds of the invention and are written in a very stylized manner. Each claim is one sentence long, which means that each can be a very long run on sentence. One claim in a recent pharmaceutical patent ran six pages long (about 3,500 words). To protect the invention from illegal copies, the claim drafter will broaden the terminology as much as allowable. In addition, the claims are written with the noun first, then the modifiers. So, instead of claiming "a red car," the claim drafter would claim a "vehicle painted the color red."

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Thus, when searching patents, note that word order is typically turned around from conventional English, with the subject of the sentence first, followed by the modifiers. Most patent websites do not allow for searching words in a non-specific order, but further investigation as to the search engine may allow the searching of order-specific phrases. For example, if phrase searching is allowed by the use of quotes, make sure to put the search terms in both the noun-first order and the modifier-first order.

A patent drafter can be their own lexicographer, meaning that they may use industry-specific terms that are not in the common vernacular. For example, what is known as a "submersible pump" in general, can be a "submergible pump" or even a "submercible pump" in the industry. When searching, one has to allow for these spelling variations.

Finally, care should be taken when searching patent assignees or inventors as even the simplest names can be spelled several ways. Abbreviations such as "mfg" or "corp" are found interspersed with the longer spelled out versions of these words. Very few governmental websites apply additional indexing to clean up these spelling variations.

Armed with the above nuances, you can still perform a useful search of the patent collections of many countries, so that you can be aware of what the prior art contains.

Patent Issuing Authorities' Websites

Most patenting authorities have their own websites with various levels of sophistication and most offer searching and retrieval of full-text documents.

Many government and treaty websites, such as the EPO, acknowledge that their sites are designed as an "information awareness programme and not as a professional search engine" and some will actually conduct a search for you if you need more in-depth information, though such work is not free.

The United States Patent and Trademark Office <<http://www.uspto.gov>> maintains a website that has more robust features than most other patenting authorities. It allows exact phrase and field searching (e.g., searching by assignee name, application number, etc.) and also utilizes nested Boolean logic (e.g., pet and (food or feed)), in addition to truncation (e.g., ignoring characters after a stem to pick up normal plurals and similar variants).

The Trilateral Website <<http://www.european-patent-office.org/tws/twsindex.htm>>, incorporating the USPTO, the Japanese Patent Office (JPO) and the EPO, features the First Page Data Base, which, appropriately enough, contains the bibliographic information normally found on the first page of a patent or application.

In order to harmonize websites, many countries under the PCT use one major website for searching called Espacenet. The site at <<http://www.espacenet.com>> allows field searching, nested Boolean logic and truncation of the EPO and PCT (so-called WO patent documents) and of many of the member countries, but you will have to drill down to find the advanced features. Each country's patent collection is found at <http://CC.espacenet.com> where CC stands for the two letter abbreviation for the country. To see a list of all countries that are available, head to <<http://www.european-patent-office.org/espacenet.info/access.htm>>.

This site will also list the websites that are in English, which include the patent offices of Cyprus, Ireland, Liechtenstein and the United Kingdom. Access to English machine aided translations of Japanese documents can also be found at <<http://www.espacenet.com>>, but while they give insight to the device described by the published application, the translations are not written in the best English.

PCT patent information is also available at <<http://ipdl.wipo.int>>, but searchable access is limited to only the contents of the first page data from 1997 to date, though it is possible to view the rest of the document. The search engine at this location is somewhat similar in its capabilities to the one found at the USPTO.

Seventy-five years of Canadian patents can be found at <<http://patents1.ic.gc.ca/intro-e.html>> and features basic and advanced searching in both English and French.

Other Useful Sources

Nolo Publishing <<http://www.nolo.com>> is a publisher of legal information and it sells a very readable and useful text entitled, "Patent It Yourself," by Michael Pressman which details the patent process, including the major international treaties.

The Patent Information User's Group <<http://www.piug.org>> is a body of patent searchers around the world who can answer questions about finding obscure documents or how to find and interpret patent information. This site also contains links to many patent and related websites.

A great source of information can be found at the Intellectual Property Mall section of the Franklin Pierce Law Center website <<http://www.fplc.edu>> where access to most patent websites can be found.

Overall, access to much of the world's patent information can be found on the Internet, and a reasonable search may be possible, as long as consideration is made for each authorities' collection of documents, search engine, and also for the nuances of international patent laws and treaties.

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Feature Article[<http://www.freepint.com/issues/100102.htm#feature>](http://www.freepint.com/issues/100102.htm#feature)**"Livestock"****By Jane Inman**

This may seem an unusual topic for Free Pint after articles on WAP and business and hi-tech issues. Indeed it was a new area for me when I was asked to work on a literature review of the livestock sector earlier last year. In the process of conducting the review I learned some interesting things about the subject and about the information sources.

The time scale for the job was quite short and we recognised that the subject area was huge so we began the task by commissioning searches from the main databases covering agriculture, namely CAB Abstracts, Agricola, Agris, BIOSIS and planned to cover the grey literature by using SIGLE, the database of the European Association of Grey Literature in Europe.

The results from these searches were surprisingly disappointing and sent us scurrying to the web to see what more could be found. The web searches were conducted in two ways. Preliminary searches were made of the sites of organisations, government departments and research institutes previously identified. The second sweep of the web was done by simply using Google. The results of these searches were much more exciting and unearthed some very useful sites and documents.

The scope of the job on which this article is based was European, both east and west, and so the sites are mainly for that area but there are also some included which are of international interest. We were looking for literature on completed, current and planned research into production, environmental impact and policy so the sites listed are biased towards those areas. However there are sites with information on many aspects of the sector including practical and management issues and the economics and policy issues of the business.

Studies of the effectiveness of agri-environmental schemes and of economic policies such as CAP, the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union, were included and organic farming was well covered both by specific sites and in the more general sites. Another limitation of our searching was that it was all done in English so that the sites identified are either in English or offer an English version.

UK

A first port of call for the UK will be the former Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) whose responsibilities since June 2001 have been transferred to

the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Their web site [<http://www.defra.gov.uk>](http://www.defra.gov.uk) contains details of on-going research as well as information on animal health and welfare. So it covers foot and mouth and BSE (although the BSE enquiry has its own web site [<http://www.bseinquiry.gov.uk/>](http://www.bseinquiry.gov.uk/>)), Scrapie, Tuberculosis, animal identification and tracing, international trade, disease surveillance and control and animal by-products. Here too you will find information on projects and programmes.

You will also find information on foot and mouth, but from a different perspective, on the Countryside Agency web site [<http://www.countryside.gov.uk>](http://www.countryside.gov.uk), for Wales, the Countryside Council for Wales [<http://www.ccw.gov.uk>](http://www.ccw.gov.uk) and for Scotland, visit [<http://www.snh.org.uk>](http://www.snh.org.uk), the site for Scottish Natural Heritage.

The Environment Agency at [<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk>](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk) is worth a visit as they commission research into the environmental effects of livestock and issue guidance to farmers on the use of sheep dip and similar pollutants. The environmental effects of livestock farming are extensive, impacting soil, water, the atmosphere, wildlife and the landscape itself, so environmental bodies are concerned to monitor and study these effects. The Environment Agency covers England and Wales while in Scotland the Scottish Environment Protection Agency at [<http://www.sepa.org.uk>](http://www.sepa.org.uk) has this responsibility.

English Nature is the government agency which "Champions the conservation of wildlife and natural features throughout England" [<http://www.english-nature.gov.uk>](http://www.english-nature.gov.uk), so they too will be concerned with the impact of livestock on the environment and undertake or commission research.

There are six research councils in the UK and of these the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council [<http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk>](http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk) and the Natural Environment Research Council [<http://www.nerc.ac.uk>](http://www.nerc.ac.uk) are the ones where research into livestock farming and its environmental effects would be of interest. The economic issues around livestock farming would be the concern of the Economic and Social Research Council [<http://www.esrc.ac.uk>](http://www.esrc.ac.uk).

Much of the research is commissioned by the bodies listed above but is carried out by private consultants or by academic departments. Consultants and research units in the UK include the Countryside and Community Research Unit of Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education [<http://www.chelt.ac.uk/el/ccru/>](http://www.chelt.ac.uk/el/ccru/>), the University of Reading's Centre for Agricultural Strategy [<http://www.rdg.ac.uk/AgriStrat/>](http://www.rdg.ac.uk/AgriStrat/>), and the University of Newcastle, whose Centre of the Rural Economy is undertaking research on the aftermath of foot and mouth in Cumbria at present. There are private consultants with a web presence. But, as much of their work will have been commissioned and paid for, they may not be at liberty to publish it on their web sites. Examples are the sites of Asken [<http://www.asken.co.uk>](http://www.asken.co.uk) and ADAS [<http://www.adas.co.uk>](http://www.adas.co.uk).

In Scotland, the Macaulay Land Use Research Institute [<http://www.mluri.sari.ac.uk>](http://www.mluri.sari.ac.uk) was established in 1987 and is concerned about livestock because of its concern about land use and how it has and will change over time. It ran a project called LSIRD (Online European Network for Livestock Systems and Integrated Rural Development) which, although finished, has developed a network of researchers across Europe. The web site contains useful

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conference proceedings and papers, as well as an excellent list of related sites.

Another Scottish site is the Arkelton Centre for Rural Development Research <<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/arkleton/>>, which may be worth a visit. Also see the Scottish Agricultural College <<http://www.sac.ac.uk>> and the Scottish Executive <<http://www.scotland.gov.uk>>, which includes SEERAD, the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department.

AGRIFOR <<http://www.agrifor.ac.uk/>> describes itself as the "UK's gateway to High Quality Internet Resources in Agriculture, Food and Forestry". It is part of the Resource Discovery Network <<http://www.rdn.ac.uk/>> which is a co-operative network which grew out of the eLib Programme, funded by the JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee). The entries and thus the search results have useful abstracts. RDN have recently launched a Virtual Training Suite which provides free tutorials on the web pointing you to key Internet resources, developing your search skills and providing practical ideas for using the web for study, teaching and research within subject areas. The AGRIFOR site links you to the training in Agriculture, Food and Forestry.

For milk, look at the Milk Development Council <<http://www.mdc.org.uk>> and for llamas try <<http://www.webcom.com/~degraham>>! For the sheep and goats dairy sector there is a French site with an English version called CIRVAL, which describes itself as the "International Resource Centre on utilisation of information in milk production of small ruminants".

Europe

The European Union's agricultural policy is the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The main place to look for information on this is the CAP Working Notes in the section of the Europa site which covers Agriculture and the Environment at <<http://www.europa.eu.int>>.

The European Union is set to enlarge in the next few years and will take in Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Slovenia, Estonia followed by Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, and Slovakia around 2010 and possibly Turkey, Romania, Albania and the remaining countries that formed Yugoslavia. The Europa site contains the reports produced by the EU on the current situation in these countries as far as agriculture is concerned and the plans for the rural economy under the Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (SAPARD) <<http://www.sapard.cz/>>.

The European Livestock Policy Evaluation Network, ELPEN, <<http://www.mluri.sari.ac.uk/elpen>> is hosted by MLURI, the Macaulay Land Use Research Institute and contains the organisation's publications and a list of links. Its aim is to support the appraisal and evaluation of European livestock policy.

Slightly more specialised is the European Fine Fibre Network site, <<http://www.mluri.sari.ac.uk/europeanfibre/>> hosted by MLURI, with information about fibre production. The European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism <<http://www.efncp.org>> is for ecologists, nature conservationists, farmers and policy makers. Again, it contains publications and a newsletter as well as a forum for discussion available in French and English.

France has INRA, Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique <<http://www.inra.fr>>, Germany the German Agricultural Information Network DAINet <<http://www.dainet.de>>, and Denmark has "Danish Agriculture on the Net" at <<http://www.agriculture.dk>> which seeks to bring together agriculture resources on the net.

International

The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research <<http://www.cgiar.org>> aims to use agricultural research to improve productivity in developing countries, thus reducing hunger, but also protecting the environment. The International Livestock Research Institute <<http://www.cgiar.org/ilri>> is concerned with livestock in developing countries and is funded by CGIAR.

The World Health Organisation <<http://www.who.int>> has an interest in livestock and will cover issues related to health such as BSE. Similarly, there may be items on the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) site <<http://www.unesco.org>>, on the UNEP, the United Nations Environment Programme site <<http://www.unep.org>>, and on the FAO, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations site <<http://www.fao.org>>. The World Bank <<http://www.worldbank.org>> has published some useful material on the economic aspects of the sector.

The International Agricultural Centre <<http://www.iaa-agro.nl>> is based at the University of Wageningen in the Netherlands. "It provides training, advisory and information management services directed towards developing countries and countries in transition." It has links which are useful. Also concerned with agriculture in developing countries is the Forum on Agricultural Research <<http://www.egfar.org>>.

Organic and Sustainable Agriculture

There is plenty of information on organic farming on the web but the International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movement <<http://www.ifoam.org>> acts as an "umbrella" organisation with members in 97 countries. Organic Europe <<http://www.organic-europe.net>> has some useful documents attached to it. The University of New England in Australia had a very useful site of links on sustainable agriculture in Europe, Scandinavia and the United Kingdom but it seems to have gone, as can happen with web information.

This tour around the world of livestock has been rapid but, like all web based information, the material that I have listed is only the tip of the iceberg. I'm sure there are many sites which I have missed as no description of the

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web can be comprehensive or, for that matter, totally current. I hope however that what has been covered may be of help to those faced with a similar task to mine.

Jane Inman is a Chartered Librarian. She is a freelance information specialist with particular experience of environmental, planning, government and local government information and may be contacted through her web site <<http://www.inmaninfo.co.uk>>. She worked on this project with Ken Taylor of Asken Ltd. More information on the work of Asken may be found at <<http://www.asken.co.uk>>.

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