FreePint®

Contents

About FreePint

FreePint is an online network of information searchers. Members receive this free newsletter twice a month: it is packed with tips on finding quality and reliable business information on the Internet.

Joining is free at <http://www.freepint.com/> and provides access to a substantial archive of articles, reviews, jobs and events, with answers to research questions and networking at the FreePint Bar.

Please circulate this newsletter, which is best read when printed out. To receive a fully-formatted version as an attachment or a brief notification when it's online, visit <http://www.freepint.com/subs/>

Editorial

We thrive on feedback from FreePinters, and following our redesign of the navigation menus on the FreePint Web site (which I announced last time) we received this nice comment from a long-time supporter:

"Congratulations on an excellent drop-down navigation system. I know how hard these are to get right, so I appreciate your achievement of getting the right balance of speed and subtlety."

However, it's the way that we 'push' information to members through email and content feeds that really keeps the community alive. We don't expect users to remember to regularly visit our Web site and 'pull' the information they need.

A good example of a free tool that's really taken off recently is the weekly email digest for the VIP Wire. The Wire is where organisations post press announcements about business information products and services, and the weekly email digest has become a very useful free current-awareness tool <http://www.vivavip.com/>.

Where we've seen the biggest growth in 'push' usage however is through the content feeds (also called 'RSS'). Although this requires special software to use, it does mean that you can collect and monitor content from multiple Web sites automatically:

FreePint feeds: http://www.freepint.com/feed/
VIP feeds: http://www.vivavip.com/feed/

Our most popular 'push' service is undoubtedly the email digest of postings from the FreePint Bar. The Bar Digest is now sent to 14,000 FreePinters (what I call our 'core membership') and is available in plain text or HTML format <http://www.freepint.com/subs/>.

Sending HTML emails is growing in popularity because of the ability to do simple (but invaluable) things like activate links in the table of contents. That's why we're starting to offer it as an option.

Offering 'push' content in various formats like this is crucial. This newsletter, for instance, is available as plain text or as a fully-formatted printable edition with photos of authors and full-colour, full-page advertisements <http://www.freepint.com/issues/>.

Although we've learnt a lot about 'push' and 'pull' content in the last eight years, I do feel like we're still very much at the beginning of learning what's best to do.

To us, the most important thing is to have a good dialogue with our members. So, keep sending us your feedback and suggestions, either at the FreePint Bar <http://www.freepint.com/bar/> or via the Suggestion Box <http://www.freepint.com/contact.htm>.

Please also forward a copy of this newsletter to any of your colleagues who might find it interesting.

Best regards

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Jinfo :: Jobs in information
<http://www.jinfo.com/>

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

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- *RECRUITING   -- Complete the form and advertise a vacancy for only GBP195 <http://www.jinfo.com/recruit/>.*

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

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

Jinfo is a database of 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 editorial is entitled "Taking time out".

To read the latest Jinfo Newsletter and to subscribe to receive it twice-monthly by email, visit <http://www.jinfo.com/newsletter/>.

Here are some of the latest featured jobs:

Researcher
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j2098>
Financial research skills in demand again; this temp to perm role and other online research roles avail now-good online essential
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment

Part Time Internet Research Analyst
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3886>
Determine information sources for markets
Recruiter: Magus Research Ltd

Business Researcher (Human Resources)
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3894>
Involved financial research work combined with face-to-face contact with very senior level clients for confident Researcher.
Recruiter: Glen Recruitment

Regional Sales Manager
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3898>
EBSCO recruiting 2 Regional Sales Managers for SW of England & N of England. Salary GBP22-25000pa, OTE GBP33,000 for 1st yr.
Recruiter: EBSCO Information Services

Performance & Research Officer
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3905>
You will lead on research and performance initiatives including developing and implementing a performance management framework.
Recruiter: First Choice Homes Oldham

[The above jobs are paid listings]

NB: There are 49 other jobs in the current edition of the Jinfo Newsletter <http://www.jinfo.com/newsletter/> and over 70 in the Jinfo database <http://www.jinfo.com/>.

My Favourite Tipples
by Veronica Yates

Veronica Yates is Information and Communications Officer for the Child Rights Information Network <http://www.crin.org> , and has previously worked in several information and media-based roles for various NGOs.

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

- <http://www.alertnet.org> - from Reuters Foundation, has extensive, up to date information and analysis on humanitarian issues. Plus, a weekly quiz to test your knowledge.

- <http://hdr.undp.org/statistics/> - The United Nations Development Programme publishes a yearly report that monitors progress of human development across the globe. This particular area of the site offers data and statistics on all areas of human development.

- <http://www.newsahead.com/> - The NewsAhead World News Forecast is a news calendar and fund of story ideas for media professionals, a look ahead for all organizations that bank on foresight.

- <http://www.globalgang.org.uk/games/gamezone/> - Games to learn about development issues. Try the landmine challenge game, or learn how to milk a goat online. Set up by the British Charity Christian Aid.

- <http://www.acronymfinder.com> - We always come across acronyms we are too embarrassed to ask others what they are. Whatever your sector or interests, this website has them all.

Sign up to Factiva's Newsletter

Keep up to date on Factiva and information industry trends by signing up for the free InfoPro Alliance newsletter. This monthly email will provide you with tips on how to better use Factiva, more information about Factiva sources, and link you to other items of interest to global information professionals.

Go to <http://www.factiva.com/infopro/register> and sign up today!

"Information Auditing: A guide for information managers"

<http://www.freepint.com/shop/report/>

In-depth report offers an overview and practical insight into information auditing, drawing on practical examples and recognised audit methods.

"This document is remarkable for the … presentation … structure … point of view … presentation of the objectives … style. Great report and congratulations. The same for your marvellous FreePint: I love it"

FreePint Bar
**In Association with Factiva
a Dow Jones & Reuters Company**

Although information professionals are generally in the business of helping other people, it's nice when they get to ask for help themselves at the FreePint Bar.

There have been a number of responses to a seasoned info pro who is looking for sample floor-plans for a new library <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31502>. Someone new to digitisation of archives is looking for guidance on document banks <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31494>.

The latest editions of a number of publications are now available. March's edition of the excellent Internet Resources Newsletter is out <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31555> and the Jinfo Newsletter has an article entitled "Taking time out" <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31549>.

The latest issue of VIP has the first of a three-part comparative product review of mergers & acquisitions products. There is also an in-depth look at two brand new products from Factiva for sales professionals, with guest comment from CILIP on pay and status <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31501>.

Can you help with a classification scheme for an environmental library <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31534> or add to advice about how the Freedom of Information legislation affects companies with Public Service contracts? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31498>. Someone is doing research into how seriously online corporate communications is taken at various levels of management hierarchy, if you can help <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31505>.

There was a bit of discussion following Paula Murdoch's article on 'Usability' in the last FreePint <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31490>. Following a surge in usage of the FreePint Web site, the FreePint Events page is now bulging with forthcoming conferences and workshops in the information sector <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31562>.

Do you have any tips to help the person wanting to capture the output of Google searches for later analysis? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31560>. What about a list of preferred outsourcing suppliers of facilities and estates management to local authorities? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31541>.

Finally, there has been some discussion of tools to help manage an email newsletter list and/or online discussion forum <http://www.freepint.com/go/b31476>.

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

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

Help with study for information-related courses is available at the FreePint Student Bar <http://www.freepint.com/student>.

Twice-weekly email digests of the latest postings can be requested at <http://www.freepint.com/subs/>.

Tips Article

"Health Information Sources for Non-Health Professionals"
By Zena Woodley

Zena Woodley lives in London, and is currently Library Resources Manager for Mid Essex Health Trust, in Broomfield Hospital, at Chelmsford. She has enjoyed a varied career within the information field, and - with twenty years' experience - finds it evident that some professional problems transcend sector boundaries. She is currently grappling with the interesting structures of NHS IT, against those of commercial companies. Her real delight, even after this double decade in information provision, is happy enquirers - and new knowledge. Her work-life balance is satisfied by attending as many concerts and operas as her overdraft will allow, and ringing tower bells.

Searching the internet for health information can be a tricky business, especially if you're not sure where to start. Perhaps you know a friend or a neighbour who has recently been told by their GP that further tests will be undertaken ... Where do you start looking for pertinent answers or just simple reassurance if you're not familiar with this field?

If the illness isn't yours, it may be someone close to you. Here, support groups can be critical. As well as providing emotional and personal support, (often from people who have had individual experience of the condition and so understand), support groups can put you in contact with other people with the same condition. Most support groups provide information of good quality, which is well written and readily available. They may also act as a link between the patient and the professional. In extreme cases, they may even fight the patient's corner.

Starting off - The standard rules apply to all web sites found via, say, Google. Check the date of the web site. Is there a contact address? Is the organisation reputable? As an example, check out <http://www.pfc.org.uk/medical/pchrt-e1.htm>. This is a non-governmental site about 'The Patient's Charter' (I always wondered who the lucky individual was); although it is still active, the principal information on the front page is from 1999.

Another example of a site that maybe isn't quite what it seems is <http://www.patienthealthinternational.com/node/home.aspx>. The site does offer genuine information - but you have to look twice before realising it's sponsored by AstraZeneca. There's nothing wrong with this approach - medical companies regularly undertake lunchtime feeding sessions for hungry junior doctors, in return for information on their latest product release.

There is a Code of Practice - HONcode - and sites adhering to this will put up the HONcode marker. You can search for these accredited sites through <http://www.hon.ch/HONcode/Hunt/>, a Swiss site which is in English and French, and which is easy to navigate. The principles are at <http://www.hon.ch/HONcode/Conduct.html>.

<http://www.antibioticresistance.org.uk/> is a good example of a site directed for public consumption which is well laid out, has clear ownership, and states when it was last updated.

Google "breast cancer" and even if you click on UK pages only, you return 930,000 hits. Most of these, especially on the first page or so, are trustworthy, reputable, and safe organisations to contact. One I would recommend, which may be less well known, is <http://www.cancerbacup.org.uk/>. But that's

because I know two of the information people who work there: energetic and talented professionals.

For a generic starting point, try <http://www.patient.co.uk/>. This is a joint venture between two general practiners (previously Patient Information Publications, or PiP) and EMIS (Egton Medical Information Systems). This website offers help on nearly 2,000 illnesses and they provide leaflets - many of which have been translated into Urdu, Gujarati, Bengali, Somali, Punjabi, Cantonese, and Spanish. There's a section on tests and investigations - excellent explanations of what's going to happen, and why - plus links to investigative centres. The directory of UK websites is so comprehensive - it's my guess that if you didn't find any information on a given topic, it would be worth contacting them.

For any illness involving children, the following web site is astonishingly comprehensive, and such an excellent starting point, I cannot imagine the need to go elsewhere <http://www.cafamily.org.uk/index.html>.

Gateways <http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/> has lots of sensible advice, including the ability to "Ask a Nurse" - though you have to accept that information is stored for 5 years (and, as no system is utterly inviolate, this 'may be read by someone other than yourself'). It also only applies to England. The Welsh site <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/> was not functioning when I wrote this, so I cannot comment on their web facilities. Northern Ireland accesses <http://www.n-i.nhs.uk/> and Scots can access <http://www.show.scot.nhs.uk/>. Both sites are clearly and logically laid out, with most of the information accessible after three or four mouse clicks.

<http://omni.ac.uk/> is a useful gateway, but the average person, told that they have a life-threatening disease, would not, I suspect, find its front page especially welcoming or user-friendly.

Related FreePint links:

- 'Healthcare and Medicine' articles in the FreePint Portal <http://www.freepint.com/go/p64>

- Post a message to the author, Zena Woodley, 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/100305.htm#tips>

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

One looks for information either by National Library of Medicine or MeSH 2005 subject headings - the latter are very detailed. One for the librarians …?

Those who work in the field of medical librarianship will know that developments are coming at us thick and fast, and not always coherently. Last autumn saw the launch of the National Library for Health <http://www.library.nhs.uk/> - but at the time, this was rather like buying the promise of information, as the site contained very little that was useful. The original NHS site, launched a couple of years ago, gives more information immediately. It's at <http://www.nelh.nhs.uk/>. The front page is packed with Know-How, Knowledge, Specialist Libraries, headline items, and news. While the front page of NLH is 'cleaner' in appearance, it's also - for the uninitiated - much less helpful - and without a log-in, the search box only refers to any free resources on the site. These are the same as NeLH, incidentally. There is, for example, a question answering service available, at <http://www.clinicalanswers.nhs.uk/index.cfm?action=about> - but you'd have a job to find it from the home page!

If a hospital stay is necessary, <http://patientexperience.nhsestates.gov.uk/content/home/home.asp> aims to improve the patient's experience. All hospitals have to collect statistics on patient satisfaction on a range of issues - from treatment, to food, to cleanliness: the lists are endless. The site has sections giving guidelines on what should be happening - forewarned, one will at least know what to look out for.

Finally, it's worth saying that although many hospitals will have a Patient Information Centre, many still don't. If you're one of the unlucky ones in this respect, it's worth asking if the site has a medical library. I've not met anyone who works in medical information who wouldn't help. My workplace is the site of a leading Burns & Plastics Unit, and we have someone who uses the Warner reference facilities regularly.

Onopoly :: One-stop-shop for advertising information

Ratecards and presentations about advertising across the FreePint network can be downloaded from:

<http://www.Onopoly.com>

What is ResourceShelf?
<http://www.resourceshelf.com>

ResourceShelf is a free daily update containing news of interest to information professionals around the world.
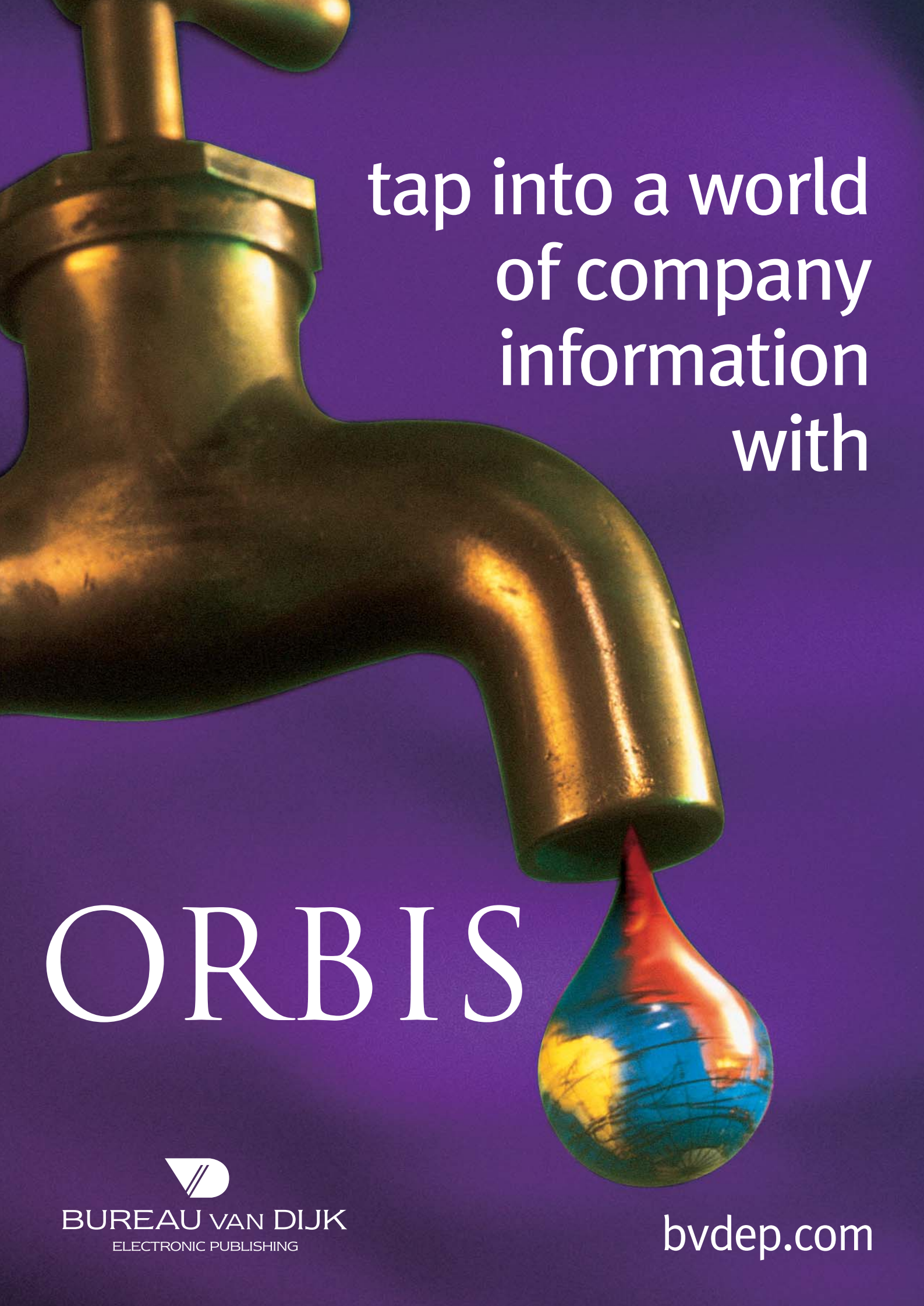
Topics include the latest news with web search engines, research tips, new web resources, and much more.

FreePint Forthcoming Articles
[Provisional]

- Freedom of Information
- Asperger's syndrome and Autism
- Making archives available through a website
- The 9 Ps of Publishing
- Competitive Intelligence
- User employee abuse of the Internet
- Cross Cultural Management
- Seeking the value proposition for the information professional
- Applying Governance to the Management of Information
- Quality assuring health information resources
- Business Information in Germany

If you have a suggestion for an article topic or would like to write for Free Pint then please contact <penny@freepint.com> or sign up for the Author Update at <http://www.freepint.com/author.htm>.

FreePint Bookshelf

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

"Leveraging Corporate Knowledge"
Edited by Edward Truch
Reviewed by Patricia Daze

Patricia Daze is a Business Systems Analyst with a network communications company in Canada. Her previous experience includes implementing knowledge management technology within the organization, and work as a corporate librarian. An avid reader of non-fiction, she can be contacted at <pgdaze@yahoo.com>

Related links*:*

- Find out more about this book online at the FreePint Bookshelf <http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf/leverage.htm>

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- "Leveraging Corporate Knowledge" ISBN 0566085763, published by Gower Publishing Limited.

- Search for and purchase any book from Amazon via the FreePint Bookshelf at <http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf>

- Read about other Internet Strategy books on the FreePint Bookshelf <http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf/strategy.htm>

As Knowledge Management becomes mature in many organizations, practical strategies and best practice initiatives are subject to investigation and validation by research. Leveraging Corporate Knowledge provides a broad examination of KM approached from a variety of disciplines, including social theory, philosophy, psychology, as well as business strategy.

This collection of papers is the work of the KM Forum at Henley Management College over three years, 2000-2003. It presents actionable advice to business practitioners at all points on the KM implementation spectrum, from mature to initiate; and it does so in the context of rigorous academic literature. The model behind the work is "participatory action research". The collaboration of academics from the College with business members of the KM Forum works well to marry theory with reality, providing a "living lab" environment to discuss and evaluate KM ideas.

The volume is comprised of fifteen papers divided into four general areas: Strategy and Organization; Management of Change; Below the Surface; and Technology-Based Enablement. It can be read sequentially or one can skip to the areas of most interest. The majority of the papers follow a common format describing the theory and relevant past research, the study methodology and results, and often include a practical matrix or checklist for practitioners. The first section contains five papers examining organizational structures and explores KM practices and dimensions demonstrated by the most successful companies. They focus on business strategy, project strategy, use of e-collaboration space, and communities of practice.

Two key papers on business strategy together conclude that KM is complex and that not all best practices bring out the most business value for every company, so it is important to focus on those that will bring the best results. There are different approaches and best practices required for successful KM based on type and maturity of the firm and the firm's strategy priorities.

The next section, Management of Change, examines cultural factors affecting commitment to KM. It explores differences between individual and organizational perception and behaviours, virtual unstructured teams, tacit knowledge sharing, and replicating excellence to encourage best KM practices within organizations. Each of these papers includes practical matrices or checklists to enable one to make comparisons with their own organization.

The third section delves into even softer aspects of KM, including KM success within organizational tribal structures, KM and personality, and even Integral Theory!

The last section on technology enablement seemed a miscellaneous catch-all rather than a cohesive section, and could have been eliminated from the volume without great loss. There is a case study of data mining, although the results were not used in practice. There is a very out-of-place item on dealing with e-mail overload. The information is dated and written in language for a generic magazine, not a scholarly text. The final paper on KM technologies also suffers from datedness as a view of current technologies would be more usable. The volume also features a summary list of all the papers, a list of contributors with their bios, and an index.

Overall, I found the volume an excellent overview of the research around KM, broadly approached from various disciplines. Make no mistake, despite the practical link to business, it's a scholarly read, but fascinating.

FreePint

Contributors to this issue:

William Hann (FreePint Managing Editor), Penny (FreePint Administrator), Tim Houghton, Zena Woodley, Veronica Yates, Patricia Daze, Plain Text <http://www.plain-text.co.uk/> (proofreading).

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What is DigBig?

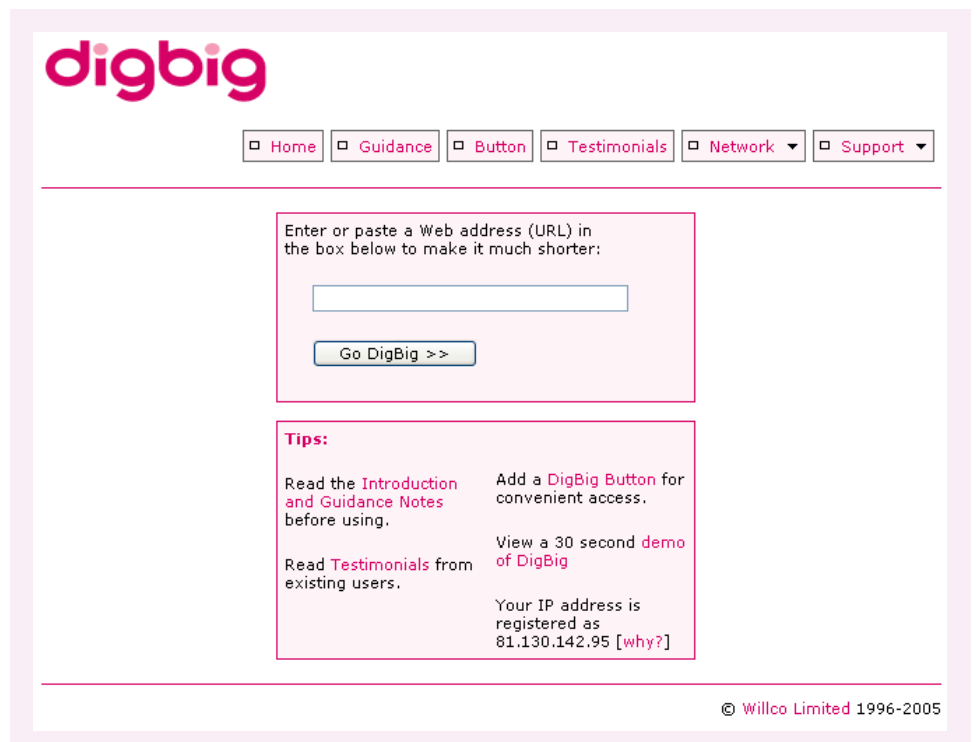DigBig is a free service that shortens long Web addresses (URLs) to make them easier to communicate.

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

Try it out at **www.DigBig.com**

Testimonial

"Preparing a current awareness bulletin is time consuming; being able to use DigBig to shorten URLs is great, to have it automatically copied to the clipboard, so I can just paste, definitely represents added value. Thank you."

Librarian, UK (Feb 2005)

Feature Article

"Tracking Youth Trends On The Web"
By Tim Houghton

Introduction

Recently a large consumer electronics firm came to us and asked if we could help them monitor trends amongst their target audience on the web. Their key market was young men and women aged 15-25. This article sets out what we discovered as we pursued this objective and the methodology we adopted. It is hoped that this is a useful case study for others undertaking similar work or looking for an overview of sources in this area. It would also be interesting to hear from others in this field who have tried alternative approaches.

Definition & Methodology

What exactly do we mean by a trend? Well a dictionary definition is as follows:

1. The general direction in which something tends to move. 2. A general tendency or inclination. 3. Current style; vogue: the latest trend in fashion.

Our focus was number 3, what web users thought was "hot" right now. But this general definition was too broad for us and we chose to narrow our focus to particular aspects of youth culture. We selected gadgets and technology, music, and travel and lifestyle. The client wished to gain insight into these areas and also to identify potential sponsorship and partnership opportunities. For example they could identify an up and coming band whose tour they could then sponsor.

Within these broad topic areas a two-stage research process was adopted. Stage One was to identify what trends were emerging. It was a qualitative trawl of sources. Step Two was an attempt to quantify support for each topic and therefore to rank their order.

Market Research Data

The most obvious source of data is of course that already provided by the numerous market research organisations. A quick search at a research portal like Mind Branch <http://www.mindbranch.com/> reveals lots of youth marketing reports. Or a well known UK provider like Mintel <http://reports.mintel.com/> can be consulted direct. But this wasn't appropriate for us. The client already purchases data of this sort, and secondly they wanted to identify trends as they emerged, not afterwards. It was this real-time reporting that web monitoring is ideally suited to.

Trend Watching Sites

The next category of sources were the trend watching sites themselves. There are quite a number of these and many trend predictors or trend gurus now also run their own blogs (more on blogs later). A couple of the best ones are PSFK <http://www.psfk.com/> and

Tim Houghton is the founder and MD of New Media Intelligence, a web clipping firm. New Media Intelligence monitors thousands of websites for news; allowing clients to keep up with the latest media developments online. The firm prides itself on its tailored approach, its willingness to be flexible in the face of client needs. Read more at <http://www.NewMediaIntelligence.com>.

TrendWatching.com <http://www.trendwatching.com/newsletter/newsletter.html>. Both are interesting as they are not just one individual's take on what's happening but a collaborative international effort. Open Source trend identification, if you like. TrendWatching.com goes further than PSFK in this regard in that it invites contributions from anyone. Ideas are paid for if they are used. Clearly web-based models of open participation are affecting this space just as they have impacted more conventional research environments. An honourable mention also to leading fashion news website WGSN <http://www.wgsn.com/public/home/html/base.html>, a very strong site for trend watchers, but one which requires an expensive subscription.

Media Sites

The client operates in the consumer electronics

Gold

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Penny <penny@freepint.com>

area and so has an especial interest in trends in technology and gadgets generally. Hence we identified popular and influential technology news sites. These included Wired News <http://www.wired.com/wired/>, Slashdot <http://slashdot.org/>, The Register <http://www.theregister.co.uk/> and ZDNet <http://www.zdnet.co.uk/>. It would be a relatively simple task to identify leading titles for another sector.

But along side this sector-specific news we also wanted to get a feel for what the media were saying in terms of more lifestyle based issues. Hence we also added music, travel and lifestyle titles to our sources. Music sites included popular portal based content like Yahoo! Music <http://launch.yahoo.com/> but also quirkier independent sites like the US based Pitchfork <http://www.pitchforkmedia.com/>. Lifestyle and travel included such sources as Wallpaper <http://www.wallpaper.com/> (a sister site to the print title) and the Rough Guide's <http://www.roughguides.com/> web site.

Weblogs

Developing alongside conventional online media sites are weblogs or blogs. The classic definition of these sites is that they are personal online journals, often including links and commentary relating to other websites. But these experiments in online self-publishing are fast morphing into media properties in their own right. Accurate audience is hard to come by for most blogs but it seems a reasonable assumption that they will appeal to a young and savvy crowd. Hence their role as tastemakers is important. There are blogs on just about any subject you can think of but we wanted to use them as a useful complement to the subject areas we were already monitoring; that is technology, music, travel and lifestyle. Useful sites in this regard include Engadget <http://www.engadget.com/> and Travelblog <http://www.travelblog.org/>.

Quantifying the Topics

Analysing the media content gave us a list of "hot topics", it showed which bands were being mentioned (for example Kasabian and Bloc Party), which gadgets were being reviewed most (anything vaguely associated with Apple's iPod) and where people wanted to travel to.

Having defined the various topics we now attempted to rank them by their popularity amongst consumers. Newsgroups were selected which were likely to contain a high proportion of the 18-25 demographic. These included rec.travel and alt.music (plus their associated sub- groups). Each topic was refined into a search string and its popularity in terms of citation volume was measured for each source.

Search Engine Behaviour

Another quantitative measure of consumer likes and dislikes online is the number of searches performed. Fortunately for us most web search engines provide at least a Top 10 most popular search terms. Google provides its Zeitgeist <http://www.google.com/press/zeitgeist.html> page and it is also very instructive to look at what it costs to link keywords to particular search terms via Google's keyword advertising service . Yahoo! has what it calls its Buzz Index <http://buzz.yahoo.com/>. These provide useful objective data on what Net users are interested in. Now clearly these searches are for the whole of the web demographic, not the 15-25 age range, but matching them against the specific topics identified above does provide useful information.

Events

United Kingdom:

- "Market Research on the Web" 23rd March <http://www.freepint.com/go/e420>

- "Global Trade Statistics Workshop" 22nd March <http://www.freepint.com/go/e467>

- "Web Creation and Design" 5th April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e433>

- "Re-designing your Intranet" 13th - 14th April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e418>

- "Data Protection" 13th April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e432>

- "Free STN workshops in London" 12th - 13th April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e463>

United States:

- "ASIDIC Spring 2005 Meeting" 20th - 22nd March <http://www.freepint.com/go/e438>

- "Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals" 6th - 9th April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e468>

- "Buying & Selling eContent" 10th - 12th April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e460>

- "2005 AIIP Annual Conference" 14th - 17th April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e444>

Australia and Territories:

- "Business Intelligence" 22nd - 23rd March <http://www.freepint.com/go/e436>

Belgium:

- "EUSIDIC Spring Meeting 2005" 17th - 19th April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e442>

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Results

Based on all the above we were able to create top 10 "buzz" charts across several areas including Gadgets, Travel, Music and Celebrities. These were useful to the brand both in terms of gaining an insight into its demographic and in identifying brands with which they might partner.

The Future

One obvious future development is to look at what happens to topics over time. How long does the buzz about a new band last? Is it longer than the buzz about a new gadget? But more sophisticated types of analysis are also possible. One type of analysis that would be interesting to undertake involves the use of an emerging type of software known as Natural Language Processing or NLP. This is software that automatically extracts meaning from text. It enables huge volumes of data to be processed and the most significant topics automatically identified. The other additional data component that would be nice to have is audience data so that not only the number of mentions but also their weight can be factored into rankings.

I hope that by setting out the process that we used, others will be encouraged to develop and refine more sophisticated approaches to identifying trends both within the youth market and more broadly amid the myriad conversations occurring online.