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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/>.

ISSN 1460-7239

Editorial

I've received a number of accusations this week about being a time waster.

Not a waster of my own time, you understand, but of other people's. My wonderment at Google Earth in the last FreePint <http://digbig.com/4eetq> caused a number of people to fritter away a number of hours exploring the world.



While I don't like being called a time waster, it's always great to hear how people use FreePint. We also like to hear how we can improve the service we offer, but understand it can be difficult to give candid feedback.

To solve this we have created a 'Suggestion Box' for FreePint, where you can give us your comments and criticisms anonymously:

<http://www.freepint.com/suggestionbox.htm>

This new feature has been well received, and we've already had a number of suggestions posted. My announcement about it at the Bar also elicited a number of replies about the dynamics of the Bar as a research forum <http://www.freepint.com/go/b32871>.

One Suggestion Box comment we've already acted upon noted that the Bar Digest would be much more usable if items were grouped by topic, rather than listed chronologically. The Digest is the twice-weekly email summary of the latest research questions and answers at the Bar. We have now changed the order of listings and the Digest is much more readable as a result.

Do send your suggestions <http://www.freepint.com/suggestionbox.htm> and we'll do our best to implement your ideas. Alternatively, if you'd like to speak face-to-face then make a note to visit the annual Online Information Exhibition and Conference to be held in November, in London. We will be exhibiting as usual and the conference programme is being published in the next couple of days <http://www.online-information.co.uk/>. I've seen an advance copy and it's an impressive line up of speakers.

In FreePint today we bring you articles from two respected information professionals. The first is a discussion of the future of the information industry from CILIP's President, Debby Shorley. The second is from VIP's Editor Pam Foster, about the latest trends in the business information world.

Thank you for reading FreePint. Again, please do give us your feedback, or join the 14,000 FreePinters who already receive the Bar Digest by signing-up at <http://www.freepint.com/subs/>.

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

The Jinfo Newsletter is published free every two weeks, and contains a list of the latest vacancies along with job seeking advice. The latest editorial is entitled "CVs that Stand Out - the Employers Viewpoint".

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:

Library Co-ordinator - Media Industry

Junior media industry Librarian. Central London. Excellent database management, search and IT skills a must.

Recruiter: The Edge Picture Company
<<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j4279>>

Information / Knowledge Officer

Recent information graduate? Excellent opportunity to work for progressive central London consultancy.

Recruiter: Glen Recruitment
<<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j4295>>

Information Services Assistants

Four temporary posts available at university south of London, four months, issue and enquiry desk work.

Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment
<<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j4307>>

[The above jobs are paid listings]

NB: There are 35 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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VIP scoops OneSource products

The current issue of VIP contains the first ever reviews of OneSource's new products for the UK and US SME sectors. A further review examines the data in Global Business Browser: Europe, following OneSource's new partnerships with European information providers.

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

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*Source: Find/SVP



Sam Vaknin

<<http://samvak.tripod.com>> is the author of 'Malignant Self Love - Narcissism Revisited' and other books. He served or serves as a columnist and editor for Central Europe Review, PopMatters, and eBookWeb, Global Politician, and Bellaonline, United Press International (UPI), The Open Directory and Suite101.

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

My Favourite Tipples

by Sam Vaknin

- <<http://www.zabasearch.com>> is a personal data search engine. This innocuous description does not begin to capture the wealth of information it dredges up. Try it - you won't believe what is publicly available about you and your nearest and dearest!
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- <<http://www.petsyclopedia.com/>> is a pet care reference work which covers the more common kinds of household dears (dogs, cats, etc.). Thorough, authoritative, and helpful in times of stress and distress!
- <<http://1911encyclopedia.org/>> is a trip down history (if not exactly memory) lane. The fabled 1911 edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica online - now in full text! The world as it was before the two world wars rendered it what it is, for better and for worse.

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.

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FreePint Bar

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In contrast to last week, I think everyone has returned from their holidays now -- Bar has been buzzing with activity, and only one or two postings remain unanswered. Thanks to everyone who has contributed.

As mentioned in William Hann's editorial, here is your opportunity to discuss what you like and dislike about FreePint and the Bar. Quite a few suggestions have been made and acted upon already <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b32871>>.

Do you know if Government libraries in England have to be open to public enquiries <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b32925>> or what about a company library recording TV programmes - is this allowed? <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b32936>>.

One FreePinter has been asked to find information on setting up a knowledge service. Can you help? <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b32834>>. Do you know where to find statistics on the ratio of researchers to information specialists <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b32899>> or hourly rates for legal researchers? <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b32894>>.

Where can one find biographies of engineering managers and directors? <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b32949>>. Is there a list of worldwide universities sorted by country? <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b32862>>.

The latest edition of the Jinfo Newsletter has been published with a provocative article about CVs from an employer's point of view <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b32940>> and a new free sample issue of VIP Eye is available for downloading <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b32845>>.

Is there a free European downloadable auto route map <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b32903>> or a "dummies guide" to football in the UK? <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b32788>>.

The closing date for the Jason Farradane Award nominations is approaching <<http://www.vivavip.com/go/w769>>. Is there an individual or a group who you think has contributed outstanding work in the information field? (By the way, FreePint won it in 2002).

Until next time, and don't forget to visit our new Suggestion Box <<http://www.freepint.com/suggestionbox.htm>>.

Penny Hann, FreePint

<penny.hann@freepint.com>

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





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- CoreReference and CoreCompensation (Hemscott) Extra
- Perfect Debt and Europrospectus (comparative reviews)
- GMID (Euromonitor) and Market Indicators and Forecasts (EIU) (comparative reviews) Extra

Published Reviews:

- Global Business Browser
- OneSource Express UK
- OneSource Express
- ISI Emerging Markets
- CEIC
- China Insight
- Mergent Online

"VIP provides me with an excellent source of reviews of all manner of relevant products. What better editorial team could there be than the people behind FreePint to report on products and news in the information market! I think this is positive testimony enough!"

Information Manager, UK

Published Reviews (con'td):

- Hoover's
- CorpfinWorldwide v. ZEPHYR v. Thomson ONE
- Factiva SalesWorks and Factiva Companies & Executives
- EBSCO Bus. Source Corporate
- Business Monitor Online
- Corpfin's CompanyQuery
- BvD's Mint
- Dialog Newsroom v. Factiva v. LexisNexis
- D&B's Global Reference Solution and MarketDirect
- Gale Virtual Reference Library vs. xreferplus
- Find.com
- Thomson ONE Banker
- Times Digital Archive
- MyInsight
- Datastream Advance
- WorldData from EIU
- Advanced Country Analysis & Forecast
- Dialog's new unified platform
- Market Research on the Web
- ICC Plum
- Net Snippets Professional
- Hemscott Company Guru



Debby Shorley graduated from Durham University in 1972 with a degree in French and attained her postgraduate Library qualification at Queens University Belfast in 1977. She began her professional career in Belfast, where she worked in the Central Library during the 1970s. She is currently Librarian at the University of Sussex, and has recently become a Fellow of CILIP. Debby lives in the centre of Brighton, and spends her spare time cycling up and down her city's ubiquitous hills and walking on the South Downs. She was "greatly honoured" to be elected by her professional colleagues to serve as CILIP's President in 2005-6.

Tips Article

"The Future of the Information Profession -- No Time for Introspection" By Debby Shorley

I try hard not to let it happen, but my heart always sinks at the thought of yet another discussion on the future of the information profession. We can be a desperately introspective bunch at the best of times, and a topic like this is guaranteed to bring out the doom and gloom merchants, all anxious to convince themselves that we're unappreciated, that our status is declining and no-one wants us any more. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth - as long as we don't let it happen.

'Back to basics' may be a hackneyed phrase with overtones designed to raise a cynical smile, but I believe that it does describe exactly what we in this profession need to do. It doesn't mean turning our back on the wonderful technological developments of the last two or three decades. Nor does it mean refusing to embrace new areas of professional activity such as intranet content management, or being precious about self-promotion. That really would be professional suicide.

Back to basics

What it does mean quite simply is that, amid all the jargon, we shouldn't forget to keep asking ourselves: what are we here for? How can we do it best? Simple questions that invite a simple answer: we help people find out what they need to know to lead better lives. You can dismiss this as a truism if you like, but it's actually at the heart of our role. And there's a constant risk that jargon and detail will allow this basic truth to be obscured. We can talk about the knowledge economy or the information society or information literacy/fluency - that's all very worthy. But it can also be a cloak to conceal woolly thinking. It can allow the current buzzwords to become a substitute for solid, practical planning of how we can do our jobs better.

Stripped to its essentials, this simple answer means: 'How can we help?'. Not in a passive, wait-and-see way, but proactively, anticipating our users' needs and making the goals of the communities we serve our goals as well.

It really doesn't matter what that community is. It could be a local community, with a multicultural, multilayered society and challengingly diverse wants and needs. It could be a centre of learning with multiple but precise requirements, and goals and targets to achieve. It could be a medical establishment seeking evidence to inform its clinical decisions. Or it could be a commercial organisation - a law firm or financial institution - exploiting its corporate knowledge in the pursuit of profit.

A more mobile profession

If you accept this premise, then one implication for the future of our profession is clear: There's nothing forcing you to stay in your current sector

for the rest of your career. "I'm a public/academic librarian" or "I'm a legal/health information professional" just shouldn't be part of the 21st century library & information professional's vocabulary.

Of course I know that people have always changed sectors as their careers have progressed - but I'd be prepared to put money on the likelihood that most people in the past have usually moved away from public libraries towards something else. All I would say is: Don't assume that that's necessarily going to be the natural order of things in the future.

Public libraries are facing a demographic time-bomb as the large number of baby boomers currently in senior positions reach retirement. The situation is so serious that MLA (the UK Museums, Libraries and Archives Council <<http://www.mla.gov.uk>>) is launching a media story about the staffing crisis that is about to hit public libraries. The Employers Organisation for Local Government <<http://www.lg-employers.gov.uk>> will also weigh in at the end of August, with a survey exploring why librarians are among their top 10 recruitment headaches. They're right to be worried; an MLA survey of chief librarians has revealed that a third of public library staff are due to retire within ten years. A third of library authorities are already having trouble recruiting, and around 15,000 public library staff are needed now.

More creative use of our skills

I point this out because there is actually no difference between the information provided to an individual in a public library and that provided to a specialist elsewhere. The same principle that underpins the proprietary services from Factiva, Dialog or LexisNexis now also underpins the vision that translated a few years ago into the People's Network <<http://www.peoplesnetwork.gov.uk/>>. In fact, the People's Network was introduced so well, and responds so directly to people's needs, that it is taken for granted and could even become a victim of its own success. It will take talented people in the public library service to ensure that this doesn't compromise its future sustainability.

Information professionals in academia, research, industry and commerce have been adapting their services to accommodate direct desktop access for end-users for years now, and it can only be a very short time before exactly the same principle applies to public libraries. In its second annual Communications Market report, published in July, the UK communications industry regulator Ofcom noted that, for the first time, there are now more UK households with broadband than dial-up: 2005 was the year when broadband became a genuinely mainstream consumer product.

Related FreePint links:

- 'Information and Libraries' articles in the FreePint Portal <http://www.freepint.com/go/p69>
- Post a message to the authors, Debby Shorley, 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/110805.htm#tips>
- Access the entire archive of FreePint content
- <http://www.freepint.com/portal/content/>

So it follows that the next phase - access to sophisticated, specialist electronic resources, not only within the library but also from home - can only be a step away. And public libraries are going to need the people with the talent to turn this into one of the biggest opportunities they've ever had.

Quite frankly, I don't care whether we use the word 'library', nor do I care whether people visit libraries - although the usage statistics from the splendid new buildings at Brighton and Gosport do show that good buildings attract users. It's all the same to me as long as people get the information they need. What we can do in this profession is broker that information better than anyone else. But we shall have to be creative (and I don't mean gimmicky) to ensure that our skills are recognized.

Everyone more empowered

We must also not be afraid of empowerment - empowerment of end-users, at home and in the workplace, and empowerment of people within the information and library profession. Empowerment means taking charge of your own career, and managing it. But it doesn't mean doing that in isolation; it also means taking advantage of the services that an organization like CILIP can provide to ambitious, career-minded professionals, and exploiting our already well-developed habit of co-operation.

You'd have to have been working on the moon not to know that CILIP has recently launched a new Framework of Qualifications <<http://digbig.com/4dkbe>>. For the first time it opens up the opportunity for paraprofessional and technical staff to gain formal recognition of their achievements. It also recognizes non-conventional professional career progressions - even (heaven help us) careers not underpinned by academic library and information qualifications. And it gives mature professionals the opportunity to revalidate their qualifications, demonstrating that they remain both relevant and timely.

Above all, the Framework will empower paraprofessionals - those skilled and experienced people who keep systems and services running smoothly, day in, day out. For the record, I think this is entirely right; the apartheid that we used to experience, separating the 'qualified librarian' and the rest was in a real sense pathetic. It hasn't reflected the reality of the situation on the ground for years. It is already being eroded, and quite right too.

Co-operation is key

We've always been pretty good at co-operating in this profession. All over the UK, libraries are co-operating as never before to give people access to local resources, and I'm sure that the

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- The 9 Ps of publishing
- User employee abuse of the Internet
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- Business information in Germany
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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>>.

inspiration provided by the People's Network will push this process even further. On a global level, the World Summit on the Information Society <<http://www.itu.int/wsis/>> is seeking to achieve the same thing.

Always important, our propensity to co-operate is now key. We must, for example, co-operate to do all we can to support the World Summit, and ensure that the potential role of libraries to deliver its aims is acknowledged from the start. Don't let's kid ourselves that this will be plain sailing. We will have a lot of vested interests to fight. I personally worry, for instance, about the continuing dominance of United States' control of the Internet. It's not healthy, and we need to work at it.

Despite all the challenges this profession faces, I'm convinced that it will thrive and grow. As information professionals we hold the key to so much that's globally important today. But we must work at it. We must continue to seek and develop partnerships; we must be flexible in our approach to our role; and we must get out of our silos. Achieve that, and there's everything to play for.

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FreePint Bookshelf

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

Ann-Marie Ashby is Academic Support Team Manager (Business, Law and Social Sciences) for Information Services at the University of Birmingham. She has worked in academic libraries for eight years, and is currently Membership Secretary for the British Business School Librarians' Group <<http://www.bbslg.org>> and a committee member for the JIBS User Group <<http://www.jibs.ac.uk>>. When not at work she is a keen chess-player, representing Bristol in the Four Nations Chess League <<http://www.4ncl.co.uk>>. Ann-Marie also likes bridge, reading, films and is a keen Coventry City Football Club fan.

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"Building an Electronic Resource Collection: A Practical Guide" ISBN 1856045315, published by Facet Publishing.

"Building an Electronic Resource Collection: a practical guide"

Reviewed by Ann-Marie Ashby

Building an Electronic Resource Collection is a daunting task, but with its comprehensive coverage and systematic approach, the second edition of this book makes it a whole lot easier!

The book is split into five chapters covering: preliminary uses; the electronic resources landscape; e-books and e-journals; accessing and acquiring electronic resources, and delivering them. The experience and knowledge of the authors is evident throughout. While they cover the basics of the area coherently, in a way understandable to a student or new professional, they never shy away from discussing pertinent issues. They discuss openurl resolvers and linkage services, metadata for electronic resources and managing licenses, as well as important technical concepts such as interoperability and Z39.450, x.509 certificates, digital signatures and VPNs (Virtual Private Networks).

Unfortunately, because of the fast-moving nature of this area, the book, while current at the time of writing, is already slightly dated: Athens Devolved Authentication <<http://www.athensams.net/>> and Shibboleth <<http://shibboleth.internet2.edu/>> aren't explored and there is little mention of ePrints services or learning object repositories. To compensate, the authors do cite up-to-date websites within their text, and have an extensive bibliography. Their breadth of coverage also means that there is something new for even the most experienced of professionals: whether it be VLE plug-ins, examples of electronic resource collection development policies or the impact of open access.

Each chapter is subdivided into clear sections, and all begin with an introduction and end with a summary. Particularly nice features are the

DigBig: Long URLs are no longer a problem

DigBig is a fast and free way to shorten long URLs. This makes them much easier to communicate:

"The best thing about DigBig is the bookmarklet. One click access to short URLs; it don't get any better." Web Producer, New York City, New York, USA (July 2005)"

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

examples which are non-intrusive but instructional and help make abstract concepts a reality: in the electronic resource landscape chapter, for example, there is a discussion centred around the importance of data and content versus interface and functionality, and the case study highlights the fact that BIOSIS data is available from six different suppliers. The same chapter discusses connection files for Endnote and the place of bibliographic management software in the electronic resources landscape. In addition, there are a number of useful checklists, such as the 'electronic collection development by numbers' (p142+) and the 'electronic resource evaluation checklist' (p88+) which really are excellent practical guides.

Written for both students and more experienced collection developers and librarians, this book cleverly combines basic coverage while also tackling more complex issues. As 'a practical guide' it really does deliver and will be of great help in the day-to-day work of all those involved in this area. Moreover, through its stimulating prose, and use of case studies and examples, the authors will undoubtedly engender enthusiasm and further innovation for the future.

FreePint

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VIP

A monthly publication with in-depth reviews of business information products.

VIP Eye

A twice-monthly current-awareness service analysing business information news announcements and trends.

VIP Wire

Search and post press releases about business information products and services (free).

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Recent Reviews:

- OneSource
- ISI
- China Insight
- Hoover's
- BvD
- Corpfm
- EBSCOhost

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- Perfect Debt
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Feature Article

"Trends in business information, provision and use"

By Pam Foster



Pam Foster is the Editor of VIP and VIP Eye <<http://www.vivaVIP.com/>>, and has been actively involved in the business information industry as a writer and reviewer for nearly 20 years.

Pam previously played a major role in Headland Business Information since its inception, as editor of its newsletters and directories. More recently, she has acted as a consultant to several large information companies.

She has an extensive network of contacts in the international business information sector amongst producers and users. A qualified information professional, Pam also has a social science degree.

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The VIP publications, VIP and VIP Eye, are concerned with the business information industry - its products, its providers and its users <<http://www.vivaVIP.com/>>. An analysis of their content for the second quarter of 2005 reveals a number of emerging trends:

Information providers are increasingly offering free content

Major information companies are making determined efforts to drive more traffic to their subscription-based services, by offering tantalising free content. Both the Financial Times and Hoover's have announced new free services in a bid to attract more subscribers and advertisers.

Flat revenues have forced Pearson to create new ways of increasing sales of its FT.com service and Financial Times newspaper. Back in April 2005, it launched FTpm, a new, free afternoon briefing service, available in both print and online formats. The briefing, which is available from 4.00 pm (BST) every Monday to Friday, uses content from FT.com and promotes content, comment and analysis in the following day's Financial Times newspaper. As well as attempting to attract more readers and users, Pearson will also be hoping that FTpm will be a channel for boosting advertising sales.

FT.com has also launched a new free desktop alerts service. Users can select from 13 news categories and choose to receive the alerts as pop-ups or as a news ticker, or both. All alerts provide a headline and a read option. A few alerts are available in a full-text format, but the majority provide an opening paragraph only, with the full text being available exclusively to FT.com subscribers.

While the new free FT services are good news for users, there's also some alarming news from Pearson. It appears that the company is planning to embargo its feeds to re-distributors. This means that users who depend on aggregated services for coverage of FT content are going to have to subscribe to FT.com if they want timely FT news and comment.

Despite a fairly upbeat second quarter statement from Pearson, some sector analysts believe that Pearson would be better off selling the Financial Times. The same industry watchers will be looking out for the impact a proposed new, free business daily newspaper will have on FT sales in the City. The London Business Daily will be launched in October 2005 and will be edited by David Parsley, previously Business Editor of the UK's Sunday Express newspaper.

Hoover's has also extended its strategy of offering free information, in an effort to draw in more subscribers and advertisers. The company has always offered quality free data but this has now been extended to content and tools that were previously only available to subscribers. By getting users involved with subscriber-only tools, Hoover's is hoping that new users will commit to

the fee-paying service. Additionally, Hoover's should also pick up more revenue from advertisers, as the new enhancements also include an expanded Internet Advertising Bureau (IAB)-compliant ad format.

All of these issues relating to Pearson and Hoover's are covered in more detail in VIP Eye, Nos 31, 32, 37 and 38.

<<http://www.vivaVIP.com/eye>>. VIP published an in-depth review of Hoover's in April this year. <<http://www.vivaVIP.com/vip>>.

Search engines offering single search access to premium content

A new development from Yahoo! now means that it's possible for users in the UK and US to search their personal subscription content, via a single search. Unlike Google Scholar, which offers something similar for academic content, the new Yahoo! Search Subscriptions service concentrates on business information and news.

Content is currently fairly limited but plans to include selected data from such companies as the Financial Times, Factiva, LexisNexis and Thomson Gale will greatly improve the quality of business information on offer. Users can search across all content or restrict their searches by source. Additionally, the search page provides an option for searching across the free web. Advanced search offers the same options as the web version of Yahoo!

Yahoo! users will be able to see the headlines from Factiva, LexisNexis, etc. but only subscribers to those services will be able to read the text of an article. Depending on vendor, non-subscribers will be provided with an option to either purchase the article on a pay-as-you-go basis or take out a subscription to the service.

It's difficult to know what to make of Yahoo! Search Subscriptions. For the vendors taking part, it will promote their content to Yahoo's audience of 372 million users, which should result in more sales. For users, it will provide a means of conducting a single search, via a single interface, across all of their subscribed content without being required to log on to each separate service. However, serious users of business information are more likely to subscribe to a package of information and data from vendors, negotiated at a special rate for their organisation, and it's doubtful that they would find the Yahoo! service adequate for their needs. By the same token, the advanced search features of Yahoo! may not be sophisticated enough for professional searchers.

Yahoo! Search Subscriptions is more likely to appeal to smaller users of business information and individuals. Yahoo! would do well to make the process easier for this group of searchers by providing a centralised way to pay-per-view or pay for a monthly subscription. Such a publishing model is likely to attract more publishers and many more users.

Further information on Yahoo! Search Subscriptions is available in VIP Eye, No. 36. <<http://www.vivaVIP.com/eye>>.

New product development focuses on Asia

Several major online companies are focusing their efforts on developing products covering the Asia-Pacific markets.

The acquisition of Mergent by Xinhua Finance has resulted in a number of new products covering the China market. The most significant of these is China Insight, which combines information from Xinhua Finance with software from Mergent. Information includes company fundamentals, sector reports, corporate news, annual reports and credit ratings reports. Charting functionality enables users to view historical daily, weekly and monthly data ranging from one week to 30 years. There are also options for compiling index and sector comparisons, as well as company comparisons for up to four companies.

Another major advantage resulting from the synergies between Xinhua and Mergent is that the Mergent Online service is now able to offer full Chinese company data.

Xinhua Finance is fast becoming a major information company. As well as acquiring Mergent, more recently it also purchased two further companies. The first, Taylor Rafferty, is a leading independent investor relations and cross-border financial communications advisor. The second company, Washington Analysis, is an economic and political analysis company.

VIP has published an extensive review of China Insight, together with a second review covering Mergent Online, in the May 2005 issue. <<http://www.vivaVIP.com/vip>>.

CEIC China Premium Database is the latest product to be launched by CEIC, which was recently acquired by Euromoney Institutional Investor, parent of ISI Emerging Markets. It provides macro-economic data and information on 16 of China's most important industries. Nearly 127,000 data series are available, at both the national and provincial levels. Two complementary databases provide useful international comparative data.

The June 2005 issue of VIP published in-depth reviews of both the CEIC Economic Databases and ISI Emerging Markets. <<http://www.vivaVIP.com/vip>>.

Bureau van Dijk Electronic Publishing (BvDEP) has launched its first major Asia-wide product. ORIANA provides data on 85,000 public and private companies, located in 17 countries in the Asia-Pacific region. All data is sourced from local providers.

ORIANA is currently only available in a CD-ROM format but there are plans to offer a Web version.

VIP will review ORIANA in a forthcoming issue. A detailed description of ORIANA is published in VIP Eye, No. 35. <<http://www.vivaVIP.com/eye>>.

Search engines diverting revenue from information companies

Google and Yahoo! earned as much revenue as the 10 largest information companies in 2004. Analysis by Outsell has shown that these two search engines are squeezing revenue away from some companies and trouncing legacy business

models. Even when Google and Yahoo! are taken out of the equation, information companies still achieved triple to double growth. However, Outsell predicts that 2005 figures will show that growth is declining for the information sector.

Further information is available in VIP Eye, No. 35. <<http://www.vivaVIP.com/eye>>.

European online market is slowing down

The European online market increased by 10% in 2004, the lowest increase for three years. Even more disheartening is the fact that half of this latest growth is not from new sales but is the result of users switching their spending from traditional print to online services.

The research, undertaken by IRN Research as part of its annual survey of the European market for online information, reveals that online business information is the largest market segment, accounting for 66% of total online sales in Europe in 2004. Online sales in this segment increased by 7% at current prices in 2004, and was boosted by more online sales of legal, tax, and regulatory information and market research online subscription services.

IRN Research is forecasting value growth of between 7% and 8% in the European online information market in 2005, but this lower growth in market value is likely to be accompanied by a further strengthening of the profit performances of most of the leading players.

The report offers good news on corporate information budgets which it claims are beginning to shake off the ties of recent years. Most core academic STM information budgets are still static or declining, but growth continues to be driven primarily by practitioner sectors such as healthcare and pharmaceuticals.

Further information is available in VIP Eye, No. 37. <<http://www.vivaVIP.com/eye>>.

US SMEs are bypassing subscription services in favour of web

Research from Shore Communications shows that US small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) are bypassing subscription-based services in favour of the web. Google and original company web sites are cited as the most important information resources for these companies.

The findings offer a challenge to business information providers to provide new models and products for small and medium-sized companies. Some companies are already meeting this challenge. Hoover's has targeted this market for some time and, as we saw earlier has just announced enhancements to its services.

More recently, OneSource has launched OneSource Express for the UK and US. These two new products provide SMEs with information on companies, executives, corporate hierarchies and news alerts. Both products are available via annual subscription.

VIP published in-depth reviews of both OneSource Express and OneSource Express UK in its current 2005 issue. <<http://www.vivaVIP.com>>.

Related FreePint links:

- 'Information and Libraries' articles in the FreePint Portal <http://www.freepint.com/go/p69>
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Events

United Kingdom:

- "STN Training courses - Pharma Focus" 16th - 18th August
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e544>>
- "6th Northumbria International Conference on Performance Measurement in Libraries and Information Services" 22nd - 25th August
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e532>>
- "Digital Resources for the Humanities 2005" 4th - 7th September
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e545>>

Australia and Territories:

- "Power Searching with the Pros" 29th August - 6th September
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e547>>
- "Intranet Usability" 29th - 31st August
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e541>>
- "neXt 2005 ALIA National Library and Information Technicians Conference" 6th - 9th September
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e535>>

Canada:

- "2005 Government & Health Technologies Forum" 30th - 31st August
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e537>>

Ireland:

- "6th European Conference on Knowledge Management" 8th - 9th September
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e481>>
- "Evaluating e-learning - a how to guide" 8th September
<http://www.freepint.com/go/e492>

New Zealand:

- "LIANZA 2005 Conference, te wero" 11th - 14th September
<http://www.freepint.com/go/e521>

These are just a selection of the 60 global events listed on the FreePint Website at
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Gold

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

- FreePint No.165 12th August 2004. "Radio Frequency Identification: An Update" and "E-Newsletters: What's the point? And how do you make it?"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/120804.htm>
- FreePint No.142 7th August 2003. "The Safety of Children on the Internet" and "Competition Law Resources Online"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/070803.htm>
- Free Pint No.118 8th August 2002. "The Economies of the Balkan" and "Answering Quick Reference Enquiries Using Google"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/080802.htm>
- Free Pint No.93, 2nd August 2001. "Photography through the Web - Part 1" and "Latin America"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/020801.htm>
- Free Pint No.68, 3rd August 2000. "Netting your Ancestors: Genealogy Sites on the Internet for tracing UK Ancestors" and "Surveillance and Privacy"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/030800.htm>
- Free Pint No.44, 5th August 1999. "Interview: Reva Basch, Super Searcher" and "How will we survive Information Overload?"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/050899.htm>
- Free Pint No.20, 6th August 1998. "Trade Associations on the Web" and "The Need For News Aggregation"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/060898.htm>