

12 **"Charting a New Course: The Future of Information Work"**

Following a successful informal consultation exercise, postgraduate courses in information management at the University of Brighton are being renovated with a view to continuing professional development and the rapidly evolving Web. Course leader Martin De Saulles describes the scene.

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Jothi Nedungadi evaluates Martin White's new guide to making search within organisations more effective.

19 **"Your Online Identity: Key to Marketing and Being Found"**

John McBurnie explains how libraries and information professionals can build a unique online identity by deploying the social networking tools that are transforming the way we communicate and interact.

Plus ...

Jobs,
Discussion,
Tips, Reviews
and Events



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Editorial



It was the end of the last millennium, and things were going well in the Cuvelier household. I had more work than I could handle, had opened up a big mortgage and was earning more than I thought possible. My husband and I weren't getting rich like some of the Silicon Valley millionaires, but then again, we weren't overly concerned with the cost of eating out a few nights a week.

And then a funny thing happened. Every publication I worked for went out of business, owing me \$20,000, and my husband couldn't find a single contract. For two years.

It was the dot-com bust, and it humbled us enormously. It taught me to look sceptically about any fast turns the so-called new economy takes.

Flash to an October morning in 2007, I'm watching the morning news learning how Facebook is holding out for a \$15 billion offer. This economy is still developing fast, and peaks and troughs aside, it seems here to stay.

Martin De Saulles noticed it. A course leader in information management at the University of Brighton, De Saulles has spent the last year making some significant changes to the institution's professional development offerings. He writes about his research in this issue.

And John McBurnie too. His nicely researched article on online identities talks about how librarians and other information workers can put social networking sites to work for their own marketing causes.

Jothi Nedungadi reviews Martin White's "Making Search Work", which addresses how enterprise search continues to evolve.

Online Information, our industry's annual event, is on the horizon. Free Pint Limited will be exhibiting again, providing us with opportunities to get early-warning notice of the next emerging trends. If you'll be attending the event, please take a minute to let us know at <<http://www.freepint.com/events/online-info-2007/>>, and we'll keep you posted on what's happening at our stand.

These days I put more money into my rainy day fund than I spend on eating out, but I'm still heartened to hear about how the new economy is evolving. And if Mark Zuckerberg, the 23-year-old who founded Facebook, can get \$15 billion out of Microsoft, more power to him.

Sincerely,

Monique Cuvelier Editor, FreePint
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Judith Schilling works toward improved accessibility of the Commission's abundance of publications for schools and libraries. She speaks English, German, Swedish and French - more or less.

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My Favourite Tipples

by Judith Schilling

Cheaper phone calls, cleaner beaches and improved product safety are just some examples of how the European Union affects our daily lives without us necessarily realising it. Information professionals can pursue the following avenues to learn more about the EU - all services and publications for the general public are for free.

- The European Commission's representation in the UK offers a free booklet with information that sets out the ways in which Britons benefit from EU membership <<http://digbig.com/4tsbd>>.
- Younger readers or their teachers may be interested in "Languages Take You Further", a publication with examples of 25 European languages. The Representation made 200,000 copies available to UK schools <<http://www.europe.org.uk/languages/>>.
- European Day of Languages is only one event arranged by the 30 Europe Direct Centres in the UK. Find the one closest to you on <<http://www.europe.org.uk/infolinks/-/ctid/8/>>.
- The abundance of free EU literature may be viewed on the Easy Reading Corner <http://ec.europa.eu/publications/atoz_en.htm> or ordered on the EU bookshop <<http://bookshop.europa.eu/>>.
- Who called for 'a kind of United States of Europe' in 1946? Check out the history of the European Union <http://europa.eu/abc/history/index_en.htm>.



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Monique Cuvelier is editor of the FreePint Newsletter. She has edited, launched and written for many magazines, newspapers and websites in the US and UK. Learn more about her at <http://www.onopoly.com/support/tea/m/>.

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Market research is backing a flood of activity on the FreePint Bar recently <http://www.freepint.com/bar>, with questions ranging from the number of people in the UK using Blackberries to the depth of the children's gardening market. A few samples are below, but many more abound at the Bar.

- Facebook has an increasingly enormous following (and, according to Microsoft, may be worth a staggering \$10 billion), but is it any good for conducting surveys? A FreePint Bar member is wondering if it's a useful way to assess English university students' thoughts on the quality of their campus buildings <http://www.freepint.com/go/b184155>. Send your insight, and then read John McBurnie's article on online identity.
- A newly minted market researcher is looking for guidance from the FreePint community on how to dig into the children's gardening market <http://www.freepint.com/go/b183422>. Pick up a few tips from some seasoned researchers or post your own.
- Issues with contaminated land seem to be popping up with increasing regularity, so it's little wonder there's such a rich flurry of discussion on the topic on the Bar <http://www.freepint.com/go/b187990>. Read through some of the useful resources posted.

- A 30-year backlog of Journal of Bone & Joint Surgery is a hot commodity on the Bar <http://www.freepint.com/go/b188393>. Check in if you're interested in taking ownership of this weighty archive.
- It often seems that everyone has a Blackberry in the UK, but just how many are wired? One researcher is having difficulty finding much information on the topic, which appears too small for larger sources to address. Have ideas <http://www.freepint.com/go/b189082>?

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"Charting a New Course: The Future of Information Work"

By Martin De Saulles



Martin De Saulles,
Course Leader, MSc
Information
Management and
MSc Information
Management
(Health)

Dr Martin De Saulles is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Brighton where he teaches and performs research in the areas of knowledge management, information law and information policy. Prior to joining the University in 2003, Martin worked in a number of information-related roles including Information Manager at Mercer Management Consulting and Senior Analyst at Analysys Consulting. Email him at <mrd@brighton.ac.uk>.

Over the last 12 months at the University of Brighton we have been setting up some new postgraduate awards in information management to complement our existing range of library and information courses. For the last several years we, like most information professionals, have been aware that the sector is undergoing significant changes and that the drivers of change are coming from a number of fronts. In early 2006 we had a close look at the courses we were delivering in the light of these changes and decided that a new course was needed to address some of the emerging demands being placed upon library and information professionals.

In assessing the continuing professional development (CPD) needs of information professionals, we invited feedback from potential applicants via the FreePint Bar and the CILIP Gazette. Both of these generated significant feedback that was hugely valuable. The course development team that I led was very impressed with the willingness of people to contribute their views. I am sure it is the same in most universities, but we were not given a budget for market research and so relied on the goodwill of interested parties to provide us information about what professionals in the field want from a postgraduate CPD course.

Web 2.0 expertise important

One of the key themes that emerged from the feedback was an interest in how some of the new Web 2.0 or Enterprise 2.0 services could be used within the context of information management. Anybody who reads the library and information trade press,

attends conferences and exhibitions, or subscribes to specialist blogs knows that there is something going on out there beyond the usual hype that accompanies new technologies.

I am not the first person to say this, but it reminds me of 1995 when people were starting to become aware of this new 'Internet thing' and could see the potential for transforming communication and information distribution. Those of us with spam-filled and overflowing inboxes may wonder how much progress has been made on the communication side of things, but the Web has certainly transformed the way most of us consume and share information.

Some of the feedback I received expressed a desire to better understand how to make sense of some of the new technologies and services such as RSS, wikis, blogs and how they might better use them in their work. I hope that several of the modules we have created for our new MSc in Information Management will tackle these technology-related issues. Our aim is to provide a practical course that shows students how to use new information management technologies effectively but also to understand them within the context of broader and more long-term developments in library and information management.

Emphasis on training and distance learning

Respondents also expressed an enthusiasm for a course that would help them with the job of end-user training. This seems to be an increasingly important role for

information professionals, as patrons of library and information services are using many information services themselves but often do not have the expertise to get the most from them. Being able to draw on the expertise of the University of Brighton's Centre of Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) has been a great help to us in thinking about how to structure a module that would 'train the trainers'.

A third theme coming out of the responses I received was enthusiasm for distance learning as a delivery method. This reflects the needs for information professionals to balance their work, personal and CPD needs. In the end, we have decided to stick with our blended approach to course delivery, where students undertake a significant portion of the work at home and attend the university in short, intensive blocks lasting three to five consecutive days. We have found this works well because it allows students to get to know each other and the teaching staff, and is less intrusive on their work lives. Next year we will be exploring the use of technology to deliver one or two modules on a completely remote basis.

I believe the interest in distance learning is part of a broader trend in education and professional development amongst library and information professionals. This stems from rapid technological changes requiring new skills to both use these technologies and understand their role within information-intensive organisations. Organisations themselves are facing pressures to adapt to globalisation, increasing competition and raised expectations

from their user base. These factors place dual pressures on information workers to adapt to technological and organisational change. Spending time out of the office or library to attend college becomes increasingly difficult, so options for home study are particularly attractive.

Ironically, some of the technologies that are forcing information professionals to update their skills are also those that make distance learning more practical. Cheap personal computers, pervasive and fast broadband, and collaborative Web tools such as blogs, wikis, instant messaging and video conferencing allow a degree of interaction between students and tutors that would not have been possible even five years ago.

Human interaction still has its advantages

However, there is a danger for educators in becoming carried away with technology and forget that teaching and learning is more than sitting in front of a computer. In my experience, some of the most useful sessions with students have been where a classroom discussion has spontaneously developed around a lecture topic. While this is not impossible to replicate using technology, there is something special about all the participants physically being in a room together.

The challenge posed by all these changes for established educational establishments, including my own, are enormous. The move to mass

higher education in the UK, the increasing demands from employers for students to be taught skills relevant to the workplace and the emphasis by policy makers on lifelong learning for all citizens may not always be best served by the traditional approach of lectures and tutorials taking place within university buildings.

The innovative approach to training librarians in how to use new technologies by Meredith Farkas and her associates in the US has shown the potential for people outside the educational system to teach others. Their '5 Weeks to a Social Library' programme which ran earlier this year used a range of Web tools to help librarians better understand how new social media can help with the delivery of library and information services. Although the online programme was limited to 40 participants, the teaching materials are all still freely available on their website <http://www.sociallibraries.com/course/>.

Making such materials freely available for others to use and redistribute on a non-commercial basis runs counter to the philosophy of many educational establishments, where educational materials are kept locked behind firewalls and offered only to fee-paying students. A notable exception to this is the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the US which has put lecture notes, presentations and supporting videos for over 1,700 courses on their website for free public access. That one of the world's leading universities feels confident enough to make such information freely available shows that education is

more than just reading and listening. It is the interaction with tutors and fellow students on top of the reading, listening and thinking that facilitates true learning.

Looking ahead

Coming back to the University of Brighton and our new postgraduate information management courses, I hope that we have developed some courses which combine the best elements of distance learning with classroom interaction and discussion. Following our consultation process and internal discussions we created two new MSc awards: MSc Information Management and MSc Information Management (Health), which both started at the end of September 2007.

Both these courses are aimed at librarians and information professionals with at least several years' professional experience in this area. As I write this, our new students are now enrolled and I look forward to teaching them over the coming months. We have been able to offer some funding towards tuition fees for new students and hope to be able to do this again for entry to these courses in September 2008. Overall, the informal consultation process worked well and has, I hope, resulted in courses that meet the needs of today's library and information professionals. A key task for my colleagues and I will be to continue this dialogue and make sure the courses remain relevant. I welcome any feedback or questions about our courses and my contact details are in my biography.

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Director of
Business
Development,
United States

" Making Search Work "

Written by Martin White

Reviewed by Jothi Nedungadi

Jothi Nedungadi has a background in training, OD and performance improvement in the healthcare industry. She has been involved in Learning Management System implementations, 360 implementations, surveys and evaluations, for corporate-wide initiatives while managing technical training for Fortune 500 companies in the pharmaceutical and medical insurance industry. Jothi was conferred the Myra T. Grenier Award for committed interest in contributing to the information profession by AIPP (Association of Independent Information Professionals) in 2007. She is dedicated to helping clients with strategic information needs. She provides information research services to her clients as CEO and Principal of Competitive InfoSearch, LLC <<http://www.competitiveinfosearch.com>>..

"Making Search Work" by Martin White is a well thought-out, well-researched read for any IT professional looking to handle enterprise searches more effectively.

The jargon, terms and language used are appropriate for IT professionals. The author has done a superb job of conveying the information in an understandable fashion and putting things in perspective for non-IT persons among us as well.

Having read the book, the title seemed a little misleading. It would have been more appropriate if it had been titled "Making Intranet Searches Work" or "Making Enterprise Searches Work". This is not to undermine the content of the book in any way. It has all the requisites for organisations to understand the magnitude of what the author is suggesting.

It requires a visionary organisation to be able to understand the depth and breadth of what it takes to make searches within organisations more effective. It also requires a strategic organisation to be able to plan, manage, orchestrate and implement a robust search engine to meet the growing needs of an organisation. This book is informative, and as I was reading it I was left wondering if any organisation would take advantage of the foresight that the author has so shared so diligently.

IT functions within an organisation these days seem to be focused on meeting the immediate, day-to-day operational requirements of the organisation, while the chief executives

are looking to outsource parts of - if not the whole - IT function as a cost-cutting measure.



As well-researched as this book is, the reality is that IT departments invariably do not have the time, the budget or the inclination to take on what is suggested in this book. And if they do venture to take on the challenge, it is a long-term proposition that many organisations are unwilling to accept, as they have more pressing problems to handle.

So while the content of this book is what is needed to effectively index, structure and manage enterprise-wide information, the fact still remains that most organisations are probably not in a position to undertake a project of this magnitude. They end up with disorganised, mismanaged and redundant information or document searches. It seems idealistic and perhaps even a wasted effort to lay out the information as the author has, if IT professionals are not able to utilise the structure, the expertise and the cautionary tone that go along with it.

This is however an impressive compilation of information and a commendable effort by the author to address intranet search. His perspectives on making searches work are invaluable. I would recommend this book to those who are considering implementing an enterprise/intranet search engine. There is definitely more to it than meets the eye!

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"Your Online Identity: Key to Marketing and Being Found"

By John McBurnie

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We all have different identities that change depending on where we are and who we are with. There is fluidity to our identity in different contexts; identity is a complex construct. Certain people and situations bring out different aspects of our identities. As a result, different people will perceive us differently as they have experienced the constructs of our identity in different situations.

Now many have started to build an online identity, again changing the idea of identity. People have different online identities; flickr <<http://www.flickr.com/>> identities, Facebook <<http://www.facebook.com/>> identities, FreePint Bar <<http://www.freepint.com/bar/>> identities and even identities with secret pseudonyms. As social networking tools become more prevalent, the concept of online identity becomes more important. This article looks at libraries building an online identity using MySpace <<http://www.myspace.com/>> and information professionals using social networking tools to build an online identity.

Making MySpace work for libraries

The influence of (mostly free) social networking tools is changing the way libraries interact with their users. This is especially true for institutions such as university libraries, whose core users are part of the demographic most likely to use tools such as MySpace. In August 2006 The Financial Times called the UK's 16-24s the 'networked generation'. This was in response to an

Ofcom report that concluded young people were moving away from 'traditional media' such as newspapers, television and radio to online communities. According to the survey, more than 70% of 16-24 year olds visited social networking sites and 54% used them at least weekly.

Traditionally, libraries have communicated using one-way messages. The message is created by the library and directed at the user. With MySpace, the messages are delivered using a peer-to-peer pyramid model. For example, the Brooklyn College Library (BCL) MySpace page <<http://www.myspace.com/brooklyncollegelibrary>> delivers messages and targets its audience organically. At the time of writing BCL has 3,257 MySpace 'friends'. These are people who wish to be associated and networked with the BCL. The peer to peer pyramid model means that 'friends' of 'friends' will visit BCL's MySpace page.

By simply ensuring that the content on their page is current and useful, MySpace's networking model ensures that BCL's message is distributed to a wide audience, as their MySpace popularity increases by virtue of peers reviewing one another's friends and interests. Information from peers is becoming more trusted and influential. The 2007 Edelman Annual Trust Barometer study found that in the US trust in a 'person like me' was 68%, compared to 20% in 2003. This is why organisations like BCL are using MySpace - it is a powerful tool, especially amongst young people.

If librarians use tools such as MySpace, they cannot be 'tourists'. It is not enough for libraries to use the basic functionality of social networking tools to project a credible online identity, by dressing up tired messages with pictures and MP3s. A library's use of any social networking tool must be purposeful. A MySpace page can be used as a portal to push users towards resources such as online libraries or catalogues.

Other MySpace profiles can be good sources or gatekeepers of information. For example, a library that is particularly concerned with Californian history can link to the Californian Historical Society profile. Libraries can help users by making more information rich profiles their 'top friends' and hence more prominent.

The functionality of MySpace allows libraries to deliver targeted messages. The profiles of friends allow libraries to find out more about users than they might in traditional interactions. This gives libraries the ability to deliver more personalised, informal messages. In a university setting, for instance, if a biology student becomes a friend, a welcome note can be sent recommending that the student contact the science librarian with any subject-specific questions or giving instructions on how to access a subject-related database. Announcements can be sent out to groups of friends according to a particular demographic or interest. For example, a public library hosting a Teen Reading Week can send out a bulletin to all teenage friends.

A MySpace page must be kept current. Social networking tools allow an online identity to grow, but only if there is content that people feel is worth sharing with their peers. As well as timeliness of content, libraries should treat personal messages via MySpace as they would emails. According to an AP-AOL Instant Messaging Trends Survey published in early 2006, nearly three in four (72%) teens who use instant messaging (IM) say they send more IMs than emails, as do one in four (26%) adults. If libraries are to build relationships with their users, they will have to embrace instant messaging as it becomes more popular.

Building an online identity using social networking tools

As individuals, information professionals can build up an online identity to present themselves and their profession. On his blog <<http://www.benhammersley.com/>>, Ben Hammersley (currently a BBC journalist, who amongst other things, coined the term 'podcasting') presents his online identity via links to Wikipedia <<http://www.wikipedia.org>>, Facebook, Twitter <<http://twitter.com>>, YouTube <<http://www.youtube.com>>, del.icio.us <<http://del.icio.us>> and Flickr, rather than having a biography or About Me section. Hammersley allows us to explore his online identity, find out what he has done in the past, what he is currently doing and his plans for the future. We can even delve further into his online identity to find out a little about his personality. Ultimately, we can decide if he is a person that interests us or not.

Via blogs and pages such as Facebook, information professionals can declare who they are, and where they can be found. Services and value are demonstrated via these facets of online identity. Online identities should allow people to interact with one another and explore shared interests. Most obviously, this is accomplished through things like becoming friends on sites like Bebo

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

or through social bookmarking. Social bookmarking sites such as del.icio.us and Furl <<http://www.furl.com>> provide a powerful tool for people to find out about one another's interests by looking at their bookmarks. This can be taken a step further by looking at profiles of users who share the same bookmarks. As well as providing peer reviewed content, social bookmarking sites allow online identities to be built. On top of this, content created can be easily shared; therefore it is important that your websites and blog posts can be easily bookmarked.

Information professionals have the ability to build specific, personalised networks using tools such as Ning <<http://www.ning.com>> or me.com's Snapp network <<http://www.me.com>>.

Ning allows anyone to create their own functional and customised social networks quickly and easily. Social networks created on Ning are personal and tailored to specific interests. At the time of writing, there are over 76,000 Ning networks, nearly 200 of which turn up in a search on the word 'Librarian'.

Ning differs from tools such as Facebook and MySpace in that it is less proprietary and more specialised. As social networking becomes more popular and people begin to build a more robust online identity, they will become more interested in creating their own worlds, their own social networks, around different needs and niches. As such, pliable applications such as Ning will become more powerful. Don't know where to find statistics on a certain topic? Join a Ning group and discuss this and other issues with people who have a definitive interest. The Ning group doesn't exist? Build one and wait for like-minded individuals to join (no matter how small the niche). Gaps in knowledge can be bridged by looking outside of comfort zones, as Ning allows networking amongst practitioners of many disciplines.

Finding and being found

The importance of building a viable online identity by those who want to be found is reflected in the number of people search engines such as Peek You <<http://www.peakyou.com>> and wink <<http://www.wink.com>>.

As well as people search, more profile aggregators such as claimID <<http://www.claimid.com>>, Lijit <<http://www.lijit.com>> and Ziki <<http://www.ziki.com>> are being created. Profile aggregators allow various profiles to be accessed in one place. Tools such as Ziki allow a more complete online identity to be built by enabling users to aggregate identities, post contact information, interests, tags and photos. Other features include a blogging facility and related Zikis,

a network of users who share similar interests; these networks are built up around the tags attached to profiles.

Building and managing a consistent online identity will help to project an image of an active, well-informed, progressive individual or organisation. As well as building a reputation to promote themselves, libraries and information professionals can build an online identity to push and pull rich information. Online identities should be accessible and frank, but most of all, interesting.

Related FreePint links:

- "It's not what you know but who: Are online professional networking services any use?" By Tim Buckley Owen
<<http://jinfo.com/newsletter/Jinfo-Newsletter-134.pdf>>
- "Survival Guide: Online Social Networking" By Shally Steckerl
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/130907.htm>>

Related links:

- "The MySpace Generation"
<http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/05_50/b3963001.htm>

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Review



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- "Skillfair Consultants Conference" 1 November
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- "Searching the Internet: Google and beyond" 6 November
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- * "KMWorld & Intranets" 6 - 11 November
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Singapore:

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Gold

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

- FreePint No. 215 5th October 2006. "What They Say and Do: Practical Tips for Harvesting Reliable User Feedback for Planning" and "Business Information Trends: Adding Value and Creating Customised Applications"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/051006.htm>
- FreePint No. 192 13th October 2005. "Pulse on Germany - German sources of business information on the World Wide Web" and "Trends in business information, provision and use"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/131005.htm>
- FreePint No. 169 14th October 2004. "Web Accessibility: Ensuring Access for All" and "Trends in business information, provision and use"
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- FreePint No. 146 2nd October 2003. "Problems with Good Credit Information on Chinese Companies" and "Digital Preservation - Barbarians at the Gate"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/021003.htm>
- FreePint No. 122, 3rd October 2002. "Effective Writing: How Good Copy Can Make Your Information Work Harder" and "From Knowledge Economy to Knowledge Ecology? - IBM's David Snowden Maps a 'Third Way' for KM at Open University Seminar"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/031002.htm>
- FreePint No. 97, 4th October 2001. "Tax Links" and "Taxonomies are what?"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/041001.htm>
- FreePint No. 72, 5th October 2000. "Influence of the Internet on the Patent Process" and "All change for search technology?"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/051000.htm>
- FreePint No. 47, 7th October 1999. "Sources of UK Financial Information on the Internet" and "Getting Good References"
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