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Plus ...

Jobs,
Discussion,
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and Events

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Editorial



Join me in this quick experiment: look around you, pick up each item you see and make a note of where it was manufactured. Here's how mine breaks down:

China: Desk lamp, computer speakers, phone, cup warmer, iPod, headset, label maker, desk, computer, monitor, printer, Palm (although assembled in the US), Palm keyboard, paper shredder, many pens, pencils and pencil cup, in-basket

US: Dictionary, markers, tissues

UK: Thesaurus, hand cream

Norway: Lip balm

Mexico: Rubber

Thailand: Elastic bands.

Looking at that list, you may deduce two facts about me: first, correctly, that I have dry skin. Second, and incorrectly, that I live in China, since that's where the bulk of my belongings were made.

If you've done a quick check of your surroundings, you'll likely come up with a similar list, with most of your possessions bearing the 'Made in China' mark and only a handful from your own country.

More than 100 million Chinese men and women churn out any kind of ware imaginable, and they're shipped all over the world. Given the enormous Chinese output, you might expect piles of facts, data and figures that relate to that financial powerhouse.

Not true. Many of the statistics that come from China are best guesses, which amounts to hard work for researchers. To address this situation, FreePint's frequent contributor Tim Houghton compiles a list of trustworthy resources for Chinese research (more on this topic in a recent issue from VIP <<http://web.vivavip.com/go/vip/39>>).

Also in this issue, we present a sampling of the latest in our FUMSI series of reports and tool kits, this one from Stephanie Taylor on how to create end user documentation for projects. And a review of Kim Dority's book "Rethinking Information Work", reviewed by Marcia J. Rodney.

When you're done reading this issue, send me your list of belongings. Where did they come from? What resources have you found to help you do work in Chinese and other Asian countries? What do you expect to happen in 2007? This is a dialogue I'm sure many of us are interested in seeing developing.
Sincerely,

Monique Cuvelier Editor, FreePint

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w: <<http://www.onopoly.com/support/team/>>

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My Favourite Tipples

by Kelsey Wiens



Kelsey Wiens is a Library Technician specialising in tax research at PricewaterhouseCoopers in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, and is currently training for an 8-day, 2,400 km cycling relay from Calgary to Austin, Texas, in support of Cancervive, a Canadian charity that supports post-cancer rehabilitation.

Staying on top of changes in the Canadian tax industry may not be exciting but it does move quickly. Here are a few sites that help me stay on top of my game and ensure that I'm invaluable to the accountants I work for.

- Bank of Canada Exchange Rates <<http://www.bank-banque-canada.ca/en/rates/exchform.html>>. You can pull up rates historically by date or by average conversion, and search any two currencies at a time, so this is useful for everyone, not just Canadians.
- Legisinfo: Parliament of Canada Info <<http://www.parl.gc.ca/LEGISINFO/index.asp?Language=E>>. Want to know what's coming up on the schedule? What about the history of a specific bill? This is your site.
- Tax Court of Canada Hearing Schedule <http://www.tcc-cci.gc.ca/hearings/hearings_schedule_e.php>. This allows me to keep ahead of what's happening with specific court cases so we can be ready to advise our clients earlier.
- Doing Business Guides <http://www.buyusa.gov/home/worldwide_us.html> The US Department of Commerce maintains this fantastic website that will answer just about any question you have on doing business in a given foreign country.
- Map My Ride <<http://www.mapmyride.com/>>. As a cycling enthusiast, I'm always looking for new routes to ride. One of my favourite features is the data on elevation gained and lost - helpful, since I live near the Rocky Mountains.



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NEW: Project Handbook Report
and Tool Kit

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<<http://web.freepint.com/go/shop/report/project-handbook/>>



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Legal Information Officer

Research, manage subscriptions, assist with regular bulletins on legal developments, content manage areas firm's intranet, training.
Recruiter: Aslib, The Association for Information Management
Country: United Kingdom
<<http://www.jinfo.com/qo/j6907>>

Information Officer

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Recruiter: The Prostate Cancer Charity
Country: United Kingdom
<<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j7126>>

Information Scientist - Chemistry and Patents

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Country: United Kingdom
<<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j7121>>

Business Knowledge Developer

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Recruiter: Business Link London
Country: United Kingdom
<<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j7127>>

Senior Researcher / Knowledge Manager

Senior Researcher with Knowledge Management expertise for newly created role at Central London consultancy in prestigious offices.
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Country: United Kingdom
<<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j7139>>

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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.onopol.com/support/team/>.

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Middle Eastern and Far Eastern research continue to be challenging topics for FreePint Bar members, which we address in this issue of the newsletter. Read on for specific issues expressed in the Bar, and then post your own thoughts [<http://www.freepint.com/bar>](http://www.freepint.com/bar).

- Researching companies in the Middle East can be a challenge, as FreePint's sister publication revealed in its last issue [<http://web.vivavip.com/go/vip/43>](http://web.vivavip.com/go/vip/43). The discussion continues at the Bar. Have you come across any useful resources for this geographic region? Share them: [<http://www.freepint.com/go/b156303>](http://www.freepint.com/go/b156303). If you're researching China, be sure to read Tim Houghton's article in this issue.
- It seems as though the song "(How Much Is) That Doggie in the Window" has been around since time began, but it started with a frugally minded dog shopper somewhere. Someone on the Bar is searching for the roots. Tap into this interesting thread [<http://www.freepint.com/go/b155064>](http://www.freepint.com/go/b155064).
- Easy-to-read guides to Freedom of Information and copyright issues and legislation can be difficult to find, as one Bar member has found. One recommended resource is Paul Pedley's "Copyright & the Internet: Myth and Reality" [<http://digbig.com/4tete>](http://digbig.com/4tete). A few other useful sites have cropped up at [<http://www.freepint.com/go/b152737>](http://www.freepint.com/go/b152737).

- Someone in the Student Bar is looking for help setting up a CD-ROM in a library that's chock-full of CDs. Full details available here: [<http://www.freepint.com/go/s28250>](http://www.freepint.com/go/s28250). Ideas welcome.
- A doctoral student at the Student Bar is looking for solid background on Sarbanes-Oxley, which has sparked some useful comments [<http://www.freepint.com/go/s27965>](http://www.freepint.com/go/s27965). For more details on compliance, look at this past issue of VIP [<http://web.vivavip.com/go/vip/33>](http://web.vivavip.com/go/vip/33) and FreePint [<http://www.freepint.com/issues/240806.htm#bookshelf>](http://www.freepint.com/issues/240806.htm#bookshelf).

Subscribe to FreePint Bar twice-weekly email digests at [<http://www.freepint.com/subs/>](http://www.freepint.com/subs/).

"Project Handbook Report and Tool Kit: Research and Scoping"

By Stephanie Taylor



Critical Eye Communications
<<http://www.critical-eyecommunications.co.uk/>> is a new company set up by Stephanie Taylor who has over 10 years' experience in the library and information sector. This has included a grounding in academic libraries at the John Rylands University Library Manchester, before progressing to work on projects delivering electronic document delivery solutions to academic libraries throughout the UK. She has also worked on the 'other side of the fence' in a software house producing document delivery and information management solutions.

[The latest report from FUMSI, The Project Handbook, is a tip-packed resource that helps those looking to document projects. This first chapter shows how to begin structuring your project handbook, and you can learn more and read activities in the whole report, available on <http://web.freepint.com/go/shop/report/>.]

From workflow to users

The first step to any good end user documentation is to identify as early as possible who will be in this group and start talking! Talk to them about what they do, what you want them to do, and where the changes your project is initiating will fit in with their work. This helps people feel a part of the project and introduces the new ideas to them well in advance of the implementation. At the same time, you get an understanding of the way they are already working. You need to start looking at how your project will fit in on an operational level. And once you have started talking, keep talking! New ideas will constantly emerge, and you will continually gather new information about what your users want and need.

It isn't always possible to identify everyone who will be involved in a project at the beginning of the process, so view your identification of users as an ongoing process, carrying out regular checks and updates to find new user groups and repeat your initial introduction to the handbook and your work to each group.

Consider an example: a project designed to implement a new inter-library loans module of a library

management system for a hospital library has some obvious groups of users within the organisation; the library staff who run that service, the technical staff who support the system and the patrons who will place orders for items are the most obvious. However, as the project progresses, new users are identified. The Web design team need to include an online request form that links to the system on the library website and staff working on the main issue desk often deal with inter-loan items in the evenings and at weekends. Two new patron user groups also emerge. The library is a member of a local consortium and patrons from any member libraries can place inter-library loans requests. The library also supports a number of mental health staff who are based away from the hospital, living and working in the community, and also regularly order inter-library loans.

Before you can create the documentation to help your users, however, you have to understand them better - what their needs are, how the project will fit into their daily work, and what questions they will have about the project. Drafting a workflow first will help you identify the right users more quickly. The workflow processes on which your project touches are, essentially, what the project is all about. Your users, then, are identified because they are the ones who participate in these processes.

User input

Once you have defined the workflow, use it to identify your users. Show the workflow to people within the organisation, and ask who will be

affected by your project. Be as inclusive as possible in getting people involved. If people know what is happening, know where to get updates and (most importantly for your handbook) know where to get information that requires changes to their work, they are much more likely to view your project in a positive light.

Pull a group of user-stakeholders together, and explain your plans for the handbook. Make sure they understand that your aim in producing it is to help them and to make their work easier. Let them know that you will be keeping the information updated and that you will welcome feedback on the handbook and the project.

Most importantly, ask for their help. And then listen to what they say. If your project handbook is to be genuinely useful, then you need to begin with a flexible framework, not a rigid plan. Activity 1 (available in the full version of The Project Handbook) leads the way for identifying the needs, thoughts and feelings of your users and addressing these in the handbook. Use the session to get a clear idea of your users too. Keep them in mind when you start to actually write, as they are your audience. Do you need to reassure them? Inspire them? Encourage them? Hold their hands to give them confidence or rein them back a little because they're raring to go? Understanding the levels of confidence and competence your users will bring to their interaction with the project and knowing their preconceptions (both

good and bad) are very important. The handbook can set the tone for the project delivery, and pitched in a way that addresses the hopes and fears of your users, it can stop some problems before they have a chance to take hold.

Remote access

Real-time and face-to-face meetings are not always possible for pulling together user groups. You may have difficulty with:

- Project partners based overseas
- Posts that are still at the recruitment stage
- Colleagues who are not easily available due to other commitments.



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In such cases, explore alternative communications channels. For remote workers rework your face-to-face meeting agenda to start with a document-based or Web-based introduction followed by a conference call. For time-strapped colleagues, concentrate on presenting them with the key issues that are relevant to their specific involvement and create a short conference call or VOIP contact. A guarantee that the time commitment will be no longer than 20 minutes maximum will make scheduling easier. For vacant posts, flag up the required involvement with your project at an early stage and ensure it becomes part of the role so successful candidates are already aware of what you will be doing. Create a short project introduction and make it available to the colleagues who will be involved in the selection and management of the new posts, keep updated with progress on recruitment and prepare a package about your project that can be delivered as part of the induction process.

Scope for inclusion

Scoping the handbook is a key task. Scoping is about focusing on what is to be included, and equally about understanding what should be left out. It's about arriving at a compromise between including enough information to support your users but not adding so much that the user is swamped and confused by detail. Keeping the focus is the main job here. If you are unsure to begin with, draw up a rough plan that includes everything in detail. Then review it and refine it down by asking of every point 'Is this necessary? What happens if I take this out?' This process

should give you a focus on what is useful and what level of detail is best for supporting your users.

Next, you need to get an overview of key areas that will be affected by the implementation of the project. You also want to identify how these changes will blend with the existing workflow. Having this overview will help you understand how broadly to scope the content of the project.

Different types of projects will have different scope. The section below shows two examples of project types and the kind of scoping notes that they raise.

Type of Project: Technical change

Example: Introducing a new system, eg library management system

Users: Administrators, staff users, onsite patrons, remote patrons, technical support

Scope Notes:

- What are the main operational tasks currently performed with the existing system?
- How will these tasks be affected by the new system?
- Which user groups are involved in which tasks?
- Are there any additional tasks that the new system will carry out?
- If there are new tasks, are there operational/admin procedures in place to deal with them?

- Consider also making more than one version of the handbook to meet the needs of different users.

Type of Project: Operational change

Example: Introducing new, global, administrative procedures to an existing content management system

Users: Staff users at all sites, patrons at all sites, offsite patrons, technical support

Scope Notes:

- How are existing workflows within the system going to be affected by the procedural changes?
- Are there any areas of the system that will be used in the new procedures and are unfamiliar to users?
- Are there are familiar areas of the system that will be used in new/unfamiliar ways?
- Make sure that staff understand the user perspective for patrons and ensure that any differences in the user workflow for onsite and offsite patrons are highlighted
- Technical support staff should be aware of the new procedures although there is no technical change.

Sample scoping - UK-based document delivery/ILL system

In the project handbook, it can be useful to include a description of what users used to do along with what they

will be doing in the future. This helps put things into context. For example, any UK-based library document delivery/ILL system will handle requests to the British Library (BL), but will handle them in different ways. For a project that is introducing changes to the technology in this area, you should be looking at how the users interact with BL now and how the workflow introduced by your project will interact with BL in the future.

Type of Project: Technical change

Example: Introducing a new document delivery and inter-library loans system

Users: Administrators, library staff users, onsite patrons, remote patrons, technical support

resource shelf

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Scope Notes:

- How do library staff users currently order from the British Library (BL)?
- How will these tasks be performed by the new system?
- Are there any new procedures in the workflow at the BL side?
- Are there any new procedures in the workflow at the library side?
- Are there any additional tasks that the new system will carry out?
- If there are new tasks, are there operational/admin procedures in place to deal with them?
- Ensure that library staff are aware of the user perspective for patrons
- Highlight any differences in the workflow for onsite and offsite patrons.

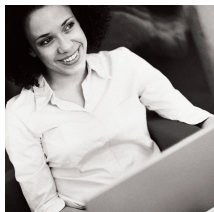
Identifying the key areas for the whole workflow of the project application will ensure that the handbook gives a detailed explanation to the users about what is going to happen, and what they need to do. Read more about workflow in The Project Handbook <<http://web.freepint.com/go/shop/report/>>.

Related FreePint links:

- "Project Handbook Report and Tool Kit" <<http://web.freepint.com/go/shop/report/>>
- "The Project Handbook: How to Write Clear and Cogent End-User Documentation" By Stephanie Taylor <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/210906.htm#tips>>
- "Life of the Party: Social Web Browsers" By Stephanie Taylor <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/150207.htm#feature>>
- "The Content Management Handbook" Written by Martin White Reviewed by Steve Lee <<http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf/conmanhan.htm>>

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"Rethinking Information Work: A Career Guide for Librarians and Other Information Professionals"

Written by Kim Dority

Reviewed by Marcia J. Rodney



Marcia Rodney is principal analyst with RSL Research Group, specialising in survey design and analysis in the library consulting, education and non-profit sectors. Marcia has a split info personality -- by day she works in competitive intelligence and technical research for a Fortune 500 company, but nights and weekends finds her crunching numbers to give public and school librarians the tools they need to demonstrate their value and argue for their budgets. Come September she'll be bicycling in the Dordogne and happily being a tourist in Paris and London -- all travel tips welcome. Write her at <mrodney@rslresearch.com>.

First, a caveat: I have known Kim Dority for more than eight years, as a student, a consultant and a friend. When we first met I was jaw-droppingly delighted by her working life as a serial careerist in publishing, academia, the corporate world and independent consulting. I have benefited from her school of constant reinvention and taking stock, and I keep revisiting her particular philosophical well to make sure I'm not getting too complacent in my own workaday rut.

Now she shares her approach with everyone in her book "Rethinking Information Work". Dority's approach is a wake-up call, not just to information specialists, but to anyone who believes the present will always remain so. And she gives us the tools to deal with our own changing professional realities.

The tools presented in the book deserve a place on every information professional's personal bookshelf, and should not be allowed to grow dusty. While dishing up a variety of options open to us, Dority hammers home the point that professionally we are our constantly changing and evolving skill sets, not our job-of-the-moment.

So what is it we intellectually and emotionally crave in our working lives?

Under the chapter heading 'Designing Your Career' Dority makes a point that echoes throughout her work: 'for once, it really is all about you'. But this is far more than the too-familiar, "What Color is Your Parachute?"-style series of drills re self-awareness.

Instead, Dority asks questions that we usually don't think about, not just the corporate-school-academic-public choices as an info pro, but a different menu of parameters. Her work-life Preference Filters include schema such as level of accountability, hierarchical v. flat organisation, and job or family focus (a concern for start-ups).

She tackles the school, public and academic roles, and encourages her readers to examine them with a more critical eye, seeing what skills are called for in each setting, checking for a good career fit. Information is provided for each on salary ranges, types of jobs and a telling section for each on 'why you might love being an ...', with stories from professionals who are succeeding in their careers.

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'The Nontraditional Path' offers up a variety of career path choices, but the strength in this chapter lies not only in the lists of possibilities for a career in the information field, but in the examples, such as how to take a specialty and move from a traditional setting that isn't working for you to one that harnesses your skills and lets you use them.

'The Independent Path' makes you examine real world questions such as how you will pay your bills and where your clients will come from, but also on establishing and maintaining a brand. Dority provides a list of getting-started baby steps, but here, as in every chapter, she provides a list of resources for the interested reader to turn to for more in-depth reading. And in each chapter Dority describes the possibilities, and then introduces us to the info pros who are making these choices a reality.

The chapters I think I'll bookmark bronze are 'Creating Your Professional Portfolio' and 'Thriving on Change', which provide a serious slap-in-the-face to complacency and the plain vanilla CV. These bring the message home, with sections such as 'Repurposing Your Skills' and 'Creating Your Change Strategies'.

Kim Dority says you might love being an independent if you're comfortable with risk-taking, multi-tasking and constant change'. That certainly describes Dority, but she helps readers find their own fit in a constantly changing world. That's worth the price of admission for this book.

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"Looking East: Chinese Research Sources"

By Tim Houghton



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 and develops bespoke solutions for clients including their own branded portals. The firm does monitor Chinese content. Read more at <http://www.NewMediaIntelligence.com/>

Notwithstanding the hype, the endless newspaper articles, the sometimes breathless editorials, China is an economic phenomenon. For a large economy to grow at an average of almost 10% for nearly 30 years is nothing short of remarkable. Yet since 1978 that is exactly what the still ostensibly Communist regime has achieved. It is no wonder that middle class school children are now being 'encouraged' by their parents to stay late and learn Mandarin at after school clubs.

So it would be staggering if information professionals were not seeing strong demand for country, sector and company intelligence on this most dynamic of world markets. After 30 years of economic growth and liberalisation China remains something of an enigma and certainly one that presents a real challenge for the research community.

A recent book by Tim Clissold, "Mr China: A Memoir", provides anecdotal evidence of the many pitfalls that await the unwary. Joint ventures may not be what they seem and intellectual property rights are more honoured in the breach. This article provides a brief overview of some of the research sources available to those wishing to learn more about the Chinese market. It is directed particularly at those information professionals helping to advise on foreign direct investment (FDI) and exports rather than portfolio investments.

The sources of data below are grouped in approximate order of depth and specialism and also with a view to the stages of an investment project. That is,

initial market evaluation, followed by more detailed market research and in all probability bespoke primary research. It hardly needs adding that an article of this length makes no attempt to be exhaustive. These are only suggestions for sources that may be useful to better understand the Chinese market. There are many others.

And as any good information professional knows, vital intelligence is often 'soft' and implicit. It is held in the minds of experienced practitioners, not within a subscription database or a market research report. Any research reports ought to be supplemented and augmented by these types of knowledge.

Current awareness

As China is such a hot topic currently, media comment is not hard to come by. Any 'global' business title will yield a good crop of China stories. So an archival search through FT.com, The Wall Street Journal, the International Herald Tribune or The Economist may well provide useful material. If you want slightly more local material, then the websites of the South China Morning Post <<http://www.scmp.com/>> The Hong Kong Standard <<http://www.thestandard.com.hk/>> or The China Daily <<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/>> are all informative sources.

For those who subscribe to a news aggregation service such as Factiva or Lexis-Nexis, these can, of course, provide such media data from a single source. And the hardy perennial for good country overviews is the CIA Factbook <<http://digbig.com/4tetg>>, as

is The Economist Intelligence unit and the dedicated country pages on The Economist website <<http://www.economist.com/countries/China/>>. Other good sources for country overviews and risk reports include Oxford Analytica <<http://www.oxan.com/>>.

Statistical data

For those in need of more statistical data the IMF <<http://www.imf.org/>>, the World Bank <<http://www.worldbank.org/>> and the OECD <<http://www.oecd.org/>> all provide a good supply of data on subjects such as GDP per capita, population and the composition of the Chinese economy by sector. However the old computing rule of garbage in, garbage out applies. As much of the source data comes from the Chinese government, it should be treated with some caution and only to provide an overall contextual view.

Credit reference and broker reports

The rather wobbly Shanghai stock market apart, many stock brokers, credit reference agencies and investment analysts are keen on China and do cover it. Standard and Poor's, Fitch and Moody's all provide reference reports on various aspects of the Chinese economy. Brokers that cover China include CIBC World Markets, Jeffries and SG Cowen Securities. Bear in mind that the Hong Kong stock market includes many firms with sizeable exposure to China and with many Chinese research specialists.

For those considering exporting to China, the credit rating of many buyers is hard to assess and as a result credit is harder to come by. However Dun and Bradstreet is known to be investing heavily in its Risk Management and Sales and Marketing products for the Chinese market so hopefully this situation will improve.

Market research aggregators

It would be a brave company that decided to invest in, or trade with, China on the basis of media and broker reports. Hence the next step for a firm interested in China will probably be to start to analyse specific sectors.

Rather than trying to identify specific providers directly, it may be faster to utilise one of the Web-based market research aggregators. Firms such as

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Alacra <<http://www.alacra.com/>>, Mindbranch <<http://www.mindbranch.com/>> and Market Research.com <<http://www.marketresearch.com/>> all provide a portal to multiple research providers. They are an excellent way to survey what research is available in the marketplace.

Specific market research providers

Unsurprisingly, in view of the opportunity presented by the Chinese market, many firms are now offering research reports across a variety of sectors. Some of the providers that offer a good breadth and depth of reports include:

- Frost & Sullivan <<http://www.frost.com/>>, which provide reports on Chinese industrial markets including the Chemicals, Automotive and Healthcare sectors
- SnapData publish a wide variety of reports on the Chinese market, covering everything from Alcoholic drinks to Food and Transport <<http://www.snapdata.com/>>
- Another good source for published data is Icon Group International <<http://www.icongrouponline.com/>> They provide a large number of market research reports, many specifically tailored to market entry strategies
- Access Asia <<http://www.accessasia.co.uk/>> is a UK firm but with a local office in Shanghai. They currently have around 500 reports available but in addition are happy to provide consulting and bespoke research services.

Other research providers, including Frost & Sullivan, also offer consultancy services. And it may also be worth talking to independent research professionals such as, for example, Jane Macoustra of Tai-Pan Research <<http://www.tai-panresearch.com/>>, who has significant personal Asian research experience.

Primary research

Dependent on the type of research project, it may also be necessary to commission surveys and other primary research in order to better understand consumer or business customers. Potential providers for such work include China Polling, based in Beijing <<http://www.chinapolling.com/>>. Although I do not have direct experience of them, they appear to use primarily online-based methods to gather data.



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DDMA (Data Driven Marketing Asia) have recently opened a Shanghai office and so can now offer 'on the ground' focus groups and other qualitative studies in 35 Chinese cities. But clearly this type of research will require substantial costs.

Conclusions

China represents an immense opportunity for many businesses, and as a result demands on information professionals for intelligence on China seem certain to increase. But it remains in many senses an opaque market, with the state still controlling many thousands of enterprises. The availability of high quality information is increasing but contacts and experience, or what the Chinese loosely call 'guanxi', remain important. Hence information professionals will need to apply all their rigour, creativity and contacts to successfully deliver on requests in this area.

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Review



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Our one day course will help you evaluate and refine your PPC strategy and maximise performance through reviewing your search term sets, employing effective bidding strategies and improving measurement and analysis methods to increase ROI. Organised by E-consultancy <http://www.freepint.com/go/e808>

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