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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 & 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 this fully formatted version as an attachment or a brief notification when it's online, visit <<http://web.freepint.com/>>.

## Editorial

Having just re-read my editorial from the last edition of FreePint in 2004, the positive tone now seems positively inappropriate, given the worldwide events of last year. A BBC Radio round-up of the year made for quite depressing listening, and the natural disaster in Asia marked the end of a pretty awful year internationally.



Two weeks into 2005 might, therefore, be too early to suggest that this year should be better than last, but let's hope so.

There were many changes in the information industry last year too, and VIP's Editor Pam Foster today summarises some of the happenings in the business information world. There were some significant mergers and acquisitions, and, of course, the news that Google will be digitising collections from a number of major international libraries.

Today's feature article is about enterprise blogging, based on a paper given at the recent Online Information conference here in London. I personally think there's a very fine line between what are called 'blogs' and what are called 'forums' -- especially when blogs are contributed to by a number of different people. Either way, I'm a big fan of both, and think that the way blogs and forums promote 'community' online is invaluable, both commercially and otherwise.

We're looking forward to 2005. We're working hard to find ways of reinventing what we do, and hope you are doing likewise. Whether you're building a business, or building a career, we should aim to make 2005 a great year -- both for ourselves and for those affected by events around the world, natural or otherwise.

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The FreePint Jobs Update is circulated widely every two weeks. This free newsletter now has 2,000 direct subscribers and is posted at the Bar and in the Bar Digest (circulation 12,000).

To see the Jobs Update No.88 and read the new 'Jobs Advice' section, visit <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b31000>>. To subscribe, modify your account at <<http://web.freepint.com>>.

Fully-formatted PDF version available at: <http://web.freepint.com/jobs/FreePint-Jobs-Update-88.pdf>

Here are some of the latest featured jobs:

### Supply Contracts Manager

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3729>>  
3-4mth contract at Govt Agy in Bristol - help develop procurement strategy for their newly formed Information Service Unit.  
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment

### Lead Document Management Specialist

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3732>>  
You will provide leadership in the support and use of Syngenta's bespoke, global documentum system.  
Recruiter: Sygenta

### Corporate Finance Researcher

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3741>>  
Develop a sector research specialism as you support some of the finest Corporate Finance teams in Europe.  
Recruiter: City Professionals

### Knowledge Manager

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3742>>  
Knowledge Manager Vacancy within Broadview, a Division of Jefferies  
Recruiter: Broadview International, A Division of Jefferies International

### Senior Research Associate

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3774>>  
Exceptional opportunity for Senior Researcher with strong business acumen and confident personality to be involved at Board level.  
Recruiter: Glen Recruitment

### Research Librarian

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3776>>  
Research for information, identify relevant materials dealing with issues of case law and policing matters.  
Recruiter: Surrey Police

[The above jobs are paid listings]

NB: There are 19 other jobs in the current edition of the Jobs Update <<http://www.freepint.com/go/31000>> and over 100 in the database.

### Planning your next career move? CILIP can help

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### "Information Auditing: A guide for information managers" ISBN: 1-904769-08-X

This in-depth report is published by FreePint and offers an overview and practical insight into information auditing, drawing on practical examples and recognised audit methods.

Find out more at: <<http://www.freepint.com/shop/report/>>

### Introducing MINT - a fresh approach to company information from Bureau van Dijk Electronic Publishing

To register for a FREE trial visit <<http://www.mintbusinessinfo.com>>

Companies, news, industry research and directors in a single easy to use information database for research, sales, marketing and business development professionals.

### VIP No.13 :: In-depth review of Business Monitor Online

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

- VIP publishes in-depth reviews of information products monthly.
- VIP Eye analyses business information announcements twice-monthly.

Coming soon: Emerald Management Extra; EBSCO Bus. Source Corporate; Comparative review: CorpfinWorldWide v. ZEPHYR (BvD)



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## My Favourite Tipples

by Zena Woodley

*Zena Woodley has worked in information for an eternity and still thoroughly enjoys the enquiry side of her work. She is Information Services Manager for Broomfield Hospital in Chelmsford.*

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

It's post-Christmas, and we're now facing a New Year. Thoughts turn to sunnier climes - and the awful credit card bills post-festivities.

- Friends of mine have a lovely home near Perpignan <<http://digbig.com/4ckgb>> - a grand area to visit whatever time of year. Getting there: well, I'm a great fan of Ryanair <<http://www.ryanair.com/>> for sensibly priced flights - and some brilliant bargains.
- Now that I've moved into the health field (planet NHS!), it's good to know that my professional association is on the case. An added bonus is that I can now search LISA directly myself - see <<http://www.cilip.org.uk/aboutcilip/welcome/>>.
- Keeping an eye out for which way our masters expect us to turn, I like <<http://www.honourablefiend.com/>>, with its more than sideways look at the political scene.
- An interesting new search engine I've discovered is A9. See <<http://a9.com/-/company/whatsCool.jsp>> and you'll discover why.
- And those debts? Not something we talk about - but here's an interesting site: <<http://www.cccs.co.uk/>>. It offers a discreet online debt check, and has many very useful links.

Here's to a prosperous and happy new year, folks!

### SLA Europe Information Professional Award

Each year Factiva sponsors SLA Europe Information Professional Award (SLA EIP). Nominate yourself or a colleague and win this prestigious award and an all expenses paid trip to the conference in Toronto. Entries by 28th February 2005.

For more details about the EIP award visit: <<http://www.sla-europe.org/>>

### DigBig :: Helping communicators communicate long URLs

Whenever you need to communicate long Web addresses, use the free DigBig service.

DigBig shortens long URLs significantly:

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

### VIP offers exciting content for 2005

VIP is planning an exciting series of reviews for 2005 including new products and comparisons of established products suggested by subscribers. Look out for a major comparison of well-known M&A products early this year.

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

## FreePint Bar

### In Association with Factiva a Dow Jones & Reuters Company

Although we moderate the Bar constantly, it's so nice to conduct a formal review of the goings-on there every two weeks in this section of the FreePint Newsletter. There really is a lot of interesting material at the Bar and here is just a small selection of unanswered queries.

Can you advise a small specialist information unit of a charity on choosing a current awareness service? <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b31053>>. What about some medical information enquiry management software for a non-profit pharma company in South Africa? <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b30979>>.

If you work for a library and are disposing of books or other collections, contact UNESCO about helping to rebuild Tsunami-hit libraries in Asia <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b31026>>. Are any FreePinters going to contribute to the online consultation about the implications of the EU's PSI Directive? <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b31017>>. Old volumes of Hansards (1919-1970) are up for grabs <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b31042>>.

The six-monthly index of all articles appearing in FreePint since 1997 has been published <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b31011>>. VIP has reviewed Business Monitor Online <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b30936>> and the latest FreePint Jobs Update has advice on the importance of what you're reading <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b31000>>. There is a new 'Jobs Update Archive' so that you can read all the past career advice <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b30825>>.

On the software/hardware front, can you recommend any packages for enforcing software licensing restrictions? <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b31056>>. What about OCR scanners for a document management solution? <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b31049>>. Do you use backup software or online backup providers? I've suggested the company that we use <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b31023>>.

Finally, does anyone in the conference/seminar business use a benchmarking system to predict the success of future events? <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b30985>>. Or is there any information about the Esso's 'Price Watch' campaign from 1996? <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b31039>>.

A mixed bag as usual. 'Happy New Year' to all contributors.

William Hann <[william.hann@freepint.com](mailto:william.hann@freepint.com)>  
Managing Editor, FreePint

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



## Tips Article

### "Trends in business information, provision and use"

By Pam Foster



*Pam Foster has been actively involved in the business information industry as a writer and reviewer for nearly 20 years. She 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. In December 2003, she became editor of FreePint's subscription-based products, VIP and VIP Eye.*

To find out more about VIP visit [www.vivaVIP.com](http://www.vivaVIP.com)

The VIP publications, VIP and VIP Eye <<http://www.vivaVIP.com/>>, are concerned with the business information industry - its products, its providers and its users. An overview of their content for the last quarter of 2004 reveals that it was an active period for forging alliances, as well as for buying and selling information companies. New product development was mainly centred on company information services, as well as mobile technology. Significantly, the influence of Google increased, following news of its project to digitise library content, and the launch of Google Scholar and Google Desktop Search.

#### New mergers, acquisitions and alliances

The last quarter of 2004 saw a number of companies involved in M&A activity. Additionally, a number of new alliances were forged and others were ended.

Bureau van Dijk was acquired by Candover, a London-based private equity house. Terms of the deal weren't disclosed and Bureau van Dijk has yet to make an official statement. A statement from Candover said: 'The key attractions of the investment for Candover were BvD's specialised products with strong brand recognition and leading market shares, its substantial growth opportunities and its highly experienced management team'.

In October, Hemscott strengthened its position as an information provider by buying bigdough, a provider of US and European information on institutional fund managers, analysts and journalists. Not only will bigdough's proprietary information expand Hemscott's data resource, but its software applications will also enable the company to launch complementary products and services across the enlarged group. The acquisition was Hemscott's second purchase of a US information provider during 2004. A couple of months earlier, it acquired CoreData, a provider of North American company financial data.

In order to concentrate on its online products, LexisNexis UK sold more than 600 of its print-based legal and tax titles to Tottel Publishing. The titles included books, loose-leaf works, journals and newsletters, as well as the entire Irish list and many of the titles published by LexisNexis UK in Scotland. Tottel Publishing is a new venture, established by Jim Smith, the former UK publishing director of LexisNexis. In 2003, LexisNexis sold its academic list to Oxford University Press.

Pearson sold its stake in Spanish newspapers fuelling speculation that it may withdraw from newspaper publishing altogether in order to concentrate on its more lucrative and successful education division. Recoletos, the Spanish media group and part of the FT Group, has been sold to Retos Cartera, a consortium of Spanish investors. Recoletos owns the Marca and Expansion newspapers. Some industry watchers are suggesting that the loss-making Financial Times newspaper could be the next to go. VIP Eye will be closely monitoring the activities of Pearson over the coming months.

#### Willco in the USA, April 2005

Willco will be attending conferences in Tucson, AZ and New York in April 2005. Contact us if you would like to meet us State-side:

<<http://www.willco.com/go/p44>>

Dow Jones bought MarketWatch for approximately \$519 million. MarketWatch provides business news, financial information and analytical tools, plus it maintains two free advertising supported web sites, MarketWatch.com and BigCharts.com. It also operates MarketWatch Information Services group which licenses market news, data, investment analysis tools and other online applications. MarketWatch will be integrated into the Dow Jones Consumer Electronic Publishing business which comprises The Wall Street Journal Online.

anacubis withdrew its product line in order to undertake a review of its businesses and technologies, with a view to merging the anacubis and i2 product lines. The company is a division of the UK headquartered i2 Group and, to date, both companies have sold different products, with different feature sets. anacubis believes a merger will create a more powerful and feature rich product. anacubis products enable users to retrieve, consolidate and analyse information from information vendors, web sites, enterprise databases and spreadsheets, within a visual interface. The November issue of VIP includes an item from Greg Coyle, General Manager of anacubis who writes on how the information mountain can be turned into actionable business intelligence via the use of visualisation tools.

Factiva ended its alliance with IBM Web Fountain. The companies were co-developing a text analytics product, Factiva Insight for Reputation, which aims to monitor Factiva's news content and web pages for mentions of a company and its competitors, and any issues that might affect a company's reputation. Factiva decided to look for alternative technologies following IBM's inability to provide the currency that the product required. Factiva says that it is still committed to research and development in the areas of text mining and visualisation, i.e. displaying results via charts and other graphics which help users grasp trends and patterns from large quantities of data. Factiva and IBM will continue to work together on other projects.

OneSource was busy signing up new content providers, following D&B's withdrawal of its data from the Business Browser products. To date, agreements have been signed with six new data providers for the European and Asia-Pacific regions. The company claims that the new content will provide its customers with a 10% increase in global company coverage and a 20% increase in executive coverage. Further details of the six information companies can be found in VIP Eye, No. 21, 11 November 2004.

### Related FreePint links:

- 'Information and Libraries' articles in the FreePint Portal <<http://www.freepint.com/go/p69>>
- Post a message to the author, Pam Foster, 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/130105.htm#tips>>
- Access the entire archive of FreePint content <http://www.freepint.com/portal/content/>

### Company information dominates new product development

The majority of notable products launched in the last quarter of 2004 were concerned with company information. The most important of these are from Bureau van Dijk, OneSource and Hoover's.

Bureau van Dijk launched INVIEW, a new global equity ownership product. It combines data from Heale Financial with BvD software to offer a global analysis of equity-holding investment funds and the quoted companies in which they invest. The INVIEW data also provides fund information and contact details for individual fund managers. More information on the new product, together with a profile of Heale Financial, is available in VIP Eye, No. 23, 9 December 2004. An in-depth review of INVIEW will be published in VIP later this year.

OneSource made available the first of a new wave of information modules that employ pattern recognition and linguistic technologies to extract hard-to-find information from unstructured text reports and web sites. The company claims that it is the first business information service to employ content mining technologies that can extract data from analysts' reports and other resources, company web sites and online HTML pages. Two new add-ons, Company Insights and Executive Insights, are available as part of the Global Business Browser product. Company Insights provides insights into the strategic initiatives, strengths and weaknesses of major publicly-traded companies, while Executive Insights provides fielded information on over 400,000 VP and director-level contacts. OneSource plans to launch UK versions of Company and Executive Insights later this year. Both will be reviewed in VIP as soon as they are made available.

Investment by Hoover's parent D&B led to the re-launch of a new Hoover's UK site and a new premium product, Hoover's UK Pro Premium. The new service provides information on more than 40,000 of the world's most influential companies; basic D&B data on 1.7 million UK companies; D&B's database of 90,000 companies worldwide; and detailed records on 560,000 UK companies. In line with the new developments, Gehan Talwate has returned to manage Hoover's UK. Gehan Talwate was previously CEO of PowerInfo, a position he moved to following the closure of the Hoover's UK office over three years ago. VIP will be carrying a review of Hoover's UK Pro Premium product later this year.

### Information providers taking advantage of mobile technology

Information providers are increasingly taking advantage of mobile technology. Three well known providers - LexisNexis, Dow Jones and Yell - have all recently developed new mobile services.

Legal Updater, from LexisNexis, provides tailored email alerts for the UK legal community. Alerts on judgements, legislation and regulations on pre-selected subject areas, together with corresponding news analysis, are received daily, twice daily or weekly on the user's PC or Blackberry by 7.00 am every morning.

Dow Jones NewsWires are now available on hand held devices throughout Europe. Financial

### What is the 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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If you're considering advertising with FreePint, VIP, ResourceShelf or DigBig, Onopoly is your single point of contact.

Download ratecards and presentations at: <<http://www.Onopoly.com/>>

professionals can select real-time Dow Jones news covering specific asset classes in their preferred language: English, French, German, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian or Dutch. Additionally, MarketStream users are able to access the premium Dow Jones Economic Alerts service, which informs them of market-moving Treasury announcements as they happen.

Yell.com Mobile provides information on approximately two million UK shops and businesses, accessible via mobile phones. Additionally, the service offers full colour street maps, and walking and driving directions from where the user is located.

### Google becoming even more mainstream

The impact of Google is becoming even more mainstream following the launch of Google Scholar and Google Desktop Search, together with the news that it is to work with the libraries of Harvard, Stanford, the University of Michigan, the University of Oxford and the New York Public Library, to digitally scan books from their collections so that users worldwide can search them in Google.

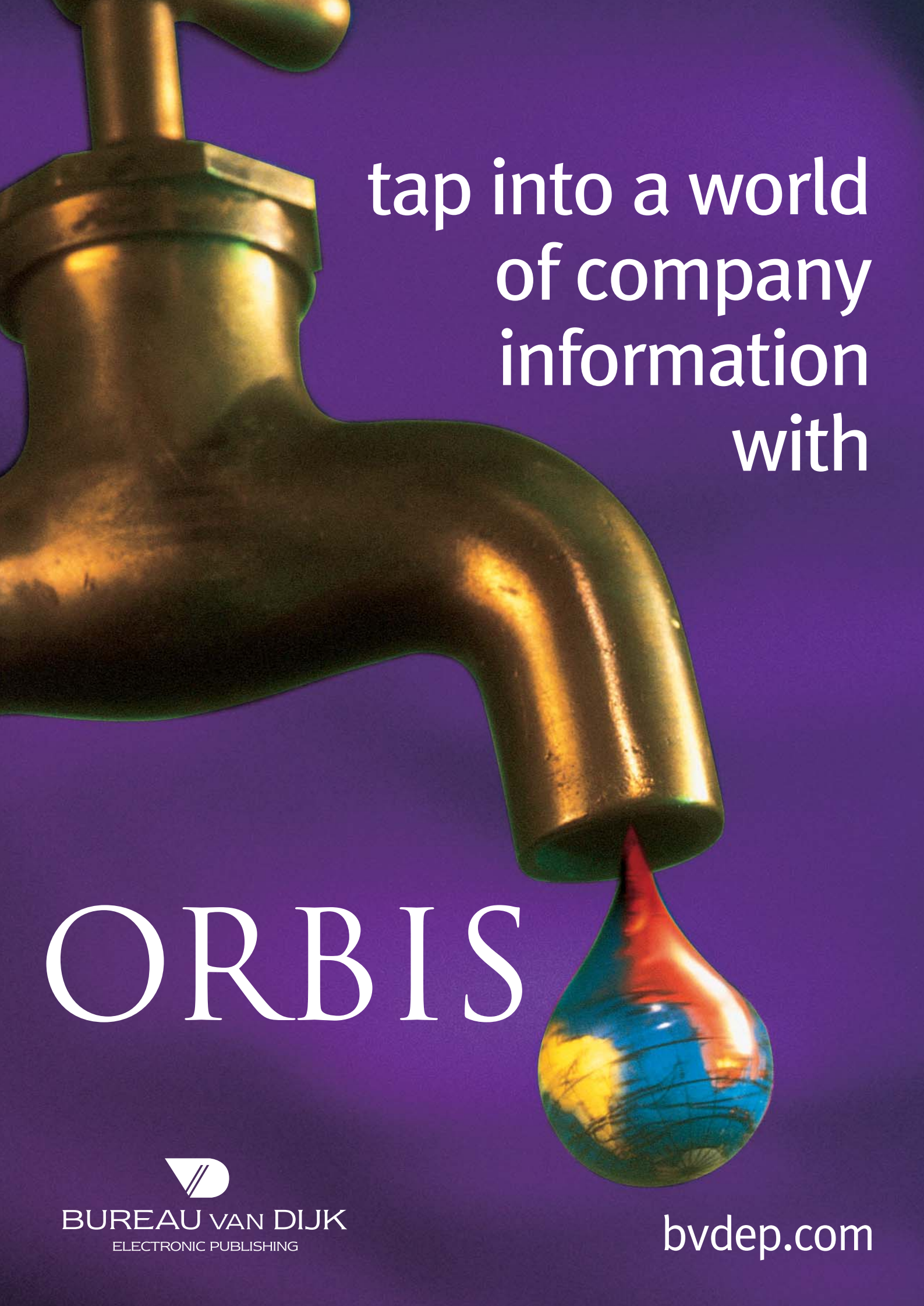
Google Desktop Search has now been launched in the UK and rest of Europe, and is available in 28 languages. Aimed at companies, universities and government agencies, it enables organisations to deliver Google-type search results on intranets and public web sites. Google Scholar, which is still only available in beta mode, enables users to search specifically for scholarly literature, including peer-reviewed papers, theses, books, preprints, abstracts and technical reports. Articles will be available from a wide variety of academic publishers, professional societies, preprint repositories and universities, as well as scholarly articles available across the web.

These are significant developments, and VIP will feature in-depth items on Google Desktop Search and Google Scholar later this year.

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To find out more about VIP visit:  
<<http://www.vivaVIP.com>>

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*Dr Tony Thompson was Senior Lecturer in Media Technology at the College of Librarianship Wales where he pioneered and developed a range of multimedia courses until 1989. He was also consultant, lecturer, audiovisual producer and author in the use and production of multimedia materials in librarianship, education, and commerce. He undertook international consultancies ranging from program production for commercial companies to systems analysis of library and associated services for broadcasting companies. Managing Editor of The Audiovisual Librarian/Multimedia information and technology for fourteen years, Tony is Chair of the CILIP/Nielsen Electronic Reference Awards Committee and an Honorary Fellow of CILIP.*

#### Related links:

- Find out more about this book online at the FreePint Bookshelf  
<<http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf/wales.htm>>
- "The Visual Culture of Wales: Medieval Vision" ISBN 0708318797, published by University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies  
<<http://www.wales.ac.uk/press>>

## FreePint Bookshelf

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

### "The Visual Culture of Wales: Medieval Vision"

**Reviewed by Dr Anthony Thompson**

This is the third and final disc in the series 'The Visual Culture of Wales', "the most comprehensive survey of the visual culture of Wales ever undertaken". The first disc of the series was placed in the top three in the CILIP/Nielsen Reference Awards in 2001, and the second disc won the Reference Award in 2002. At the time I said that "this is the most mature multimedia CD-ROM publication I have encountered". I wondered how disc three would fare, especially as funding was particularly difficult to raise for the third disc, despite the excellence of the Peter Lord's books on which the discs are based and of the first two discs. However, disc three "Medieval vision" does not disappoint, and maintains the highest standards achieved in this series.

Content is accessed from the disc itself, not copied onto your hard disc, but this does not hinder the user in any way. Three icons exist on the disc, one for Windows users and two for Mac users and these open the disc. The disc begins with yet another beautiful opening sequence - who says CD-ROMs can't be as beautiful as books? The now familiar opening screen explaining how to navigate the disc then appears. The icons at the bottom are still a little small, but perfectly adequate and user friendly. An attractive sound track of specially recorded medieval music accompanies initial screens throughout.

Visual journeys through the period consist of visually attractive screens containing multiple pictures and text, and each picture within is clickable to enlarge up to full screen. The journeys take you through a series of themes on the topics of Practice, Patronage and Ideas. Sound clips (often quotations) are included with a number of screens, their presence indicated by an icon. Hold the mouse pointer over the icon and a description of the sound clip appears.

The Time Gallery opens with an attractive screen over which you can move your pointer and as you do so panels appear which can be clicked to take you into different sections of the gallery. Each section proceeds as a multiple image slide show with sound commentaries. Themes include 'The Raglan Frieze', 'The Celtic Revival', and

### FreePint Eves :: Free publicity for your event

If you're associated with an information-related event, anywhere in the world, then make sure it has a free listing in FreePint Events:

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

there are multiple storylines within each.

The 1000 plus photographs (much of the commissioned photography was by Charles and Patricia Aithie) and images used on the CD-ROM are of the highest quality, both photographically and in terms of reproduction on full screen - have a look at the Ardagh Chalice, for example.

The discs also contain the full text of the original book by Peter Lord, and each image on the page is also clickable for enlargement. There are Galleries of images arranged by date and place (accessed by clicking in the appropriate place on a map of Wales). A Glossary and Bibliography are also to be found.

Usefully, icons exist to print the screen or save the screen as a file, and the disc comes with very flexible conditions of use. The production team is to be congratulated for the thought and imagination that has gone into the overall design and content of this series.

It is difficult to see how these discs could have been improved - in my experience it remains the best produced and most beautiful electronic publication currently available, and yet, sadly, it has attracted little attention outside Wales. It is a model for all electronic publishers to strive towards, and yet the small and talented team who produced it has been disbanded due to the current short-termism and short-sighted policies imposed upon universities by politicians who patently do not understand what universities are for. What a tragic waste!

I do recommend all academic and major public libraries purchase this series in the knowledge that it will educate in the best possible way, and hopefully inspire others to produce discs of the same exacting standards. This series is a masterpiece.

## FreePint

### Contributors to this issue:

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## Feature Article

### "Enterprise Blogging"

By Laurel A. Clyde



Dr L. Anne Clyde <<http://www.hi.is/~anne/>> is Professor in the Library and Information Science Department at the University of Iceland <<http://www.hi.is/>>. An Australian citizen, she has worked in a number of countries, including Canada and Namibia, as well as in Australia and Iceland. Her teaching and research interest in the use of online information services and the Internet has resulted in a number of publications, including a new book, *Weblogs and Libraries* (Chandos Publishing, Oxford, 2004) reviewed by FreePint at <<http://www.freepint.com/go/n173#bookshelf>>. She has also written about weblogs and blogging for a number of professional and research journals. She maintains a teaching page about weblogs at <<http://www.hi.is/~anne/weblogs.html>>.

In 2002, weblogs or blogs were discussed in a FreePint article <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/020502.htm>>, particularly in relation to library and information science. Although specialist blogging software had been available only since early 1999 <<http://www.blogger.com/>>, blogs had already, within three years, become popular as a form of online diary and as a way of disseminating current information. In May 2003, "Enterprise blogs" were identified as "a new breed of blog" <<http://www.onclipevent.com/archives/enterframe/000041.html>>.

Nevertheless, it would seem that some businesses and other enterprises have been using blogs for a number of purposes almost since the beginnings of blogging. This article, based on a presentation about "Enterprise Applications of Weblogs" at the "Online Information 2004" conference exhibition in London in December 2004 <<http://www.online-information.co.uk>>, will provide an overview of the applications of blogs in enterprises, and introduce resources and sources of further information. In particular, information will be provided about blogs devoted to discussions of enterprise blogging, and online articles and papers about enterprise blogging. A web page developed to support the conference presentation is available at <<http://www.hi.is/~anne/entblogs.html>>.

Weblogs can take many different forms, any of which might be appropriate for enterprise blogging. They may be a one-way form of communication, where users simply read the "posts" of the blog owners. Alternatively, blogs can be a two-way medium of communication (between owners and their readers) or they can be the basis of a community in which all readers of the blog can contribute on an equal footing. Each of these options has its place. For example, some "one-way" blogs are, in effect, electronic newsletters, while blogs which allow all members of a group to "post" information, can be used as the basis for group projects. Blogs might be public (available to all on the Internet) or private (available on an organisation's intranet or via a password). Meg Hourihan is quoted in the Washington Post (11 September 2003) as saying that "... some of the most effective company blogs are posted on internal networks, or intranets. These can help different business divisions connect or allow employees from disparate offices to share information when working together on a big project." <<http://digbig.com/4cjkw>>. Blogs might be created and maintained by individuals, or they might be team blogs or group blogs, with everyone in the team or group having the right to post. Blogs might be text-only, or they might incorporate graphics or multimedia. They might be maintained from personal computers, or they might be updated using moblogging technology - web-enabled mobile phones or hand-held devices.

### Enterprise Applications of Blogs

There is very little research related to enterprise blogging; the commercial applications of blogging are mostly unproven as yet. There are, on the other hand, many articles and papers written by enthusiasts or early adopters. While this literature contains many useful ideas, there is little evaluative material, so though we know that enterprises have used blogs for various purposes, we don't necessarily know whether or not those blogs achieved the purposes for which they were created. Nor do we have much information about the characteristics of successful blogs, or the purposes for which blogging is most successful. In an article in *Itbusiness.ca*, John Saunders actually challenges his readers to send him "a story of how blogging has helped your organization" <<http://www.itbusiness.ca/index.asp?theaction=61&sid=52106%20>>, though things are not quite

### Gold

- FreePint No.151 8th January 2004. "Sources of Information on Human Resources" and "Quality and Comparative International Statistics" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/080104.htm>
- FreePint No.128 9th January 2003. "Keeping IT Simple" and "Digital Libraries" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/090103.htm>
- Free Pint No.103 10th January 2002. "Searching Patents on Government Databases on the Web" and "Livestock" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/100102.htm>
- Free Pint No.78, 4th January 2001. "Radio Industry Web Sites" and "Careers Information Resources" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/040101.htm>
- Free Pint No.53, 6th January 2000. "PanEris: a model for the virtual establishment" and "Online Information - The past and the future" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/060100.htm>
- Free Pint No.29, 7th January 1999. "Understanding 'cookies' on the Web" and "Internet, copyright and linking" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/070199.htm>
- Free Pint No.5, 8th January 1998. "Top Five Web Resources of 1997" and "Finding IT on the WWW" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/080198.htm>

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as bad as this may make them seem. Karen Lasnick and Julie Weber have reported on one law firm's experience with blogging <<http://www.llrx.com/features/blogsatlawfirm.htm>> while the Radiant Marketing blog has a case study of a small business blog at Kuhlman Auctions, <<http://digbig.com/4cjks>> and there are other examples.

In the literature, the following have been suggested as potential applications of blogging in enterprises:

- Blogs can be useful sources of information for business, particularly as each one may present information from a different point of view, though it is worth noting that blogs are not a good way to gain a basic overview of a subject or topic; they tend to focus on current issues and discussion. However, finding useful weblogs and keeping up with them is a time-consuming activity. RSS feeds <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/170604.htm>> can assist those who need to monitor a number of weblogs. In addition, specialist tools are emerging that will help. For example, Kinja <<http://kinja.com/>> can be used to locate blogs that are similar to blogs that are already being monitored.
- Blogs can be used for communication; indeed it has been claimed that blogs have "the potential to be a key business communication tool" <<http://www.onclipevent.com/archives/enterprise/000041.html>>. They can be used for communication within the enterprise as well as for communication with clients and others outside the enterprise. Like other collaborative tools, blogs are effective for companies that encourage cross-functional communication. They provide individual workers and teams with easy-to-use tools to deliver critical real-time intelligence to customers, partners, investors, and indirectly to internal decision-makers" <[http://www.collaborationcafe.com/2004/01/blogs\\_enter\\_the.html](http://www.collaborationcafe.com/2004/01/blogs_enter_the.html)>.
- Blogging can be a tool for project management; good blogging software provides facilities for organising and managing timelines and information from a variety of sources. For example, Basecamp <<http://www.basecampHQ.com/>> is a new project management tool aimed at designers,

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consultants and freelancers. It uses a "blog-like format" for recording and presenting content; it brings together material from a variety of sources including email, chat, PowerPoint presentations, web links and feedback; and it supports the use of RSS feeds  
<[http://www.eevl.ac.uk/rss\\_primer/](http://www.eevl.ac.uk/rss_primer/)> to deliver information to the desktops of all who are involved in the project.

- Blogs can be used as a competitive intelligence tool, particularly for carrying out research to support new business proposals or product development. For example, the Traction blogging software "handles the collection, organization, sharing, linking and retrieval of information from multiple sources, including e-mail, Web content, external news feeds, business analytic systems and customer contact reports"  
<<http://www.tractionsoftware.com/productadvantage.htm>>.
- Blogs can be used for marketing, for example as a "way to connect with potential customers". Says Ellen McCarthy: "few business bloggers can say how much their daily postings affect the firm's bottom line, but most assume that customers who check in regularly will be more likely to purchase a new product or be faithful users of the services offered"  
<<http://digbig.com/4cjkw>>. Blogs can be used as an alternative to email marketing, or as a marketing tool in their own right. Marketing-oriented blogs enable enterprises to provide information and discussion about new products and about developments within the enterprise. For a report on blogs in marketing, see  
<<http://www.marketingprofs.com/preview.asp?file=/4/huba11.asp>>.
- Blogs have been promoted as a tool for knowledge management and knowledge sharing. Ross Mayfield has suggested that blogs can help to capitalise on "a wide variety of areas of expertise within a group", encourage contributions from different people, and provide a basis for internal data feeds so that they can be viewed in context, among other things  
<[http://ross.typepad.com/blog/2004/02/disney\\_enterpri.html](http://ross.typepad.com/blog/2004/02/disney_enterpri.html)>. The recognition provided by signed blog entries provides motivation for people to participate; they get credit for their ideas. Blogs can "make knowledge workers more productive" says David Goldstein  
<<http://digbig.com/4cjkw>>; "Navneet" further notes that the knowledge captured through a blog (and accessible through its archive) "remains within the enterprise, even if the knowledge worker does not"  
<<http://www.onclipevent.com/archives/enterframe/000041.html>>.

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- Customer service is an area in which the potential of blogging is being explored. Blogs could provide customers with information about products, assessment of the value of the products in particular settings, contact information and direct contact with people who are using the product, tracking of updates to the product and new versions or functions.
- A blog can be used as a newsletter or can take the place of a newsletter; it is a form of online publishing. This is particularly the case with one-way blogs, but nevertheless the capacity for users to comment (where the facility is provided) does make a useful addition to the traditional newsletter format.

A potential problem is that blogging does not fit with the corporate culture of many organisations. If an enterprise values a "top down" approach, then blogging, with its emphasis on freedom and open access, may not be a useful tool: "bottom-up organizations use blogs" says Jay Cross; for him, "... blogs are the leading edge of the social software movement that's propelling the bottom-up, self-organizing reformation of versatile businesses. A bottom-up organization values the collective work of individuals over top-down authority; it supports cooperation and co-evolution in lieu of command and control. Instead of telling people what to do, it provides the networks that enable them to do what they want to do"  
<<http://www.learningcircuits.org/2003/aug2003/cross.htm>>. Another potential problem is that while "blogs are popular in the technology, marketing, media and law sectors, with professionals using them to connect with suppliers, customers and employers"  
<<http://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/europe/11/12/globaloffice.blogs/>> they may meet with less acceptance in other fields.



### Blogs About Enterprise Blogging

A number of well-regarded weblogs have emerged, the primary function of which is to discuss and track developments related to enterprise blogging. They include the following:

Business Logs

<<http://www.businesslogs.com/index.php>>

CorporateBlogging.Info (including Business Blogging Basics)

<<http://www.corporateblogging.info/>>

KLog News: Enterprise Weblogging News, Resources and Commentary

<<http://klognews.com/>>

Mopsos - Corporate Use of Weblogs

<<http://blog.mopsos.com/archives/000111.html>>

Online Business Networks Blog

<<http://www.onlinebusinessnetworks.com/blog/category/general/>>

Radiant Marketing Group: A Blog Dedicated to Small Businesses that Blog

<<http://radiantmarketing.biz/>>

Ross Mayfield's Weblog

<[http://ross.typepad.com/blog/2004/02/disney\\_enterpri.html](http://ross.typepad.com/blog/2004/02/disney_enterpri.html)>

The Small Business Trends Blog

<<http://www.smallbusinesses.blogspot.com/>>

### Articles About Enterprise Blogging

Articles and papers about the applications of weblogs in enterprises have been published in both print and online journals, newsletters, and news services. Some examples include the following:

Blogs in Business

<<http://blogs.salon.com/0002007/2004/06/30.html#a794>>

Carroll, Jim: Jumping on the Corporate Blog Wagon

<<http://www.jacc.com/articles/mktg22.htm>>

Cross, Jay: Blogging for Business

<<http://www.learningcircuits.org/2003/aug2003/cross.htm>>

Easen, Nick: The Budding Business of Blogs

<<http://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/europe/11/12/globaloffice.blogs/>>

Golden Blogs

<[http://www.economist.com/business/displayStory.cfm?story\\_id=1994135](http://www.economist.com/business/displayStory.cfm?story_id=1994135)>

Lasnick, Karen and Julie Weber: Blogging: One Firm's Experience

<<http://www.llrx.com/features/blogsatlawfirm.htm>>

McCarthy, Ellen: Making Blogs More Than Just

What's for Dinner <<http://digbig.com/4cjkw>>

Rosencrance, Linda: Blogs Bubble Into Business

<<http://digbig.com/4cjkt>>

Saunders, John: Enterprise Blogs: The Final Frontier

<<http://www.itbusiness.ca/index.asp?theaction=61&sid=52106%20>>

Small Business Blog Case Study: Kuhlman

Auctions <<http://digbig.com/4cjks>>

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