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Editorial

It is a lot of hard work and it always seems to come at the time of year when everyone's getting their first winter colds. But it was our fourth attendance at the Online Information show last week in London and it was well worth all the effort.

We went for a more modern "wine bar" feel to our stand this year, in contrast to the "local pub" feel last year. We gave away many thousands of beer mats and lots of Free Pinters came up to give us their support and encouragement.

It's an important event because it gives us the chance to chat to our members and find out what they like and dislike about Free Pint. It also means we can find out how much you know about the different services we've launched this year.

The Free Pint Jobs service has obviously been well publicised and is very popular, but there was little awareness of the fully-formatted version of this newsletter. I would therefore invite you to check out the Adobe Acrobat version at <http://www.freepint.com/issues/>. A lot of people are finding it much easier to read and print - since its column-style formatting means it uses fewer pages - and are more willing to pass it to their colleagues.

Anyway, if you didn't manage to make it to the show then you can see some photos of our stand at <http://www.freepint.com/press/>.

In today's Free Pint we have our annual review of the year, taking a light-hearted look at popular topics at the Bar, quirky pieces from the

Newsletter and enhancements to the site. We've also invited Katherine Allen, Event Director of last week's event, to give us her thoughts now that it's all over for another year.

We also look at tools to help you track changes to Web sites. Rather than having to keep visiting sites regularly to see if anything has been added, you can use one of these tools to monitor changes to a site automatically. This is a popular topic at the Bar and so should be helpful to many readers.

I'll be sending you the complete "Free Pint Index" by email next week. This is your handy guide to ALL Free Pint articles and book reviews from the last four years. Please do print it out and disseminate it as you wish.

Thank you for your support this year. We hope you have a wonderful festive season.

William and the Free Pint Team

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ONLINE VERSION WITH ACTIVATED HYPERLINKS

[http://www.freepint.com/
issues/131201.htm](http://www.freepint.com/issues/131201.htm)

ADOBE ACROBAT VERSION WITH NEWSLETTER FORMATTING

[http://www.freepint.com/
issues/131201.pdf](http://www.freepint.com/issues/131201.pdf)

About Free Pint

Free Pint is an online community of information researchers. Members receive this free newsletter every two weeks 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 the substantial archive of articles, book reviews, jobs, industry news & events, with answers to your research questions and networking at the Free Pint Bars. Free Pint Regulars (paid-up members) also receive a weekly current awareness newsletter, discounts and publicity. Please circulate this newsletter which is best read when printed out.

To receive the Adobe Acrobat version as an attachment or a brief notification it's online, visit <http://www.freepint.com/subs>.

22 January, 18.15-19.15, **P.D.A. HARVEY: Medieval Maps of the Holy Land at the British Library.**

Some are simply based on world maps; others draw their information from contemporary travel accounts of the Holy Land. They all have much to tell us about medieval ideas of the land of the Bible and of the Crusades - and also about the development of medieval mapping. P.D.A. Harvey is the author of Medieval Maps (The British Library). For tickets tel 020 7412 7332 or email boxoffice@bl.uk

[bl1021]

Secure List Management is a Must

If you're administering your newsletter subscription list online, then you'll want to do so securely. Our list hosting admin interface is hosted on a secure server to keep your email addresses private.
<http://www.freepint.com/bulk>

"What I like best is that I've been able to customise my list completely." Hairnet

Free Pint Regulars

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

At the Online Information show last week, a number of Free Pinters mentioned that they were considering upgrading to "Regular" status, but that they'd like to see a copy of the Pub Crawl. They also wanted to get an idea of the pricing of a Redistribution License so that they can forward it to their colleagues.

If you'd like to see a sample edition then just drop me a quick line and I'll gladly email you a sample. We have a fixed price list, and so if you want cost details for multiple users then let me know the type of organisation you work for (government, academic, non-profit or corporate) and the number of colleagues who would receive it.

When you have signed up you will have access to an administration screen which will enable you to have the Pub Crawl sent directly to your colleagues. You can also give them password-protected access to the entire archive.

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

[If you are not currently a Free Pint Regular and would like to find out more about the benefits of membership, then please visit the Regular homepage at <<http://www.freepint.com/regular>>. Regular membership is just 60 pounds per year (US\$85, AUS\$169 or 97 Euros) and Regulars receive the weekly "Pub Crawl" current awareness newsletter, discounts and publicity.]

Free Pint Fact

The new Free Pint offices are coming together nicely. Having redecorated before moving in, we're now moving on to other enhancements.

These include improved desks, reception and meeting room chairs, and doors. Yes, doors. Some of the internal doors are somewhat, shall we say, horrible, and so they'll be replaced some time soon too.

My Favourite Tipples from Susy Corney

- I use the Bookshelf page at the Office for National Statistics all the time <<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/OnlineProducts/default.asp>>. This is a list of National Statistics publications arranged by themes, each publication can be downloaded for free in PDF format.
- <<http://www.economist.com>> - The website of the Economist has a good selection of free content and is user friendly to browse and search. If you are a subscriber to the print edition you are entitled to free full online access.
- <<http://www.mori.com/polls/>> - View the latest MORI (Market Opinion & Research International) polls or search the polls archive. You can also sign up for Polls Digest, a service which looks at the latest polls and surveys covered in the UK media.
- <<http://www.searchenginewatch.com>> - All you ever wanted to know about Search Engines. It is well worth signing up for the free email newsletter.

- <<http://www.epicurious.com>> - My all time favorite cooking site, from the publishers of Gourmet and Bon Appetit magazines. The recipe database is excellent.
- <<http://www.findarticles.com>> - A large archive of published articles that is free to search and view. Content is mainly North American.
- <<http://www.irn-research.com/MRL.html>> - IRN's Market Research on the Web database: "A free gateway to web sites containing statistics and market data, including trade associations and other industry sources". Covers mainly UK and pan European resources.

Susy Corney works as the Information Manager for the Henley Centre <<http://www.henleycentre.com>>, a strategic marketing consultancy.

Tell us about your top five favourite Web sites. See the guidelines at <<http://www.freepint.com/author.htm>> and email <simon@freepint.com>.

Free Pint Gold

This time last year we looked at consumer-to-consumer (C2C) online auction business models, and horseracing resources - an unpredictably popular topic.

- Free Pint No.77, 14th December 2000 "A Look at Online Auctions" and "Horseracing on the Web". <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/141200.htm>>

In Free Pint two and three years ago we reviewed Free Pint over the year (as we have done in this issue also) and reviewed the Online Information show for those years.

- Free Pint No.52, 16th December 1999 "Free Pint in 1999" and "Review of Online Information 99".

<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/161299.htm>>

- Free Pint No.28, 17th December 1998 "Review of Online Information 98" and "Free Pint in 1998". <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/171298.htm>>

Four years ago we also reviewed the Online Information show, and Free Pint's William Hann looked at the advantages and pitfalls of using meta-search engines which allow you to search a number of engines at the same time.

- Free Pint No.4, 18th December 1997 "Is Meta a Bit or Much Better?" and "Review of Online Information 97". <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/181297.htm>>

Free Pint Bar
In Association with Factiva
a Dow Jones & Reuters Company
Reviewed by Simon Collery

<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/131201.htm#bar>>

Free Pint Bar <<http://www.freepint.com/bar>>

[Note: To read a posting enter the message number in place of XXXXX in the address

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/bXXXXX>>]

Unless I've counted incorrectly, this appears to be my fiftieth Bar Summary. The Bar is a much busier place now than it was when I wrote my first. For a start, a far higher percentage of questions receive answers than they did then. I've just looked back through some old Bar Summaries and I notice that it's become easier to gather postings into fairly predictable groups. And, interestingly, I think people have become better at phrasing their questions, too.

The Bar has become recognised as an excellent place for finding online resources of all kinds. Recent postings have been about UK postcode and local authority data (14422), a definitive map of UK regions (14483), European newspapers (14477) and some Henley Centre reports (14484). And I reviewed three useful resources, two about online courses (14420) and one about searching for current and breaking news (14533).

People have also become aware that there is a lot of statistical and quantitative data available online. Hence the questions on special library staffing statistics (14427), salaries for information specialists (14415), UK car accident figures (14343), financial sector marketing data (14340) and UK SMS usage and pricing (14332). These have all received a response but questions that have remained unanswered include ones about paint container consumption (14517), the LED market (14479) and small companies with access to PCs or Macs and related figures (14309).

Researchers realise that their subject may have been researched already and that others in the information community may be able to help. We've had postings about knowledge management (14532), French mapping symbols (14495), parental control on the Web (14456), 3D and interactive sites (14363), enterprise resource planning (14336), information visualisation (14348), broadband elearning solutions (14341) and broadband fibre optic providers (14312). Only the last question still needs an answer.

Another regular set of questions comes from business people enquiring about things like analysing companies (14308), company contact details (14534), finding specific types of company (14357), women starting a business (14513), business directories (14458) and starting up chatrooms, in this instance for Australian chartered accountants (14426). There was also one about merger and acquisition ventures that were adversely affected by human resource issues (14515).

There's nearly always a group of finance related queries and this time round is no exception, with postings about Euromoney Reports (14329), the leading US mortgage

servicing companies (14514), US company credit information (14381), Greek historical share prices (14355) and raising capital for a small business (14352).

Usually the largest group of questions is the one about technical and software matters. The latest items in this group are about music studio software (14509), bulk emailing (14518), correcting PDF files (14524), computer peripherals (14525), Explorer folder options (14431), damaged floppy disks (14367), emails with no sender details (14310), taking credit card payments online (14468), dealing with viruses (14462) and getting rid of HTML coding in text emails (14529).

We also had a request for help with SPSS and NUDIST software (14433). The latter stands for Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing, in case you were wondering.

Finally, there's always a handful of questions that are not so easy to put in a group. Aside from the usual Latin ones (14535, 14429, 14440, 14449, 14385), there were miscellaneous questions about using mobile phones in hospitals (14485), UK immigration laws (14507), jigsaw puzzles of Frankfurt (14317), football transfer records (14365), getting professional voiceovers made (14323), using postage stamps as legal tender (14540), a writer called Ann Rachlin (14382) and a cryptic music puzzler (14543).

Free Pint Student Bar

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

[Note: To read a posting enter the message number in place of XXXX in the address
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/sXXXX>>]

Students have been researching information retrieval (2037), media companies (2038), Java programming (2027), Hollywood's domination of cinema (2041), information literacy (2045), continuing professional development in education (2047), information communication technology (2051) and Irish Department of Foreign Affairs examinations (2036).

Simon Collery, Content Developer <simon@freepint.com>

If you have a tricky research question or can help other Free Pinters then do post a message at the Bar
<<http://www.freepint.com/bar>> or the Student Bar
<<http://www.freepint.com/student>>.

I'm Not Buying Unseen

If you've considered buying a UK company or director Report but don't know what you'll getting for your money ...
... then view the sample reports at:

<<http://www.freepint.com/icc/sample/>>

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[fa1023]

Free Pint Jobs

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

Free Pint Jobs is THE place for information-related vacancies. Whether you're job searching or have a position to fill, you should be making the most of Free Pint Jobs.

Here are some of the latest featured jobs:

Data Analyst

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j1513>>

Analytical and numeracy skills are required for this fabulous opportunity.

Recruiter: R&B Group

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<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j247>>

With 10 years experience for Management Consultancy. Involves reactive and involved research with direct client contact.

Recruiter: Glen Recruitment

Junior Information Scientist

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j1499>>

Exciting opportunity for a recent information and/or science graduate to work for the research arm of an international food manufacturer.

Recruiter: Recruit Media Limited

Information Scientist - Switzerland

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j1504>>

Pharmaceutical Information with Business and a hint of IP. An excellent opportunity in NJ, USA or Switzerland.

Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited

[The above jobs are paid listings]

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Find out more today at <<http://www.freepint.com/jobs>>

Events

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

Unsurprisingly, there are no events in our database taking place over the holiday period. However, there are some great conferences and exhibitions planned for the new year, and so we'll bring you details in the next edition. In the meantime, if you know of an information-related get-together, then do submit details at <<http://www.freepint.com/events>>.

Details of many conferences and exhibitions in the information industry can be found on the Free Pint Events page <<http://www.freepint.com/events>>.

Submit details of your event for free promotion, and keep us informed about any changes to current listings.

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<william@freepint.com> or visit <<http://www.freepint.com/advert.htm>>

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Free Pint Bookshelf<<http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf>>**"A Simple Guide to Writing for your Website"****Written by Susannah Ross****Reviewed by Duncan Parry**

Writing for Websites might seem no different from writing for printed publications. However, the Web is a different medium and requires a different style of writing: attention spans are shorter, time online is often limited and users skim-read through text.

Susannah Ross provides a step by step guide to writing for a Website. She begins by explaining why the Web is a different medium and the implications this holds for the author, before describing how to plan the text of a Website and the site structure. She also covers proof reading, editing and maintaining a site.

Chapters in the book discuss the type of language to employ and mistakes to avoid (including over-reliance on automatic spellcheckers and the over use of capital letters). Advice is provided on how to layout text and use features like links, bullet points and headlines to capture the attention of the reader.

This book is more than a simple guide to writing Websites. There are chapters on the functions of words, grammar, sentence construction and choosing the right words to use. The author explains different types of words (verbs, adjectives, etc.) and provides guidance on the effective (and correct) use of punctuation. Not only does the author explain how to write for the Web, she provides the

reader with an understanding of how language functions and therefore how to improve the clarity of your writing.

The book is easy to follow and tables and figures provide useful illustrations throughout, including some from Websites readers will be familiar with. Usefully, each chapter starts with a brief description of the points it covers and ends with a summary.

If like me you have previously written the text of Websites and sometimes wondered if your English grammar skills were lacking, or if you are preparing to write the text of a Website and need guidance on where to start, this is a useful little book to have on your desk.

The book's author Susannah Ross is a Free Pint Regular

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/r30082>> and a former BBC Journalist. She now offers training in business writing and writing for Websites
<<http://www.selectideas.co.uk/ross>>.

Duncan Parry is a directory editor for Lycos UK, responsible for Computers, Technology, Internet and Telecommunications.

<<http://www.lycos.co.uk/>>. He also provides freelance site design and writing services
<<http://www.digitalstrike.co.uk>>.

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<<http://www.amazon.co.uk/exec/obidos/ASIN/013041557X/freepint0c>>
- "A Simple Guide to Writing for your Website" ISBN 013041557X published by Prentice Hall and written by Susannah Ross
- Search for and purchase any book from Amazon via the Free Pint Bookshelf at
<<http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf>>
- Read about other Internet strategy books on the Free Pint Bookshelf
<<http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf/strategy.htm>>

To propose an information-related book for review, send details to
<bookshelf@freepint.com>.

All we ask is that you spread the word

Free Pint can remain free if you continue to help us spread the word about the community to your colleagues and friends.

We've made this easy to do. Simply enter a colleague's email address and we'll send them a courteous introduction to Free Pint:
<<http://www.freepint.com/reco.htm>>

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<<http://www.datasnake.co.uk/fp/>>

[ds1022]

Tips Article

<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/131201.htm#tips>>

**"Tracking the Net"
By John Garside**

Has this happened to you? When you get to a Web site ... it looks exactly the same as the last time you got there. There is no new information; nothing has been changed. Or worse, the Web site looks different. Something, somewhere has been updated, but you can't for the life of you see what it is that has been changed.

Wouldn't it save time, effort and frustration if you were alerted when the Web page had been updated with new information? And you were presented with only the new, fresh stuff?

That is the rationale behind Web Page Tracking (= Monitoring = Minding).

The trackers present you with only the screened, relevant new stuff that you tell them to watch out for and filter out the noise.

What you choose to track is limited only by your needs and your imagination. For example:

- Monitor what's being said in the news, on the Web, in Usenet or discussion forums about a client or a brand
- Check your local seismological observatory every ten seconds
- Watch over a page of results from a Free Pint Job Search
- Ogle a dating service for that leggy blond!

This article introduces examples of:

- Web-based tracking
- Desktop applications for tracking
- Tracking searches of the Net
- Tracking using "real-time" updates (RSS, Weblogs, etc.)
- Resources in related areas - Net clipping, Desktop tickers and News monitoring.

Web-based Tracking

This is generally still free and is easy on your computer's resources. The trackers have:

- Optional "Quick Add" browser integration (for Internet Explorer 4.0+ at least)
- Folders for categorising your tracked pages
- Compatibility with all browsers and platforms
- "Secret weapons" for companies' competitive intelligence and for Webmasters to build into their sites
- Almost no limit (100+) on the number of pages you can track.

INFOMINDER

<<http://www.infominder.com/webminder/index.jsp>>

This is one of the newest and one of the simplest tools for tracking changes on Web pages. You do not have to install any software on your computer. You just have to sign up.

Then you can "Create a Minder". To do this, the only mandatory information you need to specify is the address of the page (URL) that you want to track. When the page changes you will be notified by email. Alternatively, you can sign in to InfoMinder and see the changed pages marked with an icon on the "View Minders" page on the Web.

Email notifications come as text, HTML or as single digests and can also be sent to multiple users. They can optionally contain a:

- Preview of the text of the changes to the page
- "View Changes" link to your minded page
- The Web (HTML) page (as an in-line attachment in the email) with the changed portions marked. The changed text is marked in red with a blached almond background.

You can customise the frequency of your notification emails - anything from hourly to monthly. And you can determine what you would like to be notified of:

- The number of changes
- Just when the page moves or goes dead
- Changes to particular keywords.

For users of Internet Explorer 5.0 and above there is an add-on module. Then you can right click and choose to create a minder for the page you are currently viewing.

TRACKENGINE <<http://www.trackengine.com/>>

To quote Seen magazine:

"TrackEngine tirelessly operates much like an experienced hunting dog does by flushing the game towards you for targeting and then bringing your prize quarry back, dropping it proudly at your feet in return for a pat".

The folks at TrackEngine also sport a jocular interface and excellent user support.

In addition to the features at Infominder you can also track:

- HTML links (useful for monitoring external links to your Web site)
- Dynamically-generated (database-driven) pages such as forms and search engine results

**Advertise Your Information vacancies
To 400+ Job Seekers**

Over 400 job seekers have set up their personal profile in Free Pint Jobs. That means that if you list your vacancy in the database then it will be matched against those profiles.

Get your job filled by clicking on "Advertise your vacancies" at:

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

- Pages requiring (cookie-) authentication and SSL-encrypted pages.

You can also receive notifications at a WAP-enabled email account and Trackengine can be configured as an AvantGo channel (but with no highlighting).

MINDIT <<http://www.mindit.netmind.com>>

Mindit is the most venerable and has the most functionality of the Web-based Trackers. However, for me, the notifications have been sporadic - missing days here and there. Your "Minders Page" is less user-friendly than the two tools we've just discussed.

In addition to TrackEngine's capabilities, you can also track pages that have:

- Javascript
- Deleted content (e.g. text that disappears)
- Images
- Sections of a page
- Content created in MS Word, Framemaker and Adobe Acrobat.

In fact, pretty much any content unless it was created with VBScript.

QUICKBROWSE <<http://www.quickbrowse.com/>>

This company focuses on meta-browsing - stitching many Web pages together into one long page. You can monitor either Qb portals - Quickbrowse's cherry-picked Web pages or pages that you select. These pages can then be tracked and you will be notified, as with the utilities above, on change or on a fixed schedule. The types of pages that you can track are quite limited, but password-protected pages can be handled. Here is an example (large page on Japanese news)
<<http://www.quickbrowse.com/qbmetapage.cgi?prelogin=1&colid=383573>> The service costs \$US12.95 for 3 months.

Other Web-based Trackers

TracerLock - Fighting to keep up to date and charging \$US19.50/month to monitor real-time news alerts from "hundreds of online news sites".
<<http://www.tracerlock.com/>>

Spyonit - Admirable, basic alerts that can be received by email-enabled cell phone, Instant Message, ICQ, email pager, Palm VII(tm) connected organiser as well as on the site and by email. <<http://www.spyonit.com/>>

TheFetcher - Nearly-new with no frills. My HTML emails were poorly coded. <<http://www.thefetcher.com/>>

Karnak - is a reasonable current awareness tool (I have used only the basic \$US10/month version)
<<http://library.karnak.com/>>
<<http://library.karnak.com/>>.

Desktop Applications

C4U SCOUT? <<http://www.c-4-u.com/>>

OK, it's a tacky name but C4U is free, user-friendly and proclaims itself as "the voice of reason in an insanely dynamic and ever-changing Web".

You can import URLs from your bookmarks or from a file or paste in new ones. The program integrates with your browser and a flashing icon will notify you when (a certain number of) images, keywords, links or email addresses change. The sites can be checked as often as every fifteen minutes. Then a "little face will symbolise their status".

WEBSITE WATCHER <<http://aignes.net/>>

Is not free (\$US40), but is very well designed to "watch any kind of Web site via the http or ftp protocol". The designer, Martin Aignesberger, told me in an e-mail interview that:

"My main goal was speed, so customers can save time and online cost. To save time means

a) A fast check of sites (e.g. 100 sites per minute)

b) Fast detection of changed parts in a website. When you open a changed website all textual changes are highlighted and you must not search new or changed content by comparing the new version with the old one

c) You can also highlight specified words in a website (e.g. "Watcher"), so you must not search sites manually for such keywords."

Functions include:

- Handling cookies
- Ignoring changing banners, typical dates or user-defined strings
- Watching only part of the site
- Sending a basic email alert.

The program has its own mini-browser - your personal knowledge repository. Your favourite Web sites that have been updated since last you checked are indicated and the changed content is highlighted. Previous versions are stored on your hard drive and there is a serious search capability.

WebSite-Watcher will check sites whenever you choose, and as often as every ten seconds!

ENFISH TRACKER PRO <<http://www.enfish.com/>>

Enfish takes tracking one step further. You can set the software to notify you of changes on whole sites - up to 100 pages per site and as many as five levels of links deep. You have, in fact created "your own custom-built search engine".

The program also organises and files everything on your computer or network, including email.

Searcher magazine's review of Enfish warns that:

"To get the most out of Enfish, you must have a fairly powerful computer with lots of RAM and plenty of hard disk space. It also helps if you have a fast Internet connection, preferably with unlimited access for a flat fee." It costs from \$US70 to \$US230.

<<http://www.infoday.com/searcher/jan99/may.htm>>

Tracking Searches

You can use the tools above to repeat and monitor searches of the Net. When your keyword does not appear in the searches' URL (a 'POST' request) you will need to use Mindit's "Form result" or TrackEngine's tutorial.

<<http://www.trackengine.com/servlets/com.nexlabs.trackengine.ui.ShowPage?pg=help/tutorials/005/index>>

You also have a number of options in addition to those above. At least two search engines let you set up alerts, and notify you when new search results are found.

Northern Light offers a choice of a simple search, a power search, business search, investtext search or news search. You can also limit your search to specific categories and tweak it using other parameters.

<http://www.northernlight.com/docs/alerts_help_about.html>

Profusion is a meta-search engine with limited Boolean operators. It lets you choose which engines to search.

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

Search Engine Watch reviewed these in "Search Engines with Autopilot" in November 2001.

<<http://searchenginewatch.com/searchday/01/sd1114-autopilot.html>>

For alerts of more sophisticated meta-search results, there are two desktop applications - Copernic (\$US79)

<<http://www.copernic.com/>> and Bullseye (\$US249)

<<http://www.intelliseek.com/prod/bullseye/bullseye.htm>>.

At Sherch.com and Moreover you can create publishable custom searches and other feeds using RSS (see below).

Tracking Pages with RSS Content and Weblogs

What is RSS?

<http://www.oreillynet.com/pub/a/rss/2000/03/17/about_meerkat.html>

Another approach to Web page tracking is to check out sites that are being updated in (almost) real-time. Information from thousands of resources is syndicated using RSS files. These can then be "scraped" using an RSS reader such as:

Amphetadesk - Is a desktop application (Windows and Macintosh) that allows you to gather RSS files in one long list and read them.

<<http://www.disobey.com/amphetadesk/>>

Headline Viewer - is another desktop application (Windows only) that acts as a browser for RSS files.

<<http://www.vertexdev.com/HeadlineViewer/providers.html>>

NewsIsFree and My.Userland let you read each of up to 5000 sources on its own Web page or will bundle several together.

<<http://www.newsisfree.com/>> <<http://my.userland.com/>>

Moreover bundles the headlines according to category.

<<http://w.moreover.com/>>

Syndic8 is "A community-driven effort to gather syndicated news headlines..." <<http://www.syndic8.com/>>

BlogTracker (formerly known as the "SubHonker Filter") "Lets you see when your favourite weblogs have been updated last, so you can read the freshest blog entries". It has a TrackerPane (available on Internet Explorer 5) that displays your recently updated weblogs.

<<http://www.dansanderson.com/blogtracker/about.php>>

MIT's Media Lab has produced Blogdex which ranks the most popular links and provides an insight into what's hot in the world of weblogs.

<<http://blogdex.media.mit.edu/>>

Resources in Related Areas

Monitoring and Clipping Services Round-Up from Searcher magazine

<<http://www.infoday.com/searcher/jul00/kassel.htm>>

Desktop Tickers from the Special Libraries Association

<<http://www.sla.org/pubs/serial/io/1999/jul99/onthenet.shtml>>

This writer's article about automated, customised news alerts

<<http://www.japanacea.com/page1009.html>>

Personally, I use WebSite Watcher unless I'd prefer to read the updated page on paper. Then I use TrackEngine and an email program that will automatically filter mails to my printer.

But to help you choose which method is suitable for which track, there is a Ready-Reckoner at

<<http://www.japanacea.com/page1013.html>>.

John Garside has been lecturing in Information Retrieval in Tokyo, Japan for seven years. But he is returning to the UK in December 2001 and hopes to continue as a consultant in the field of Information Retrieval. He also runs a Web site devoted to (Japanese) news and innovative news searching.

<<http://www.japanacea.com/>> John can be contacted at <Joyalbar@btinternet.com>.

Related Free Pint links:

- Web searching articles and resources in the Free Pint Portal <<http://www.freepint.com/go/p185>>
- Read this article online, with activated hyperlinks <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/131201.htm#tips>>
- Post a message to the author, John Garside, or suggest further resources, at the Free Pint Bar <<http://www.freepint.com/bar>>
- Access the entire archive of Free Pint articles and issues <<http://www.freepint.com/portal/content/>>

Feature Article

[<http://www.freepint.com/issues/131201.htm#feature>](http://www.freepint.com/issues/131201.htm#feature)

" Free Pint In 2001"

**By William Hann, Katherine Allen
Simon Coltery and Rex Cooke**

Free Pint - William Hann, Founder & Managing Editor

It's been something of a Free Pint tradition over the last few years, to use the last edition of the year for reflection. Therefore, I've asked my colleagues here to reflect on what we've been up to in 2001, and the Event Director from last week's Online Information exhibition to share her thoughts on a show which always marks the end of the year.

From my point of view, 2001 has been a very fulfilling year. We've launched quite a few major new initiatives, including Free Pint Jobs. This has seen over 100,000 searches and 400 job-seeker profiles added to the database, and a number of agencies already list their vacancies and have reported a great response to job listings.

We introduced the upgraded "Regular" membership, along with multi-user redistribution licenses for the Pub Crawl. There's now a fully-formatted version of this newsletter in Adobe Acrobat format and we completed our move to much larger offices.

The UK company research gateway now has company director reports, and the list hosting service had a raft of enhancements, including being able to send mailings in a variety of formats such as text, HTML, single or multiple attachments. The usage of the Web site is still doubling every six months and we've had to upgrade the Web and emails servers three times this year.

We went against the grain in a number of ways, including having our busiest month in August (in the middle of summer!) and bucking the dotcom downturn. 44,000 people now receive the Newsletter (compared to 33,000 this time last year) from 181 countries, and 7000 get the Bar Digest three times a week.

We recently celebrated our fourth birthday and one hundredth edition of the newsletter. Our increasing internationalisation prompted a move from "freepint.co.uk" to "freepint.com" and the name is now officially registered as a trademark.

From a financial point of view, Free Pint is now in a much stronger position than it was a year ago. It's paying for itself at last. We'd like to give a big thank you to all our sponsors and advertisers, of which most have already signed up for another year. A special thanks to Factiva for

their sponsorship of the Free Pint Bar. It is their continued support which makes it possible to provide so much for free.

On a personal note, I had the birth of my second child and of course that infamous appearance in the BBC survival programme from the desert in Arizona.

A big thank you also to the whole Free Pint team (contributors, programmers and support staff) and especially to Simon and Rex for their invaluable support and commitment.

Online Information 2001 - Katherine Allen,
Learned Information

Last week marked the twenty-fifth Online Information conference and exhibition. As organisers, we at Learned Information approached the silver jubilee event with a mixture of awe and pride. Awe, because the show was staged for the first time in the Grand Hall at Olympia - the largest exhibit hall in the Olympia complex and over 60% larger than the National Hall, where the show was previously located. For the first time in many years we were able to fit the whole of the event, with its 289 exhibitors, under one roof. The sheer scale of the space was amazing, and looked even more amazing when all the stands were built - a visual metaphor for the vast range of information content and services available to information professionals today.

Speaking personally, I felt a great sense of pride as I witnessed the human interaction taking place - surely one of the fundamentals of any trade show, and even more so in what has clearly been a difficult year for many. In the conference we welcomed delegates from over 40 countries including Australia, China, Ethiopia, Ghana, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Russia, and South Africa as well as Europe and North America. Delegates who had attended the first ever Online Information conference introduced themselves to first-time delegates and quickly found themselves sharing challenges and swapping success stories and email addresses.

Seminars on the exhibition floor were packed, with Gary Price, Greg Notess and Amelia Kassel proving particularly popular. But the thousands of information professionals and information users who attended were interested in technology just as much as search techniques, attending sessions on website content management, XML and wireless delivery. For me, this illustrates some of the exciting new roles information professionals are carving out for themselves.

Linda Stoddart, Director of Library Services at the International Labor Office who was presented with the IWR Information Professional of the Year award at the Online Information party, has noted that the library and information profession is 'no longer a field for introverts'. She believes that unless information professionals 'quickly develop a vision for the 21st century', others will take over their specialism.

This idea of rapid change and invigorating new challenges was a recurring feature of both the conference and exhibition halls this year. I believe that the ongoing vibrancy of Online Information is a tribute to information professionals and information users themselves, and to their ability to evolve over the years, sometimes in difficult circumstances. It is their success that Online Information celebrates. One of the recurring topics discussed this year was the role that information plays in driving creativity and

**Studying for an
Information Qualification?**

We know what it's like working towards an information degree. We've been there. That's why we started the Free Pint Student Bar. It's YOUR free resource to get help with projects, funding or placements. Tap into the knowledge of the Free Pint community:

[<http://www.freepint.com/student/>](http://www.freepint.com/student/)

innovation - a fitting keynote for the next 25 years.

Free Pint Bar - Simon Collery, Content Developer

One might expect issues to come and go in the Free Pint Bar but while some come, others never go. All we needed was one posting about University Rankings and those efficient search engines indexed it. Now people keep coming back for more. Perhaps it's significant that the original poster started with the words "Sorry for the disturbance...". And Latin translations have had a similar effect. The first message was about Latin resources. It then became a thread of requests for translations of phrases, aphorisms, poems and what not.

Well this year's first Free Pint Newsletter found me talking up the Internet. I continued to do that throughout the year and I make no apology for this. Anyone with an Internet connection can avail of all manner of online goodies. They can access more news sources than they could possibly read, more reference works than they could fit on their bookshelves and as many educational and entertainment resources as their hearts could desire. You only need to spend a little time in the Free Pint Bar to know this. I reckon I'll be doing the same thing next year.

Now, one of the most significant issues raised in the Bar this year was that of commercialisation, both in Free Pint and on the Internet as a whole. There is an interesting form of naivety here. People sometimes think that because something is free to them, it is free to produce. That is rarely the case. The good things produced for the Web are paid for by non-profits, educational institutions, various individuals and commercial organisations. And while these parties make things available for free they still have to make money somehow, whether it be through sponsorship, advertising, syndication, or whatever.

Anyhow, we at Free Pint look forward to another year of busy Bar sessions with large doses of questions, answers, recommendations and views.

Free Pint Newsletter - Rex Cooke, Editor

As Editor I often come across intriguing and even amusing byways in the material I prepare for subscribers. Our authors are not only wide-ranging but deucedly imaginative in their thinking and the resources they recommend. Here are some of the gems which can be found in this year's Free Pints.

First some aspects of the web:

"An important feature of the Internet is that it allows individuals to publish on the same basis as large organisations."

"Berners-Lee's objective is to produce a semantic Web, the purpose of which is to permit machines to help people use data."

"Guru links are susceptible to the broken-link phenomenon known as 'link rot'."

"Terminology can be important, a cleaning company is unlikely to get a grant, a company that is a specialist cleaner of limpets and barnacles from ocean liners could be successful."

Moving on to health matters:

"Who knows your medical secrets? It's getting easier for health marketers, your boss, and your mortgage company to find out what ails you."

"Everyone has heard bells ringing - you may not know what they are doing, but you surely know if they 'sound good' or not!"

"Did you hear about the Dyslexic Witch? She sold her soul to Santa!"

And next a look at images:

"So you want to be a photographer for MI5? Yes, there is information about that on the web."

"Imagine a world-wide photo club which didn't charge admission fees, and whose meetings you could attend while never leaving home. That's what the Web provides for those interested in photography."

"It's 6pm. I've finished work for the day and there's nothing on the TV, as usual. I've got a computer in front of me, Internet access via ADSL and a few hours to kill. So what can I watch online?"

"It is of course possible to go to any search engine and request 'pictures of birds'. Depending on the ambiguity of the words you choose, you might get more than you bargained for and quite possibly fall foul of your company's acceptable use policy."

Then there is the societal impact of the Net:

"Women are wary of accumulating debt to fund new ventures and business growth. A survey by NatWest bank found that women entrepreneurs are also less driven than men by the desire to make a lot of money. Instead they are more motivated by the sense of personal satisfaction in providing a service."

"The Internet has the potential to change the way in which elections are fought."

But don't forget society creates waste:

"Waste. We all generate it, but hardly give it a second thought until the bin-men go on strike. Or the government taxes it."

So let's take refuge in the arts:

"England is the only Western country that has a music system directly related to that of Asia and the Far East."

Do you get a lot out of Free Pint?

If you find Free Pint useful and want to give something back, then consider becoming a "Free Pint Regular".

As well as helping us to support the community, you will also get promotion in our member directory, the weekly "Pub Crawl" current awareness newsletter, and discounts on all purchases. Find out more:
<<http://www.freepint.com/regular>>

This musical tradition is the more remarkable for being completely unknown."

"Today, if you want to read the best 100 mystery novels you need to buy at least 90 of them, yet only around 20 will be found in even the largest bookstores."

Then there are our pipe dreams:

"Within five minutes I too will be marvelling at fat pipe up, fat pipe down, and our server will finally be running all of our websites out of the room we deign to call an office, at an affordable cost. I had a dream ..."

"By a delicious quirk of history, I think we will see the encoding of the world's information in XML taking place at the same time as Nature's information in DNA is being decoded."

Enough of dreaming too. Let's travel:

"Ah, to travel by train. The traffic free journey, the gentle clickety clack of the rails, the green countryside rolling by, the incessant ringing of mobile telephones, the foul tasting coffee, the sudden inexplicable delays, the crowded carriages ..."

Or perhaps further afield:

"The Middle East should be one of the new millennium's most exciting business environments."

"When the First Fleet arrived in Botany Bay in 1788, around 270 indigenous languages existed. Today, that number has been reduced to about 40 and these are all in danger of dying out."

"In the Digeridu section, traditional Aboriginal music is explained, as well as the history of this instrument and how to play one."

This may be enough to send us further still:

"Spaceref - This is a great starting point for anyone obsessed by the extra-terrestrial.
<<http://www.spaceref.com/>>"

And to bring us truly down to earth at last, please ponder this thought:

"If sheep were connected, we'd have all the latest infrastructure in place, but it's reliant on a headcount of people only."

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If you have a suggestion for an article topic or would like to write for Free Pint then please contact me or sign up for the monthly Author Update on the Web site at
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Rex Cooke, Editor <rex@freepint.com>

Many thanks for reading today's Free Pint. Do look at the fully- formatted Adobe Acrobat version at
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/>> and pass it on to your colleagues. Have a great holiday and ...

See you in four weeks!

William Hann, Founder and Managing Editor
<william@freepint.com>

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