

12 **"Beyond Music: Integrating Podcasting into Your Business"**

Sure, podcasts are interesting add-ons to your online offerings, but they can be much more. Matt Chapuran looks at a few individuals who've shown how to boost business by offering audio content.

17 **"Music Distribution and the Internet: A Legal Guide for the Music Business"**

In his new book, Andrew Sparrow offers insights into the legal aspects of conducting music-related business online. Reviewer and fellow attorney Jeremy de Beer shares his thoughts.

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Conventional browsing let you search and save. But that's all. Contributor Stephanie Taylor uncovers highly integrated social Web browsing, which focuses on the sharing elements of the various applications.

Plus ...

Jobs,
Discussion,
Tips, Reviews
and Events



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Joining FreePint is free at <<http://www.freepint.com/>> and connects information practitioners around the world with resources, events and answers to their tricky research and information questions at the FreePint Bar, our free online forum: <<http://www.freepint.com/bar/>>.

The FreePint Newsletter is available online in several formats and can be read, saved and forwarded at <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/>>.

Editorial



I'm about to share a dirty little secret. Anyone close enough to me to have seen my desk, my handbag or my car will tell you it's not such a deep secret. But here it is:

I steal pens.

If they're not chained down, I'll swipe them. I love pens of all kinds, but particularly those I don't own. In my defence, I usually do it without thinking. I sign a form and later notice I own a new pen.

While I'm sure a headshrinker would have a name for my pen kleptomania, I think it's a symptom of a condition many of us have, one that's becoming more prevalent: open ownership.

In a corner of my mind, I believe no one can really own a pen, which makes it OK for me to snatch a few. Really, who owns anything these days? Music is so easy to take that the global music industry reported a 3 per cent fall in 2006 music sales. Images are so freely available that people don't know if they're stealing (check out the Bar <<http://www.freepint.com/bar/>> to read more). And even the nature of how we browse the web leads us to give and take.

We examine ownership in this and the next issue of FreePint. Stephanie Taylor measures up two social Web browsing tools that freely deliver original materials, such as blogs and images. Then we look at audio issues in a piece from Matt Chapuran on how podcasts are benefiting businesses, and a review from Jeremy de Beer on a book that detangles law and digital music (also check out ResourceShelf's related ROTW <<http://digbig.com/4rgkg/>>).

When you're done reading this FreePint, pick up more news from VIP <<http://www.vivaVIP.com/>>, which this month examines another hot topic for information professionals: research in Asian-Pacific countries.

And don't turn your back on your pen cup. You never know what might go missing.

Sincerely,

Monique Cuvelier Editor, FreePint
e: monique.cuvelier@freepint.com
w: <<http://www.onopoly.com/support/team/>>

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FreePint FUMSI Report -- Risk Management



Risk Management Report

ISBN 978-1-904769-11-X

Risk is an unavoidable part of doing business, and managing risk is part of everyone's job – from the board room to the shop floor. To manage risk effectively, organisations must process internal and external information on strategy, environment, regulations, competitive landscape and more. They must process that information through a systematic protocol for managing risk in a constantly changing environment.

This report provides a practical overview of risk management and can be used by executives, managers and staff to gain a solid understanding of the tools and processes of risk management. The included tool kit of 8 hands-on worksheets and activities helps users translate the information into an actionable risk management plan.

Author Jela Webb is a noted consultant, writer, speaker and trainer in knowledge management and risk management fields. In 1992, she was appointed to a new role, Risk Review Manager, in a UK bank, and she has further developed her expertise in the field through MBA studies.

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Vasyl (Bill) Pawlowsky has spent over the last seven years in Ukraine, working in a variety of areas other than his professional training as an information specialist. He has worked on democracy development issues, as a journalist/editor at two Kyiv-based English language publications, Head of Information Services at a leading Kyiv-based law firm for three years, and now is a freelance consultant, editor, translator and writer and international media facilitator, assisting international media on getting the story right.

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

My Favourite Tipples

by Vasyl Pawlowsky

Based in Kyiv and working independently as an editor, translator, writer and facilitator for Western journalists and researchers, I find the following five sites useful and at times entertaining:

- In communicating thoughts clearly using the written word, at times I turn to automatic jargon-finding software Bullfighter <<http://www.fightthebull.com/bullfighter.asp>> for assistance in tidying up pieces I am writing or editing.
- Finding the geographic location of a name can prove difficult without a good gazetteer. An online tool that I find useful to accomplish this is the Geoname Server at <<http://gnswww.nga.mil/geonames/GNS/index.jsp>>.
- Foreigners often ask me about wi-fi hotspots in Kyiv, and I can usually recommend one of my favourites. However, Hotspot-Locations <<http://www.hotspot-locations.com/>> can help many who travel with their wireless-enabled notebook close at hand.
- When trying to find out how critical security levels have affected airports worldwide, use World Airport Codes <<http://www.world-airport-codes.com/>> for details ranging from airport codes and abbreviations to runway lengths and security.
- When recently trying to write engaging Ukrainian-language broadcast material, I stumbled upon Radio Nostalgia Network <<http://digbig.com/4rhcp>>. It's entertaining and provides a glance into what radio was during its golden era.



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Current Issue

- **IQ Test:** Capital IQ aims to help lending financial and advisory professionals make more intelligent business decisions. We analyse how well it succeeds.
- **Surprise Move:** Business Intelligence Services, a division of The Thomson Corporation, announces it is realigning its flagship product. Find details on this and other news.
- **Safety Net:** Nowadays risk management is a necessity in any company. A new report from Jela Webb examines how to implement a strategy.
- **Off Piste:** Researcher Jill Fenton lends advice on how to think creatively when researching financial and M&A topics.

Coming in 2007: More product reviews each month, plus focused feature issues on Asia-Pacific, Middle East and more. What would you like us to cover? Share your thoughts at any time to support@vivaVIP.com, or post them to the VIP Lounge.

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<<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j6370>>

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Recruiter: TFPL Ltd.

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<<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j6437>>

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FreePint Bar

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Monique Cuvelier is Editor of the FreePint Newsletter. She has served as editor of several publications and her writing has appeared in Publish, USA Today, Bankrate and many others. Learn more about her at <http://www.onopoly.com/support/team/>..

Subscribe to the twice-weekly email digests at <http://www.freepint.com/subs/>

More copyright talk is bouncing around the FreePint Bar, as is discussion about Andy Warhol, booze and smokes. Interested? Read on for highlights, or jump into a discussion at: <http://www.freepint.com/bar/>

- Basic stats and recent news are expensive information when you turn to services such as Factiva and Companies House. A few are discussing the best and most economical way of finding data on UK companies <http://www.freepint.com/go/b97370/> and consumer brands <http://www.freepint.com/go/b101702/>. VIP <http://www.vivaVIP.com/> has done the hard work for you by evaluating many products. The February issue focuses on finding Asia-Pacific data.
- Andy Warhol may have often thought about soup and bright colours, but copyright might not have topped his list of concerns when he was reproducing images of Marilyn Monroe and Campbell's chicken noodle. One would-be artistic reproducer is concerned about the law; take a look: <http://www.freepint.com/go/b101372/>. More legal help is in this issue's book review.

- Dissertation-topic questions are common among students at the Student Bar. When one came asking about how to craft a thesis on finance or management, the posting solicited some sound advice on finding good topics. Read the full story <http://www.freepint.com/go/s20101/>. Digitisation of dissertations continues to be a hot topic <http://www.freepint.com/go/b96962/>. Keep your eyes on FreePint for future coverage.
- Booze and smokes are always interesting research topics, but they can present hurdles for researchers. One is looking for free or cheap data on German spirits for a uni project <http://www.freepint.com/go/b102622/> and another isn't having any joy locating prices for cigarettes in the last decade <http://www.freepint.com/go/b103187/>. Both topics may lead to some interesting feedback for a separate study on potential trends in the NHS - including lung transplants <http://www.freepint.com/go/b101041/>.

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Current Jinfo Newsletter

Current issue:

- CV Makeover: From Freelance to Consultant
- Robert Alvarez 's 'Before' CV
- Robert Alvarez 's After' CV



Review



Before CV



After CV

"Beyond Music: Integrating Podcasting into Your Business"

Written by Matt Chapuran



Matt Chapuran is a writer, actor and affordable-housing analyst living in Boston. His work regularly appears in Lowe's For Pros, an online journal with technical and business advice for plumbers, electricians and property management professionals. He can be seen selling wrap sandwiches (and rapping) in a commercial for the Maine Lottery. He can be reached at <matthchapuran@yahoo.com>.

On 30 June 2005, podcasting came of age when Apple announced that in the first two days podcasts were offered on iTunes, users subscribed to more than one million of them. Although podcasting enters the lexicon as a descendent of broadcasting, it isn't limited to typical news and entertainment formats. Nor are podcasts difficult to produce: they are easy to integrate into your existing business model.

Podcasts are a means to distribute files, typically MP3s for audio content or MP4s for video content, although a podcast can carry literally any digital content.

'A podcast is not a kind of show', points out Tim Douglas, co-host and co-creator of the Boston Sports Massacre, a US-based podcast that 'aired' during 2005. 'It's a method of distribution. Content is created and then distributed through the Web'.

An RSS (Real Simple Syndication) feed carries an XML file, which contains information about the podcast's name and location. Once a podcast has been subscribed to, the XML file prompts the user's web browser to download new content when it comes online. These files can later be downloaded to a portable MP3 player, such as an iPod, and listened to or watched (as the case may be) when convenient.

Aggregators, such as iTunes or Juice <<http://juicereceiver.sourceforge.net/>> organise and categorise podcasts, helping users to finding the content they want.

Booting up

In discussing the genesis of the Boston Sports Massacre, Douglas says, 'My partner and I knew we could talk about sports and that people around the world were somewhat rabid about sports'.

Creating a podcast for your business needn't be much more complicated than that. Douglas drew upon his local network of friends, one of whom had a home recording studio, to polish the podcast to a professional level of quality. Another found a service that would manage the organisation and creation of the podcast's XML file and RSS feed. (See

<http://www.podcastingnews.com/topics/Podcast_Hosts.html> for a list of host companies). The partners purchased a web domain for \$25 where the podcast could be found, and also listed the podcast on iTunes.com for free. As simple as that, with virtually no IT infrastructure, their podcast was created.

Getting online

At the same time, Dr. Richard Savel, an intensive care unit physician practicing in New York City, was using his commute to contemplate the value of podcasting and its new methods for distribution. He convinced the Society of Critical Care Medicine (SCCM) to sponsor a regular podcast that would provide content of interest to its membership. 'I was blessed with a voice that sounds pretty good on radio', Savel says. With some Internet research, Savel was able to acquire all the equipment

necessary to produce a podcast in his home for less than \$1,000. Among the equipment Savel acquired was:

- An SM58 dynamic microphone from Shure, Inc., \$99
- A UA-25 USB audio interface from Roland Corporation, \$239
- An Innkeeper PBX digital audio hybrid from JK Audio, \$459
- Audacity software program, free from Audacity.

The audio interface allows the microphone to link to the computer while the audio hybrid facilitates recording phone interviews by 'cleaning' the recording's background noise. The Audacity program mixes the recording.

In the year and a half since launching his podcast, Savel has produced more than two dozen podcasts. Before SCCM conferences, Savel interviews speakers so that conference participants will have a flavour of each session before registration. He has also recorded keynote addresses for later use.

'The challenge of recording at the conference,' he says, 'is that you have to find a breakout room that's acoustically okay'. But as a podcast producer, Savel can travel light, bringing just his laptop and two microphones to the conference to record on-site interviews.

A typical 20-minute podcast takes Savel about six hours to complete, including preparation time. Savel begins by researching his topic, interviewing his guests and trimming out any 'uhms' or 'ahs' from the recording before editing it into usable product.

For Savel, part of the selling point of podcasting is that not only is the podcast available both on the SCCM website as well as iTunes.com, but even the most computer un-savvy individual can receive new programming instantly simply by hitting the 'subscribe' button at either location. The initial hurdle was not cost, technical expertise or infrastructure. Instead, Savel needed to 'explain what it was and how to do it' in order to earn key buy-in support. Once the initial podcast was complete, the segment has been essentially self-running with no ongoing costs other than Savel's time.

'It's a labour of love', he says. 'It's a lot of work, but it's important to me. It's one of the most important things I've worked on in my career'.

Building the business model

Eli Ingraham has been a producer at public broadcasting company WGBH in Boston since the podcasting explosion began.

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'The hardest thing is keeping up with the open-content revolution,' she says. 'New media formats and distribution channels are evolving faster than we can develop new business models and metrics to support them'.

WGBH was the first public station in the States to make use of the new technology. While she admits that it's sometimes difficult to follow the multiplicity of offerings, she says, 'The diversification and personalisation of content is worth it. There are podcasting camps now inviting people to learn how to make podcasts at home or on the go'.

Outside of the traditional realm of the entertainment or news podcasts, businesses are incorporating this new communication distribution technology into their marketing and promotion plans. Ingraham points to a winery podcast where every week the owners discuss a different kind of wine.

'Through an informal conversation, the podcast provides information to communities of interest,' she says, noting that the podcast then directs users back to the winery's website.

Podcasters are also experimenting with advertising and sponsorships, including spots usually at the tag or tail of the program. (Savel's podcast, whilst lacking sponsorship, does include a stock tag at the beginning of each episode, noting that the opinions contained therein belong solely to the guests and not to SCCM).

'It's still in the beginning stages', Ingraham says. She says pricing is not yet as standardised as it is for traditional media buys.

Podcasting's future

When asked about the most exciting innovators in podcasting today, Ingraham points to PodZinger and dotSUB as two organisations that are moving the technology forward.

PodZinger uses voice-recognition software to create an agile search engine ideally suited to podcasting. At PodZinger.com, users can type in a keyword search and receive audio and video responses which then allow them to begin listening to the podcast from the moment the word or phrase is found.

PodZinger CEO Alex Laats says, 'Podcasting has opened doors for getting your message out, but it is all about getting your wired content found. With PodZinger, we let the audience get the most out of podcasts by giving them direct access to what interests them the most'.

Also creating excitement is dotSUB, which allows content owners to make their video podcasts available for translation into any number of languages. Once a text transcription is created for a piece of film, dotSUB's software easily allows a user to create a line-by-line translation. DotSUB allows content providers to penetrate world-wide markets by enabling native speakers to create their own translation or provide professionally hired translators with a tool that claims to require no training to use.

DotSUB's software can also be embedded onto a user's website so that translations can be kept inside a single URL. For example, a multinational company's CEO could

load a training video onto the dotSUB site as an MP4. After either creating an initial text translation -- appearing as subtitles in the final product -- or after hiring dotSUB to perform the transcription, the CEO would provide the specific URL to employees in country branch offices with instructions to use the dotSUB software to create a native translation. The next morning, all of the company's employees would have access to the video either in the original language, in their native language, or in any other language in which a translation had been prepared. The video could remain available on the dotSUB website (where the owner has the ability to limit access) or the video could be embedded into the corporation's home site.

'It's a multi-level paradigm shift', Smollens says, 'but there are many CEOs out there who are not afraid of embracing it'.

At the end of the day, podcasting will make its mark by potentially making any company or employee capable of providing content. Get started putting together your own podcast by reviewing these features and resources from FreePint:

"MP3s, Podcasts and all that" By Nick Luft

<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/020306.htm#feature>>

Bar Discussion "Best format for podcasting?"

<http://www.freepint.com/go/b37552/>

"Gleaning consumer intelligence from blogs and podcasts" By Patrice K. Curtis
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/040506.htm#tips>>

"How Libraries Are Applying Blogging, Podcasting and RSS Technologies"
<<http://www.solinet.net/emplibfile/ACF3819.pdf>>



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Comment

"As a freelance researcher, I miss picking up intelligence about new sources etc. from colleagues in an office setting. FreePint provides me with a wonderful online community of peers all over the world, who share their collective wisdom."

Freelance Researcher, UK
September, 2006

Comment

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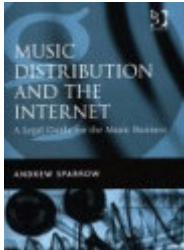
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"Music Distribution and the Internet: A Legal Guide for the Music Business"

Written by Andrew Sparrow

Reviewed by Jeremy de Beer



Jeremy de Beer is a law professor at the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Law. He holds degrees in law and business from the Universities of Oxford and Saskatchewan. His research revolves around various aspects of technology and intellectual property. Professor de Beer has published widely on these topics, and acts as a consultant on related legal, policy, business and strategic issues. He teaches, among other things, Digital Music Law, a unique interdisciplinary survey of developments in the global music industry. He is online at <<http://www.jeremydebeer.ca/>>.

Music is among the most captivating topics in cyberspace. On almost any given day, headlines highlight something new happening in the online music industry. Often the story involves litigation against anybody threatening traditional business models. Lawyers obviously aren't the only people interested in these developments, but legal issues do permeate all aspects of distributing music via the internet. So it isn't surprising that lawyers are tackling this topic more frequently. Leading information technology law practitioner Andrew Sparrow is among the latest to do so.

In his new book, Sparrow attempts to offer insights into the legal aspects of conducting music-related business online. His focus is on British and European law, but there are occasional references to other jurisdictions, including the United States. He writes for those involved with various facets of the music industry, including composers, publishers, performers, managers, executives and, of course, lawyers. Although Sparrow does touch on timely topics like podcasting, ringtones and the Creative Commons, the book contains little in the way of cultural commentary. Unlike some more general works on trends in digital music, this is a technical and practical account of the range of legal challenges associated with internet-based music businesses.

Throughout the book, music businesses are broadly defined. They include not only online music services offering digital downloads, but also internet retailers of physical products such as CDs or music-related merchandise. In a

way, that makes the book more about e-commerce generally than about the music industry. Sparrow canvasses an array of topics relevant to any internet business, including matters such as online sales and contracting, consumer protection and privacy regulations, website terms and conditions and other topics of general application. His analysis is presented in the specific context of music businesses, but on many issues there are few legal differences between this industry and others.

There is only one chapter on the crucial and complex matter of intellectual property rights in music. It addresses some of the most recent litigation, legislation and licensing practices. However, it leaves out important issues regarding royalty payments to the record labels that own sound recording rights, thus presenting only a partial picture of the rights-clearing process.

The author has nevertheless created a useful resource by probing the basics of the broad and diverse set of legal problems confronting those working in this area. Few other books about online music offer any analysis of matters such as advertising regulations, electronic payment systems or international conflicts of laws.

Sparrow structures the book in a way that might have been improved. For example, rather than dealing with contract-related issues in one section, discussions of offer/acceptance and electronic signatures appear at opposite ends of the book, with the part on consumer protection tucked somewhere in the middle. Some chapters contain long quotations

reproducing passages from legislation verbatim, without offering much explanation or analysis of the statutes.

On the whole, this book might be a worthwhile addition to the music or internet law specialist's library. Most readers, however, will still need to seek legal advice after reviewing Sparrow's work, as it often just flags and introduces the key areas of concern.

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- "Notes on the Net: A trawl around the Music Sites" By Carey McIlvenny
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/211099.htm?#tips>>
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"Life of the Party: Social Web Browsers"

By Stephanie Taylor



Critical Eye Communications <<http://www.criticalyecomunications.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. Stephanie can be contacted at: <stephanie.t@critical>

You may think the Web browsers we currently use are fine. They've helped the Web grow to its present state, keep us connected and disperse information with no trouble. So why would we need a new breed of browser?

Social Web browsers are the latest buzzword application. Designed to support the Web 2.0 trend of online sharing, they make it easier to share resources. They address the two sides to sharing, whereas old-school browsers address only one. Social Web browsers let you share information with other people as well as let other people share with you. The Internet is not a static database of hyperlinks anymore. It's moved on from the old days when it was a super-efficient, enormous encyclopaedia you read like a book. Now it's a virtual party where you circulate and introduce yourself, talk about your interests and find like-minded people. You can chat, share resources, set up a community and interact.

So what has social browsing to offer to the information professional? A conventional browser lets you do the searching just for yourself and save bookmarks to your own hard drive. Searching and saving are all you can do. Social Web browsing offers a high level of integration, and focuses on the sharing elements of the various applications. In theory, sharing resources can increase your chances of finding relevant material. It can open up new ways of accessing information, such as sharing your favourite bookmarks and photos and in return seeing the favourite resources of someone else who shares your interests. It can mean being able to

comment and chat with groups of people on topics of shared interest and being able to tap into a collective knowledge. So, potentially it has a lot to offer. The social browser is the tool that promises to help you manage all of this interactivity.

Comparing two players

I started my journey into social Web browsing by using two fairly new tools: Flock <<http://www.flock.com/>> and StumbleUpon <<http://www.stumbleupon.com/>>. Both are social Web browsing tools that concentrate on discovering and sharing online resources in two different ways. Both have their advantages and disadvantages, and both have something of interest to offer the information world.

The concept of Flock is one that is familiar to information professionals under another name that was flavour of the month not that long ago: the portal. Essentially, Flock gives you access to all the disparate parts of social networking through one user interface. It also acts as an aggregator and can (if you choose) handle all your logins to these applications. The Flock 'unique take' is that it includes an internal browser, and all the other applications fit it. So far, so good. Flock makes online storing and accessing of your photos, bookmarks, blog, tagging tools etc. nice and straightforward. But the real social aspect of this browser it is how easy it is to share all these things with others, and for them to share their links and content with you. Social networking in action.

StumbleUpon focuses on discovering sites and managing links through tagging, bookmarking, reviewing your finds and then sharing all of this through a personal homepage. It also puts a selection of search engines there. It sits in your existing browser as a set of additional buttons. You can't access your blogging software through StumbleUpon, so posting to your blog is done externally. You can upload photos, but this is handled by an internal photo application and you can't access any existing photo applications you might already use such as Flickr or Photobucket via the StumbleUpon interface. If you already use photo software, this means either changing to the StumbleUpon photo application or uploading everything twice to integrate within this system.

But the big guns of social browsing from this social browser is the StumbleUpon button. This takes you to random sites based on a ticklist of your own selection of interests. You then rate the sites -- 'I like them!' or 'No more like this!' -- and StumbleUpon builds an ongoing profile of your preferences. In theory, this means that it will learn your likes and dislikes and, over time, become more accurate in offering you sites that match your interests. Once you access a site, you can bookmark it, tag it and review it then make it available to share. You can search for other users who have similar interests and view their shared links, tags and reviews.

Plusses

The feel of both is very casual, and at first, I was a little sceptical of their use for an information professional. My

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initial reaction was to relegate them to the something I should know about because end users would probably be using them. But on closer examination, I found quite a few features that were either useful or potentially useful in both browsers.

Looking at Flock, I liked the easy-to-use interface. I could easily select the blogging software, the social bookmarking system and the photo software I wanted to use. I could also simply select my preferred search engine and customise the news/media page with my RSS feeds and links. I could include my logins to the various tools I chose to use and let Flock sign me in automatically if I wanted. Practically, I found that it really had the potential to make sharing quicker and easier. I can open my blogging software and my photos are accessible in the same Flock interface. I can search for online resources and save, tag and share my finds. I can share via email, or join the Flock community and chat and share. I can open my Flock homepage to the world so people can see what I'm using, what I'm looking at. I can easily

access the hot sharing sites of the moment like YouTube and MySpace, and I can set these up so that others can see what I'm looking at and using there too. And I can save this all online. So professionally, I can keep all my resources in one place on my hard drive but I'm not chained to any particular network for access. If I'm working on site or from home, I still have access to all my resources if I take a laptop.

Drawbacks

But -- and it's a big but at the moment - there are some things that need work. The biggest drawback I found was that I am bringing together all my online resources -- which I could previously use no matter what computer I was on - onto one computer. If I access the resources that Flock brings independently, I can log in to them individually on any machine with an internet connection. But if I access these same resources via the single Flock interface, I must access them on the particular computer where the software is installed. So I'm trading the great flexibility of storing and accessing online. I'm not sure there is a feasible technical workaround for this, given that everything is hanging on a browser, but without being able to login to a central location, I'm losing one of the big innovations in the applications I'm bringing together. If this could be sorted, then Flock would be a very powerful tool. Not only could you build your own personal portal of resources, but you could also share specific resources with end users within the community.

The other issues I had with Flock are less significant. I couldn't work well with the latest version of my chosen blogging software, although it was listed. Only two photo options are supported too. I suspect that these kind of things will be resolved over time. Flock is still quite new and I can accept teething troubles and/or agreements yet to be agreed with different software companies. If I'm moving my tools to a single interface, though, I want to get to select my preferred tools and would want a wider range of the standard favourites.

StumbleUpon does have a login, so can be used on any machine. It isn't a browser, but sits within the browser. At the moment, it is only available with Firefox or Internet Explorer, and again I'd like to see more choice here, but, again, it is early days. StumbleUpon doesn't handle blogging and it's a potential drawback that it doesn't integrate with any of the popular web photo applications such as Flickr and Photobucket, offering instead, an internal StumbleUpon photo application. I already have a lot of photos in my Flickr account, for example, and would be reluctant to either move this over to a new system or duplicate them in StumbleUpon.

After all, though, StumbleUpon concentrates on searching and managing found resources. On this front, it is an interesting tool. To find, or "stumble upon", websites, you begin by completing a ticklist of interests. This is a sketchy framework, with great detail

in some areas and little in others; 'cats' appears as an option, but not 'dogs'. Technical and online interests are represented at a greater level of granularity, but the categories and sub-categories are not standardised and seem very patchy overall. These are further refined as you use the tool, but again the sub-groups were uneven. This makes it unreliable in the spread of matches you will get.

Clicking on the StumbleUpon button gives you a website that matches one or more of your categories. By giving the website a thumbs up or thumbs down, you add information to your profile and in theory get more accurate matches over time. I say in theory, because the matches are made against user-generated tags. And this is where I start to have a problem. I am wary of user-generated metadata. I know it is one of the foundations of social Web browsing, but for an information professional it can be unnerving! It is inherently inaccurate and that leads to all sorts of complications for the serious searcher. That said, I found some useful sites in StumbleUpon and some interesting sites I would never have encountered in my usual, more conventional and accurate searching. It's not a tool for precise information matching, but the clue is really in the name. It re-awakened my sense of surprise at all the information that is available online and got me out of my comfortable rut of old reliable favourites.

And this is, I think, the biggest thing that social Web browsing has to offer to information professionals at the moment -- an alternative, adventurous

source of new material. Don't throw out your tried and trusted search tools, but do have a look. I guarantee you'll be surprised at what you find! Longer term, the trend of sharing that these new tools encourage is going to be very interesting and, I think, increasingly valuable as it becomes refined. I'll be exploring further, adding social browsing into my tool kit as a wild card for now, but definitely a useful tool, and keeping an eye on new releases and forthcoming developments. And maybe we'll meet up and share resources sometime.

Related FreePint links:

- "Get a (Second) Life" By Jill Hurst-Wahl, VIP
<<http://web.vivavip.com/go/vip/37/>>
- "An Introduction to Search Engines and Web Navigation" Written by Mark Levene, reviewed by David Stuart
<<http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf/introsearch.htm>>
- "2001 to 2006: Five Years of Information Architecture" By Karen Loasby
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/211206.htm#feature>
- "Holiday Express: Taking the Mobile Web on Holiday" By Gary Price
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/040107.htm#tips>>

Related links:

- Flock <<http://www.flock.com/>>
- StumbleUpon
<<http://www.stumbleupon.com/>>

Events

United Kingdom:

- "JISC Conference 2007" 13 March
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e708/>>
- "Taking the Plunge 2007: Art Librarianship as a Career Option" 3 March
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- "Reaching Out to the Emerging World" 7 March
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- "WIFI in Libraries Conference 2007" 13 March
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- "STN Patent Forum" 28 March
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Hungary:

- "Global Outsourcing Locations Strategies Summit" 8 - 11 March
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- "The 13th Nordic Conference on Information and Documentation 2007" 18 - 19 June
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United States:

- "ASIDIC Spring 2007 Meeting" 11 - 13 March
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Czech Republic:

- "INFORUM 2007: 13th Conference on Professional Information Resources" 22 - 25 May
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e792/>>

Kenya

- "eLA - eLearning Africa" 28 - 30 May
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e790/>>

Gold

- FreePint No.200 16th February 2006. "Health intelligence sources in diabetes" and "Digital repositories in UK universities and colleges"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/160206.htm>
 - FreePint No.177 24th February 2005. "Website Usability" and "Recycling - A Growth Industry"
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<http://www.freepint.com/issues/200203.htm>
 - FreePint No.106, 21st February 2002. "Searching for 'The Daily Me'" and "So you want to start your own business? Web resources that every budding entrepreneur should consult before taking the plunge"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/210202.htm>
 - FreePint No.81, 15th February 2001. "Economics sources" and "Aboriginal Australia on the World Wide Web"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/150201.htm>
 - FreePint No.56, 17th February 2000. "UK Political & Government Web Sites" and "Topics and Collections: An Alternative Metaphor for Using the Web"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/170200.htm>
 - FreePint No.32, 18th February 1999. "Environmental Information on the Internet" and "New Library: now comes the action"
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/180299.htm>
- * FreePint No.8, 19th February 1998. "A New Light on the Horizon" and "Current Awareness Research on the Internet"
<<http://www.freepint.com/issues/190298.htm>>

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