FreePint®

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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

The Online Information exhibition and conference here in London is a great way to round-up the year. We had a more sober presence this year, in contrast to last year's frivolity. A nice gallery of photos is available online, together with the handouts we were distributing:

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

There are also photos from the International Information Industry Awards gala dinner, where we announced that the winner of the 'Online Information / FreePint Award for Best Customer Service' was STN Agency UK/Ireland, which provides customer support and training to customers of STN International <http://www.freepint.com/press/>.

At Online Information we also promoted the 'VIP Wire'. This is where organisations can post their business-information-related press releases and where you can keep up-to-date with announcements like the one above through a free weekly email digest <http://www.vivavip.com/>.

In line with the information community's current interest in Google Scholar, a FreePinter in today's newsletter talks about the significance of the Open Archive Initiative (OAI) in locating and promoting reports and other 'grey literature'.

VIP's Editor Pam Foster met with Google at Online Information and was given a demonstration of their Search Appliance. VIP will be reviewing that and Google Scholar in the new year. VIP Eye (the twice-monthly current awareness bulletin) has just provided details of two free white papers from Google <http://www.vivavip.com/>.

It's been a fabulous seventh year for FreePint, with the publication of a number of reports and 10% growth in membership. VIP's first year has also exceeded expectations and we've seen significant growth of other services in the network too (including DigBig, Willco and ResourceShelf). We also feel a real sense of permanence now, following the purchase in June of the offices we've been renting for three years.

I would ask you to join me in thanking all the contributors to FreePint throughout 2004. I'm sure you'll agree that it's a pleasure to be a member of such a well-informed and professional community -- a real demonstration of the vibrancy of the information industry.

William Hann
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FreePint Jobs
<http://www.freepint.com/jobs>

The FreePint Jobs Update is being 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.86 and read the new 'Jobs Advice' section, visit <http://www.freepint.com/go/b30827>. To subscribe, modify your account at <http://web.freepint.com>.

Fully-formatted PDF version and full archive available at:
http://web.freepint.com/jobs/update/

Here are some of the latest featured jobs:

Information Specialist Team Leader
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3565>
Roles in Bristol - a vendor mgt role (6294) and an info specialist team leader role (6118), also 2 posts in Manchester (6276, 6286)
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment

Knowledge Manager - Business Risk Services
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3712>
Knowledge Sharing Champion with at least 3 years' experience required to work in the field of Risk Management.
Recruiter: Glen Recruitment

Global Client Information, Research and Records Coordinator
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3717>
Global Client Information, Research and Records Coordinator required to work in Hay Group's Knowledge Information Team
Recruiter: Hay Group

[The above jobs are paid listings]

NB: There are 39 other jobs in the current edition of the Jobs Update
<http://www.freepint.com/go/30502>.

FreePint Photos and Handouts from Online Information 2004

View a gallery of photos and handouts from this year's event, along with those from previous years:

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

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

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VIP :: In-depth business information reviews
<http://www.vivaVIP.com/>

Last three months: Dialog NewsRoom v. Factiva v. LexisNexis; Corpfin CompanyQuery; Mint

Next three months: Business Monitor Online; Emerald Management Extra; EBSCO Business Source Corporate; CorpfinWorldWide (Corpfin) v. ZEPHYR (Bureau Van Dijk)

FreePint Jobs Update Archive now online

Each issue of the twice-monthly FreePint Jobs Update includes an advice column along with the latest information job vacancies.

Access the new Jobs Update Archive to read the past editorials:

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

VIP reviews emerging markets data from BMI

Independent analysis and forecasts data from Business Monitor International is put through its paces in December's issue of VIP. Plus, Steve Goldstein, Co-founder, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Alacra writes about the fate of content aggregators.

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

AQUTE

Measuring equity research performance

AQUTE is a new online research tool that helps you identify who is producing superior equity research.

Jointly developed by AQ Research and Bureau van Dijk Electronic Publishing, AQUTE offers a detailed, quantitative measure of equity research, valuable to anyone in fund management, investor relations, corporate finance, banking and credit as well as brokers themselves.

AQUTE looks at analysts' recommendations and eps forecasts and applies AQ Research's methodology to measures these against companies' actual results and share price performances. Wizard led software helps you manipulate this data, to reveal results from a number of different viewpoints. For example, you can identify which brokers are best in terms of accuracy, which individual analysts are performing well, how sectors compare and how companies fare against their competitors.

AQUTE also offers a broker specific module which gives brokers exclusive access to their specifics. Here, you can monitor your analysts' performances in detail and see how they compare to their peers. Watchlists help research management spot stale estimates and outliers from the consensus.

AQUTE is now available and we're taking bookings for demonstrations. Please e-mail info@bvdep.com or visit www.bvdep.com to find the contact number of the appropriate BvDEP office for your area.

AQUTE

AQ ANALYSING THE ANALYSTS

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My Favourite Tipples
by Roshan Khan

Roshan Khan is Group Know How Manager at Maitland. Maitland is a professional services firm, providing legal, fiduciary and asset management services from offices in ten locations across Europe, South Africa and the Caribbean <http://www.maitlandgroup.com/>. These were Roshan's favourite tipples in her previous role of running the Information Centre at the Financial Services Authority.

- The Compliance Exchange <http://www.compliance-exchange.com/> is a useful source of information about financial regulation worldwide.

- Marketresearch.com <http://www.marketresearch.com/> allows you to buy costly reports 'by the slice' (i.e. the report is available in smaller, less expensive sections).

- Media UK <http://www.mediauk.com/> is useful for tracking down little-known regional newspapers, as well as having comprehensive coverage of all things necessary to turn you into a proper media luvvie.

- Meeting friends at a nail bar in Marylebone High Street for a girly afternoon, I had to decide where to retire for lunch. Unfamiliar with that neck of the woods, Street Sensation <http://www.streetsensation.co.uk/> showed me all the shops, bars and restaurants, etc. on popular central London streets (we decided upon Carluccios in nearby St. Christopher's Place).

New: Search across the VIP Wire and VIP Lounge

A fast new keyword search feature has been added to the Willco Forums Module <http://www.willco.com/products/forums/>.

This means you can now search across the archive of postings at the VIP Wire and VIP Lounge <http://www.vivavip.com/>.

FreePint Bar
**In Association with Factiva
a Dow Jones & Reuters Company**

Even with the FreePint team out of the office for a week at the Online Information show, the Bar was as busy as ever. Photos from the event, and the handouts we gave out, are available online <http://www.freepint.com/go/b30826>.

At the show we launched 'Onopoly' <http://www.freepint.com/go/b30840>
-- a one-stop-shop for information about advertising across theFreePint network. You can subscribe to the 'Onopoly Update', which is a quarterly email update with the latest offers. This replaces the FreePint Advertiser Update and is available online at:

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

Back at the Bar, a related posting asks for a database of advertising- supported email newsletters <http://www.freepint.com/go/b30820>.

It's great when FreePinters just post interesting resources -- like the link to a comprehensive review of Google Scholar <http://www.freepint.com/go/b30853>. On a similar topic, is there a list of definitions of records, from a records management perspective? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b30848>. Any advice for someone wanting to catalogue their own private library? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b30722>. Or do any UK libraries use the UDC, Colon Classification, Brown, Bliss or Moys classification schemes? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b30768>

The latest FreePint Jobs Update has advice on the benefits of mentoring, along with the latest job vacancies <http://www.freepint.com/go/b30827>. There is also now an archive of past issues of the Jobs Update, so you can catch up on all the earlier advice columns <http://www.freepint.com/go/b30825>.

The cosmopolitan nature of the Bar means there have also been queries on a variety of other topics: Is there research on non-indigenous languages spoken in the UK? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b30789>; Do you have links with a local newspaper that can give advice on digitising an archive and funding such a project? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b30765>; Can you help with data on French-language STM publishers and their revenues? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b30777>; Or what about ways to contact the estates of deceased minor celebrities? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b30730>.

Finally: has anyone used the Mondosearch on-site search tool (including BehaviorTracking and Information Manager)? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b30800>; Are there any in-depth resources on running an internal corporate blog? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b30749>; Is there an equivalent to the 'oecreative code' for copywriters, translators and technical writers? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b30846>; Or a source for five year's worth of collated bestseller data? <http://www.freepint.com/go/b30753>.

Well, that's enough variety for 2004. Season's greetings to everyone who frequents the forum and all the best for the new year.

William Hann <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

"Outsourcing Research to India"
By Mike Taylor

Mike Taylor is the UK sales director for Evalueserve, where he has been for nearly three years, in which time Evalueserve has grown from 40 to over 500 people. Prior to Evalueserve, he was a sales manager for Marconi, responsible for outsourcing and managed services. His background is in Engineering, he has a degree in Fluid Mechanics and Thermodynamics from Durham University .

Evalueserve is a global research company, with almost 500 full-time research professionals in Gurgaon, a suburb of Delhi. We offer multilanguage market research, the full spectrum of business research and intellectual property research and patent writing. Our sales team is around 25 people, spread around the globe from Silicon Valley to Singapore <http://www.evalueserve.com/>.

Imagine if you had a research team of 10 people working for you, with no hassles about managing them, making sure they were busy and motivated, worrying about their holidays, boyfriend troubles, hangovers or office politics. They would do what you wanted, by the deadline you'd set. Be great, wouldn't it? You could concentrate on what only *you* can do, making sure you deliver your customers exactly what they need, within budget.

Call centre and IT jobs have been heading offshore for years. Research companies are now starting to use India as an operations base to undercut UK firms. Is this a threat or an opportunity for research jobs in the UK?

Several companies offer research services in the UK from India. I work for Evalueserve, one of the largest and most established, but will try and give an objective overview of what is available from India, how it works, the risks and some best practice advice.

So, what's the background? Different services have been outsourced to low-cost economies for years. From our plastic toys 'Made in Hong Kong' in the 1970s, silicon chips to go into our ZX81s in the 80s and the software behind our websites and databases in the 90s, manufacturing and services jobs have always been outsourced to the location with the best combination of skilled resource and low costs. Call centres and bank back-office operations have hit the headlines in the last couple of years because of high-profile companies moving large centres from the UK, with associated job losses and media hype.

Knowledge Process Outsourcing (KPO), which includes Market Research and Business Research, is a distinct evolution from Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) services like the call centres and software services. Clearly, KPO isn't as simple as picking up a process and moving it to a lower cost location, it normally involves significantly more value-addition from the offshore team.

One of the first companies to successfully run an offshore knowledge centre was McKinsey Consulting, who set up a research centre in Delhi to provide simple data retrieval and presentation resources to McKinsey consultants round the world. Since then, lots of independent companies have started up, claiming to offer high value research services to anyone. Several companies started up around four years ago, among them Evalueserve, Irevna, Office Tiger and Pipal Research. According to their websites, all deliver similar services - high quality market, business and financial services research, from India, for a fraction of the traditional cost. The companies have different customer-facing structures but are all based around a team of MBAs and smart graduates in India delivering research work to clients in the West. Meanwhile, some companies have followed the McKinsey example and decided to build their own Indian research centres (Bain,

Goldman Sachs and Lehmans for example). There are good and bad points of these captive centres, including staff recruitment and retention, costs and quality.

India isn't the only destination for KPO jobs, but it's certainly the biggest. This A.T.Kearney report looks at all the destinations in more detail <http://digbig.com/4cgyj>. The first question on many prospective customers' minds is whether companies can really deliver what they promise. And they're right to ask. Although India is an amazing place, with a billion people, six times the number of graduates and twice as many MBAs each year than the UK, it's 4,000 miles from here and is a completely different world. Inside the offices, it is completely 'westernised', with cutting-edge architecture and VOIP phones, but outside there are cows in the street and unbelievable traffic ...

One of the most common questions I am asked is how a 27 year-old graduate in Delhi, who has never left India, can possibly understand the intricacies of UK markets?

The truth is that some projects work better than others. The teams in India will not have the detailed knowledge of consumer or regional markets that you do; and highly brand-specific, regional projects are tough. Projects that work really well are ones that can be clearly defined at the outset with a focus on global markets.

Indian firms have built teams to conduct high-quality market research interviews. This is a different world to call centres; the interviewers are capable of high-level qualitative conversations with executives at companies around the globe (including non-English interviews). Consumer interviews are more difficult than B2B, mainly because people called at home are not as receptive to calls from India and rejection rates are higher.

Straightforward business research including company profiling, sector or country overviews, database building and database maintenance is very successful. Productivity and quality are normally the same or better than a UK team and they can access all the same online sources of information. As the projects move up the value chain to include things like value chain analysis,

commercialisation studies and company valuations, the cost differential gets even more pronounced.

Indian teams are not trying to compete with management consultancies, and for the really high value-add projects, the customer will need to be much more involved for guidance and thought leadership. They will also normally not provide advice; rather give you the summary data on which to base your own decisions.

Other high-end research services available from India include patent writing and intellectual property research, data analytics and quantitative modelling. The cost differential for these is absolutely staggering - in some cases the cost for the same service in India is around 10% of UK rates.

For all projects, the most critical aspect to ensure a quality end product is communication. Your initial brief should give the team the framework and background for the project. You should expect a phone conference with the team before they write a proposal to let them ask questions which you may think are obvious, but will let them understand how the project fits into the customers' business needs. Proposals should give a firm, fixed cost for the project and detail exactly how the work will be conducted and how long it will take.

Once the project starts, your role is to be the person who really understands the needs of the end customer, why they want the research and how it fits into their business goals. You have to decide how much the team in India need to know in order to deliver worthwhile and valuable research. Project management communication will normally be between you and a senior researcher in India and the relationship between you is critical. The Indian team will keep you fully informed about progress and issues, but you need to keep giving them feedback on how you think it's going, how the quality is looking and any new directions you think the research should be moving.

By moving up the value chain and becoming the link to the highly skilled, experienced and low-cost resource available at companies like ours, UK researchers can make themselves invaluable as they have what the offshore company can never have - real understanding of the end customers' needs.

Related FreePint links:

- 'Information and Libraries' articles in the FreePint Portal <http://www.freepint.com/go/p69>

- Post a message to the author, Mike Taylor, 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/161204.htm#tips>

- Access the entire archive of FreePint content http://www.freepint.com/portal/content/

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All the sites on our network have 'Suggestion Boxes' on their Contact Page.

Please use this facility to give us your anonymous comments, suggestions, corrections and feedback.

FreePint's Suggestion Box is at: <http://www.freepint.com/contact.htm>

FreePint Events :: 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/>

FreePint Bookshelf

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

Phil Bradley is a well known Internet consultant and search expert. He teaches on a wide variety of aspects of the Internet, (both public and private tailored courses for in-company training) and is the author of a number of well known titles, such as the Advanced Internet Searcher's Handbook. He writes, designs and maintains websites for clients, as well as offering a Search Engine Optimisation service. He has also written a weblog for the last two years. Most recently he has become a Microsoft 'Search Champ', providing them with advice and feedback on their developments in the field of Internet Search. His website is at
http://www.philb.com

Related links:

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- "Weblogs and libraries" ISBN 1843340968, published by Chandos Publishing Oxford Ltd.

- Search for and purchase any book from Amazon via the FreePint Bookshelf at <http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf>

"Weblogs and libraries"
By Laurel A Clyde
Reviewed by Phil Bradley

Weblogs are a (relatively) new Internet phenomena, and there are only a few books that cover the subject in any detail, and "Weblogs and Libraries" by Dr. L. Anne Clyde (Professor in the Faculty of Social Science, University of Iceland) is unique in that it looks at the subject from a librarianship angle. It's short; only 181 pages, and I was able to read it in a single sitting. It covers a lot of ground quickly, and looks at the subject from a variety of different aspects: an overview of blogging; weblogs as sources of current information; finding weblogs, weblogs in the field of library and information science; weblogs created by libraries; creating and managing one and sources of information.

Consequently, it will be of value to anyone with an interest in weblogs, or simply someone who wishes to know rather more about them, particularly those individuals who work in the library and information science field.

The writing style is engaging and easy to follow with little or no technical jargon employed. It is clearly set out, with a good type face and overall design style. The text is helpfully supplemented with screenshots that are also clear and easy to view. Given that the subject area is moving very swiftly, the book is also reasonably current - most screenshots being dated in April of 2004. Clyde has also provided a great many useful links to websites that cover weblogs, so even if/when the content gets dated the reader will still gain considerable knowledge by using the title as a basis for further personal exploration.

The author has given many examples of weblogs that the reader can visit to increase their own knowledge, although I sometimes felt that the accompanying text, while descriptive, did give the feel of a little 'padding'; I would have liked to have seen more recommendations of weblogs and less description, though this may be because I already knew most of the examples used. It would also have been helpful to have a step-by-step guide to creating a weblog, rather than a generic description of how it could be done. I would also like to have seen rather more in-depth information on how weblogs can be used within a library, to really draw out their benefits for librarians. Although this is slightly unfair, since weblogs have yet to be widely taken up by the information community I feel that the author is knowledgeable enough to give some really good suggestions and ideas and I was disappointed not to see more in this area.

These are however minor quibbles; overall the book is very informative, and the reader will be left in no doubt about how useful weblogs can potentially be, and there is advice aplenty on where to go next. I would recommend it to anyone with the slightest curiosity in weblogs,

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VIP Digests for the Wire and Lounge

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FreePint

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ISSN: 1460-7239

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Feature Article

"The Open Archive Initiative (OAI) and Google Scholar"
By Nick Luft

Nick Luft, Information Manager GFN-SSR, has worked in libraries since 1988 and has specialised in the application of ICT in libraries between 1995 and 2003. Since 2003, he has left the library world and become an Information Manager for the GFN-SSR, which involves the design of a web-based database, the management of a web site, the editing of electronic and paper publications and the tricky business of facilitating a global network.

He holds a degree in History, from York University, and a Masters Degree in Library and Information Studies, from Newcastle Polytechnic, and is currently studying for a Knowledge Management Systems MSc <oai-trends@impudent.org.uk>.

There has been some disagreement about the merits of Google Scholar <http://scholar.google.com>. Whatever your position on this, it is certain that the actual workings of Google Scholar are still the subject of speculation. What follows is not an unpicking of Google Scholar's innards but an exercise in trend watching. I think I might have spotted a trend in the act of tipping!

Recently at the Online Information exhibition, I asked several database vendors my customary difficult question. This year I was interested in what strategies, if any, they had towards the collection, indexing and dissemination of 'Grey Literature' specifically the growth of papers, articles, and reports being routinely published on organisational web-sites.

My question was inspired by my daily work in trying to collect information from the internet for my network of practitioners and academics, the GFN-SSR <http://www.gfn-ssr.org> and also my discovery of a relatively small database vendor, CIAO, <http://www.ciaonet.org> that was collecting electronic grey literature directly from the producers.

The other unspoken aspect of my question was that I was trying to find out if there was 'buy-in' to the Open Archive Initiative (OAI) standard <http://www.openarchives.org/OAI/openarchives protocol.html>. OAI is a XML-based standard that is attempting to unify the dissemination and exchange of metadata used to describe documents or records accessible via the web . The actual metadata standard used to describe the items has to be an implementation of Dublin Core, but can include others. OAI is one of several web-services coming into existence, of which Really Simple Syndication (RSS) is perhaps the most widely known and popular method for finding, collecting and disseminating web-based news stories.

My interest in the two parts of the question were, of course, related. I could see that if more online-information gateways would adopt OAI standards I could implement a OAI element within the GFN-SSR database and further distribute the papers produced by my organisation and our partners. I could also see that if the web sites themselves would adopt OAI, it would assist my discovery of their papers for my network. However, I could not find any major implementations of an OAI standard, at least within the field of international affairs and developmental studies. As a small organisation I could not afford the development resources necessary to implement OAI when there would be few outlets for the service. I had made enquires, in June 2003, with other web-content managers to see if they were investigating OAI and none were.

At the Online exhibition I asked several vendors the same question and got a variety of responses. The best response came from an organisation that not only had an implementation of a distributed database for the producers of grey literature, but also mentioned that it could support the use of OAI standards.

Emboldened by this, I re-asked the question of the web-content managers I had originally approached, and discovered that all of them were at various stages of looking at OAI.

I was surprised but pleased by this news, and have now started to seriously consider writing the initial proposal for our OAI implementation, with

Gold

- FreePint No.150 11th December 2003. "Taking a look at media information professionals and asking: what makes a successful conference?" and "From Fortune 500 to Handelsblatt's European 500 two years on - a final look at some useful European and International Rankings"
  http://www.freepint.com/issues/111203.htm

- FreePint No.127 12th December 2002. "Home Pages: Websites for the Homeworker" and "Archive Television - A Survey of Websites"
  http://www.freepint.com/issues/121202.htm

- FreePint No.102 13th December 2001. "Tracking the Net" and "FreePint In 2001"
  http://www.freepint.com/issues/131201.htm

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

- FreePint No.52, 16th December 1999. "FreePint in 1999" and "Review of Online Information 99"
  http://www.freepint.com/issues/161299.htm

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

- FreePint No.3, 4th December 1997. "Getting the Most Out of Online 97" and "Getting Even Better Results from Search Engines"
  http://www.freepint.com/issues/041297.htm

Penny <penny@freepint.com>

Related FreePint links:

- 'Information and Libraries' articles in the FreePint Portal <http://www.freepint.com/go/p69>

- Post a message to the author, Nick Luft, or suggest further resources at the FreePint Bar <http://www.freepint.com/bar>

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a degree of informal cooperation with these partners. However, I could not help wonder if I had taken my eye off the ball over the last year and had missed the development of an OAI friendly environment. Such are the paranoias of working for a small organisation.

Then I noticed a discussion on the OAI-Implementers discussion board where the posts mentioned how Google was considering OAI <http://oaisrv.nsdl.cornell.edu/mailman/listinfo/oai-implementers>.

"Google has recently been doing things with the OAI-PMH (Protocol for Metadata Harvesting). The important thing for Google, as far as I understand, is getting to content. If enough content is available through the OAI-PMH, they will use the OAI-PMH to get to it. and it seems that Google has decided that enough interesting content might be (or might become) available through the OAI-PMH for it be worth their time" <http://digbig.com/4cgxx>.

Maybe I have put two and two together and made five, but would the reported interest in OAI from Google be a visible indicator of them collecting material for Google Scholar. And where Google leads, other database vendors follow. Is this a trend? If this is true - and remember this is speculation - should not all producers of electronic grey literature, start to think about getting our collections OAI compliant.

As I write (8 December 2004), I have received an e-mail back from the Google Scholar team, thanking me for directing their attention to my site, and they will be looking at it in due course. Well I never...!

FreePint Forthcoming Articles
[Provisional]

* Business Awards * Usability * Autism *
* Health Sources for Non-Health Professionals *
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* Applying Governance to the Management of Information *

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This is just a selection from the 6 listings in FreePint Events. For your free listing, complete the form at <http://www.freepint.com/events>.

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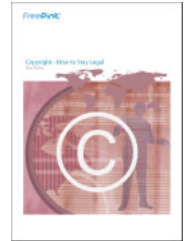
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