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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 a substantial archive of articles, reviews, jobs & events, with answers to research questions and networking at the Free Pint Bar.

Please circulate this newsletter which is best read when printed out. To receive a fully formatted version as an attachment or a brief notification when it's online, visit <http://www.freepint.com/member>.

EDITORIAL

You won't be aware of this, but I've actually spent quite a while now writing and rewriting this Editorial.

The problem is that if you're talking to someone on a one-to-one basis then you generally know (or can discern) a bit about who they are, what they might want to know about, etc. If you're talking to a bunch of people then there's likely to be a common interest or background between members of the group, which again helps when deciding what to say.

When I started FreePint five years ago, it was simply information professionals talking to information professionals. I'm an information professional. I have a degree in information science. I've worked for information vendors in the past. I'm a member of information-related associations. The majority of my colleagues and contacts are in the information industry. Simple.

Not so simple now though. As the awareness of the importance of information has mushroomed, thanks to the Internet, information seeking skills are now needed by pretty much anyone looking for serious information on the Web. So, where are the boundaries of the information industry now? Who are its members?

What is slowly starting to dawn on me is that there are no boundaries, and indeed there should be no boundaries. Everyone's welcome. The information profession is not a private club. It's not 'members only'.

Having information management skills is something to which many people aspire. They can see a direct relevance and use for them in their everyday work. They don't want to be 'information professionals'. They don't want to have a degree in the thing, or charter. They just want to learn new skills which will be useful every single day.

There's been discussion about this again this week at the FreePint Bar. For instance, someone asked "Are there many young people going into the profession?" <http://www.freepint.com/go/b22337>. My answer would be that there are hundreds of people of all ages and backgrounds with an interest in information who are joining the fringes of our profession all the time.

So, bravo to those educational institutions, associations, publications, companies and individuals who've worked this out; and there are many more than you may realise. Let's talk, and think about how, together, we can make the most of the diversity in the information profession. We can talk at the TLS/ILI show next week <http://www.total-library.co.uk> or at the various conferences in the States and Europe which I'm attending in the next couple of months.

I'm very proud to be an 'information professional'. However, I realise that there's a lot of work to be done in updating how the profession is viewed, from both outside the industry and (I'm afraid to say) within it too.

Cheers
William

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FREE PINT JOBS

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

This week's selected listings are below. All new jobs are posted to the Bar and Bar Digest (circulation 10,000+). This week's is at <http://www.freepint.com/go/b22927> and last week's at <http://www.freepint.com/go/b22796>.

Here are some of the latest featured jobs:

Resource Co-ordinator
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j2320>
Calling Librarians in the West of London (Ealing, Uxbridge, etc.) - lots of temporary roles available! Call now for more details.
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment

Statistician/Analyst/Writer
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j2365>
With strong Access and Excel skills to deal with ranking data.
Recruiter: Glen Recruitment

Head of Corporate Planning, Project and Performance
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j2367>
Innovative project analyst with strategic, financial and operational experience required to lead performance measurement.
Recruiter: Intelligent Resources

Statistician
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j2369>
Experienced, qualified statistician required for leading financial publication.
Recruiter: Recruit Media

[The above jobs are paid listings]

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

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MY FAVOURITE TIPPLES
from Joe Tarrant

Joe Tarrant has worked at University College Cork (Ireland), UCL, IME Ltd and The Chartered Institute of Bankers before a move to Clifford Chance LLP in 2000. He has been a shelver, cataloguer, documentation writer, software tester, helpdesk geek, researcher, webmaster, systems admin and general dogsbody.

Tell us about your favourite Web sites. Check out the guidelines at <http://www.freepint.com/author.htm>, then email <penny@freepint.com>.

- <http://www.wired.com> - A technology newsfeed - usually at least one tech article worth reading and one oddity. And the magazine's online as well with an awesome back archive.

- <http://www.apple.com> - You can run MS Word, a Unix shell, the world's best MP3 software and the world's prettiest GUI on stunning hardware AT THE SAME TIME. What more can I say?

- <http://www.ora.com> - Already mentioned. O'Reilly write techie books for techies and non-techies and they give away a lot of content for free. Cruise the Open Source section for great writing.

- <http://www.photo.net> - Mentioned previously on FreePint, I'm sure. This site is amazing.

- <telnet:towel.blinkenlights.nl> - This is the best thing I've ever seen on the internet and it doesn't matter how slow your connection is, so long as your firewall lets you telnet, it'll still work. Enter the command above from your Windows/Unix commandline and JUST WATCH. The command to exit on telnet programs is control-] (control-right angle bracket).

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<http://www.factiva.com/infopro>

FREE PINT BAR
In Association with Factiva
a Dow Jones & Reuters Company

Whatever your research question, help is always to hand at the FreePint Bar. Just visit and browse to see the range of topics being covered each day <http://www.freepint.com/bar>.

Dissertations seem to be the main focus currently at the FreePint Student Bar <http://www.freepint.com/student>. If you're stuck with yours, then give the Student Bar a go for some great advice.

For a twice-weekly digest of the latest postings by email, modify your account <http://www.freepint.com/member> or email <subs@freepint.com>.

FREE PINT GOLD

Last year Briget Lander gave us a brief online tour on the Netherlands ranging from Government and News to Tourism and Expats. Paul Harwood's Feature explained all about scholarly publishing.

- FreePint No.108 21st March 2002. "An introduction to the Netherlands on the web" and "Evolution or revolution: the future of scholarly publishing" http://www.freepint.com/issues/210302.htm

In March 2001, Neil Smith shared what he thinks Extensible Markup Language's effect on the world will be. Richard Wakeford looked at the The Freedom of Information Act.

- FreePint No.83, 15th March 2001. "XML - the DNA of the Internet" and "Freedom of Information" http://www.freepint.com/issues/150301.htm

Three years ago Martin White wrote a Tips article about sources of information for portals. Simon Collery looked at The Oxford English Dictionary on the Web.

- FreePint No.58, 16th March 2000. "Portals" and "WWW.OED.COM - A New Home for the Dictionary" http://www.freepint.com/issues/160300.htm

Four years ago Sophie Graham "highlighted some of the key pharmaceutical and health websites". Jonathan Eaton's Feature article was about access controls and Internet security.

- FreePint No.34, 18th March 1999. "Pharmaceutical/ health information on the Web" and "Who goes there...? - Access Control Issues for Internet-based information services" http://www.freepint.com/issues/180399.htm

Networking for business was Alison Scammell's choice of subject in 1998. Ben Heald narrowed down Business and Accounting Resources on the Internet.

- FreePint No.9, 19th March 1998. "Working the Net" and "Business and Accounting Resources on the Web" http://www.freepint.com/issues/190398.htm

Penny <penny@freepint.com>

TIPS ARTICLE
<www.freepint.com/issues/200303.htm#tips>

"Military History on the Internet"
By Jonathan Crowhurst

Jonathan Crowhurst is a trainee library assistant at City lawyers Norton Rose, and deals with Tax and Competition law information. He will be beginning an MSc in Library and Information Studies at City University in October 2003. Contact him on samuelpepys1666@hotmail.com to discuss any aspect of this article or military history in general.

The Internet has much to offer the military historian. There are many excellent resources available out there whether you are a re-enactor, an historical researcher, a war gamer, or a scale modeller. Although I work in legal information in my day job, military history has been a major interest of mine for as long as I can remember. I would like to take this opportunity to share some sites that I have found to be really helpful in my quest for military-related information: starting with some more general sites; looking at some sites relating to World War one; then my own story of how I found out about one of my relatives who died in that war.

General Sites

Getting over a million hits when you type in "Military History" on Google means that there needs to be some sort of smart targeting when doing your research. I would hazard a guess that most people using the Internet to research military history will have a reasonably good idea of what precisely they are looking for, which is half the battle. The best place I found to start, although I came to it from researching some market information on the UK defence industry rather than personal interest, is the Web site for the UK Ministry of Defence (MoD) <http://www.mod.uk/>. In America the equivalent is provided by the Department of Defense <http://www.defenselink.mil/>.

<http://www.militaryhistoryonline.com/> is an excellent US site covering many periods of military conflict, with a different special feature each month. February looks at the role of Afro-Americans in conflicts past and present.

King's College London's Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/lhcma/home.htm> is a large collection of military documents, including the recollections of over 500 senior generals serving this century. It is not possible to look at the collections online, but it is possible to look at the catalogues, contact numbers should you wish to view the material, and some handy research guides on various areas of the collection. These should be consulted before visiting.

For museums relating to the military, the Imperial War Museum site <http://www.iwm.org.uk/> is highly recommended, linking to the museums at London and Manchester, as well as the Cabinet War Rooms and HMS Belfast. It covers from the First World War.

For the British Army around the world from 1485 to the present, the National Army Museum is the place to visit <http://www.national-army-museum.ac.uk/>. <http://www.regiments.org/milhist/regtintro/index.htm> is also a great index of the histories of the British Empire and Commonwealth. Returning to the UK MoD site, as well as all publicly available information on current military affairs, are individual sites for the Armed Forces at <http://www.army.mod.uk/>, <http://www.royal-navy.mod.uk/>, <http://www.raf.mod.uk/>.

The MoD links page is the best place to visit initially as it is a huge list of pre-sorted links <http://www.mod.uk/links/index.html>. This includes links to the Defence Ministries for most countries and links to most of the search categories one could think of in relation to military. I would start off with <http://dmoz.org/Society/History/By_Topic/Wars_and_Conflicts/>, <http://dmoz.org/Reference/Museums/Military/> ,<http://dmoz.org/Regional/Europe/United_Kingdom/Society_and_Culture/Military/>, <http://dmoz.org/Regional/Europe/United_Kingdom/Society_and_Culture/Military/Veterans/>.

These sites will provide search results for each category and the layout will be familiar to anyone who has used a search tool such as Yahoo. These have been organised by the DMOZ open directory project. I cannot recommend these links strongly enough since the pain of trawling through a load of irrelevant results from a keyword search (unless it is very specific) has been removed. It remains for the individual to select the sites that are most relevant to their area of interest. Re-enactors might visit the wars and conflicts link for example, where over a thousand results are tabled under Living History.

World War One and the Web - A Case Study

Since military history is such as vast subject, I would now like to mention some sites which I have found especially useful in my own current area of interest, the First World War. I will look at some sites that provide background information to the 'War to End all Wars', tracing veterans, and tracing those soldiers who never came back. Some of us will have family from the past, perhaps still alive, who fought in, or lived through, the Great War. Most of us will have had family members killed, or know someone who did. It has not left our generation's awareness - next August sees the 90th anniversary of the start of the war.

General First World War

The Web can bring us closer to those who fought, and died. BBC2 is re- broadcasting the seminal 1964 series The Great War on Saturday nights. Shot entirely from archive film, some reconstruction and the voices of the veterans, many of who were still with us in the 60s, and with the powerful narration of Sir Michael Redgrave, this series brings the horror of the Great War home.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/war/wwone/> is a great start to those who may be unable to see the programme and for general background to the war. There are lots of features, for example an interactive 1914-1918 map of the trench system and campaigns along the Western Front and is a good mix of texts and images.

Other First World War sites well worth visiting are the World War one Archive, as it says an online archive of many of the significant contemporary documents from the period <http://www.hcu.ox.ac.uk/mirrors/www.lib.byu.edu:80/~rdh/wwi/index.html> which is searchable

by keyword and category. Amongst other things, there are official documents, an image archive, and information on the maritime war and the medical front which can be printed should you wish.

Veterans

Those looking at veterans who are still alive can try the Royal British Legion <http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/> to get in touch with them, though survivors are declining in numbers with each passing year. Their memory is perpetuated by The Great War Society, a British Living History Group <http://www.thegreatwarsociety.co.uk/>. There is an excellent links page here <http://www.tgws.fsnet.co.uk/>.

There are also a number of Regimental organisations such as the Machine Gun corps Old Comrades Association <http://www.mgcorps.ndirect.co.uk/>, and The Gallipoli Association <http://www.gallipoli-association.org/home.htm> which may be helpful in your research.

The dead of World War One can be searched for through a number of sites. For those who did not come home, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) maintains an excellent Debt of Honour register, more of which later <http://www.cwgc.org/>. The Public Record Office <http://www.pro.gov.uk/> would also be another obvious starting point for the researcher looking at Veterans records. Their catalogues are online and best consulted before going to the PRO at Kew.

A Personal Story

I would just like to relate how the Internet enabled me to discover one of my relatives who died in the war. There was always a Crowhurst read out in the roll of honour on Remembrance Sunday in Church, and as I began researching my family history last year I found out he was in fact my great uncle. I went to the Commonwealth War Graves Debt of Honour register online (see above). You need at least a surname, the arm of service, which Commonwealth country's forces the relative was serving in, and the conflict (the site covers World War One and Two and all the countries who made up the commonwealth forces in both World Wars such as India, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, whose dead are buried in cemeteries coming under the auspices of the CWGC.

I had all the information required by the search facility so I typed it all in and the records came up<http://www.cwgc.org.uk/detailed.asp?casualty=296125> showing my uncle died on November 4 1918. There was even a link to a picture of his commemoration. I found <http://www.1914-1918.net/>, an excellently researched and maintained site on the British Army in World War One. I was able to find out which attack he died in, namely the assault on the Sambre - Ouse Canal during the Battle of the Sambre.

I knew the Regiment my uncle was in, the King's Royal Rifle Corps (KRRC) as this was listed on our parish church war memorial and confirmed by the CWGC record, which listed him as being in the 2nd Battalion. The KRRC was listed on this site's regimental listings at <http://www.1914-1918.net/krrc.htm> and I was able to find the Division his Battalion was part of, then link to a history of this Division 1914 - 18 <http://www.1914-1918.net/1div.htm> which was one of the key divisions involved in the attack. Details of this attack are under construction on the site as I write.

Wilfred Owen's Regiment, the Manchesters, were also part of this attack, and Owen was killed on the same day as my uncle. Putting in the Sambre Canal brings up plenty of Wilfred Owen-related sites like <http://www.hcu.ox.ac.uk/jtap/> and <http://www.1914-18.co.uk/owen/> with some information about the battle. I was also able, through the Royal Green Jackets Web site at <http://www.rgjassociation.org.uk/index.html>, whose history the King's Rifles have long since become part of through various amalgamations, to contact the Regimental Archivist and get some information sent to me on the Regiment's history at this time.

So for me, the Internet has helped solve a long-standing family mystery, and made last year's Poppy Day a far more personal and poignant event. Current events also remind us that war is still a part of our world; the Internet can inform us of war's futility by being an ever-changing monument to its victims.

FREE PINT BOOKSHELF

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

"Business Darwinism: Evolve or Dissolve"
Written by Eric A. Marks
Reviewed by Dafydd Lewis

The basic thesis of this book is that IT has come to play a central role in corporate activities, in the same sense that culture plays a central role in society, and that consequently a new approach is required which aligns IT and business strategy more closely. The author, Eric A. Marks, draws on his experience as an IT consultant to suggest a macro-level business model which should help reposition businesses successfully in the face of rapid change, and pre-position them for the future.

Marks maintains that companies must invest more aggressively in IT. He introduces the concept of Information Mastery as a critical core capability of any modern organisation: superior strategic use of information requires a shift from regarding information as a budgetary expense to regarding it as a core asset. Consequently, new metrics are needed to relate IT to the bottom line. Case studies - e.g. Dell Computers - illustrate how this new thinking has proven successful.

The book traces how technology - from the printing press to the internet - has had a liberating effect on information. Using analogies with Darwinian evolutionary theory, Marks suggests that companies' success in surviving and competing in the short term, and replicating (developing) the business and adapting, in the longer term, can be measured against the four criteria of revenue, profit, cash flow and market share.

A potted history of IT in corporations is also provided, and a New Age
- as opposed to an Industrial Age - business evolution framework isproposed which incorporates Weill and Broadbent's <1> IT investment categories - infrastructure, transactional, informational and strategic - and outlines how this can be 'flexed' in response to business need. The business strategy model used is that of Gary Hamel <2>.

There is nothing so practical as a good theory, and this book offers a philosophical starting point to developing an IT strategy in today's fast-moving, IT-dependent age. You will especially like this book if you are partial to metaphors: how does 'corporate velociraptors' grab you? If you are not - or perhaps if you are a creationist - you could possibly get away with reading the introduction and chapters six, seven and eight.

If I had a criticism it would be that the book could have sneaked into its 270 pages of smallish type - and few pictures - some acknowledgement of the importance of the social context of information when designing information strategies. Using technology to solve problems generated by technology, after all, tends to create more problems if people are not sufficiently taken into account. Consequently, I would recommend users of this book to also read Brown and Duguid's entertaining and thought-provoking volume "The Social Life of Information" <3>. Perhaps Amazon should offer a discount when you buy both books together.

REFERENCES

<1> Weill, P. and Broadbent, M. Leveraging the new infrastructure.
Harvard Business School Press, 1998

<2> Hamel, G. Leading the Revolution. Harvard Business School Press, 2000

<3> Brown, J.S. and Duguid, P. The Social Life of Information. Harvard Business School Press, 2000

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FEATURE ARTICLE
<www.freepint.com/issues/200303.htm#feature>

"Librarians & Comics"
By Emma Finney

Emma Finney is an Information Adviser in the Science & Engineering Team at Sheffield University where she supports the school of Science & Mathematics. In her own time she can be found reading comics; there is probably little chance of her stopping now. She has yet to find a comic or graphic novel that can be purchased to support her Science & Mathematics students. She is a member of CILIP.

Our idea of a comic depends on our experience and age. What is a comic? A comic can be 2000AD, the Beano, Barefoot Gen, Eagle, From Hell, Grendel, Hellblazer, Lenore, Maus, Palestine, Sandman, School Kids OZ, Stuck Rubber Baby, Superman, Viz or the X-Men. They cover all subjects and attract a varied age range of readers.

Why should we be aware of comics?

It is important that certain sectors of information workers, e.g. School, Public and University librarians are aware of comics.

Comics can be purchased for these libraries to widen the range of material available, or to offer alternative formats from the plain text of books or the glare of the PC screen.

Public and School librarians may find that for younger readers, comics can be an attractive way in to literature, for some the leap from picture book to text is not attractive at all. For these readers, comics can be more appealing and maintain a reader's interest in literacy and the world of literature.

For teenagers, there have been a number of comics written which deal with 'coming of age' and sexuality issues such as 'Books of Magic', 'Stuck Rubber Baby', 'Strangers In Paradise', or 'Love and Rockets'. These titles can be an alternative way of supporting teenagers need for material in a format they may find more appealing than text. Rites of passage can be depicted with imagination and graphics that may appeal.

School and Academic librarians may be interested in comics which have dealt with emotive issues in a visual medium such as the award winning 'Maus' which deals with the holocaust, 'Barefoot Gen' which deals with the aftermath of the Hiroshima bomb or 'Palestine' which deals with life under the Israeli occupation.

Comics can be used as outreach material to entice and encourage reluctant readers and to convey difficult and emotive issues in graphic and imaginative form.

Comic Books and Librarians

The incorporation of comics in libraries is dependent on the librarian's personal and professional opinions regarding comics. Not all of us were brought up reading comics and some of us may never have read comics. So it would not be too surprising if comics did not make it on to our shelves as we would have no experience or knowledge of comics. Comic books may not appear on the library shelf if the content is regarded as objectionable or unsuitable by librarians.

In 2000, the comic publishers Titan appointed a member of staff to liase and promote their publications within libraries. Personally, I like libraries to resound with different opinions, viewpoints, formats and styles to support the needs of our users. We select our material using our professional judgement about the quality of material, collection relevancy, and personal judgment about the suitability of content for users. It's the purpose of this article to point out useful Internet resources for locating where the main comic collections are and how to develop a comic collection within your library.

Significant Collections

It's pleasing to say there are collections of comics in many of my local public, schools and academic libraries. I know this because of a recent project completed in this area. The latex-loving superhero genre including Batman and X-men, the sci-fi genre including 2000AD, Aliens & Predator and the thought-provoking Maus and Sandman are all represented in local Sheffield collections.

As we know, the Internet has widened access to our holdings with library catalogues accessible via the Internet. The following Websites have their catalogues on the web: some include images, reading lists, collection development policies and research guides.

Within the UK, the British Library <http://www.bl.uk/collections/comics.html> houses the British Comics Collection from 1870 to present day with a brief collection overview. The collection is mainly historical and not as contemporary as one would wish.

The National Art Library <http://www.nal.vam.ac.uk/nalcomic.html> is aiming to build a collection of contemporary comics to reflect ground breaking design and art-work. It has recognised the academic nature of comics and aims to build up a comic research collection.

The Centre for the Study of Cartoons and Caricature at the University of Kent <http://library.ukc.ac.uk/cartoons/> aims 'to conserve and catalogue cartoons' and encourages cartoon research. The Website includes an online catalogue which displays thumbnail images including broadsheets political cartoons.

In the U.S.A. the Library of Congress <http://lcweb.loc.gov/spcoll/049.html> and Michigan State University Libraries <http://www.lib.msu.edu/coll/main/spec_col/nye/comic/index.htm> have the largest collections of U.S. comics.

Michigan State University Libraries has an easily searchable comic catalogue which includes images. R.W.Scott at Michigan State University Libraries has contributed enormously to comic librarianship and his expertise is reflected in the type of information available on this Website for other librarians. It includes collection development policies and links to other U.S.A. comic research libraries.

The Library of Congress holds around 6,000 titles and the collection grows by around two hundred issues a month. The Website is not as user friendly as Michigan State University Libraries with little added value i.e. no images or introductory text about the collections but it does include its comic collection development policy <http://lcweb.loc.gov/spcoll/049.html>.

The National Library of Canada <http://www.nlc-

bnc.ca/superheroes/index-e.html> has an interesting digital exhibition on Canadian superheroes. It uses Flash to create the visual feel of a paper comic via a Website. It works well to show how national libraries can exploit their collections via the Internet to reach a wider audience, in this case, the fan boy!

The New York Public Library <http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/grd/resguides/comix.html#controv> has quite an extensive and growing collection of comics and related material. The research guide is a useful tool for developing a collection of comic based material in the library and identifying background reading in the area.

Online Comics

The Internet is increasingly being used as a medium for online comics.

The OnlineComics Website <http://www.onlinecomics.net/> has over 1041 online comics in various genres from manga to horror to humour. The quality and the subject matter does vary due to the self publishing nature of the internet but there is an "editor picks section" which aims to pick the quality comic from the less professional pieces.

One of the main advantages of online comics is that they can have multi-language settings. For example 'Assassin' at <http://assassincomic.cjb.net> can be accessed in Spanish or English. The Guardians of the North exhibition <http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/superheroes/> from the National Library of Canada can be accessed in French or English.

Online comics use the advantages of ICT i.e. sound, Flash and animation to create an online comic which takes on the traditions of print comics and furthers the medium.

Useful Internet Resources for Comics and Libraries

The 'Comic Books for Young adults' Website <http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/units/lml/comics/pages/index.html> is a useful resource for librarians who wish to incorporate comics into their collection. It answers questions like "do comic books belong in libraries?" It addresses the collection development issues of a comic book collection, for example, how to develop an age appropriate collection. It provides recommended titles for a collection i.e. Watchmen and Batman: The Dark Knight Returns. This Website is an extensive and valuable resource for comic book librarianship.

If you want to develop a broader collection, Michigan State University Libraries <http://www.lib.msu.edu/comics/intcomic.htm> has an interesting Webpage dealing with international comic collections including France, Mexico & Japan. The Website has an online European Comics Collection Exhibition which provides useful collection development pointers. Or, if you think your users would be interested in funny kid comic books or horror comic books or even Kung Fu comic books the genre search Webpage <http://www.lib.msu.edu/comics/rri/grri/genre.htm#genres> allows you to locate a title without having extensive comic knowledge.

The Comic Book Resources Website

<http://www.comicbookresources.com/> is an awarding winning Website. The Website has current comic news & previews of the comic book industry. It provides access to Diamonds Comics Previews catalogue <http://www.comicbookresources.com/resources/previews/> which is useful tool for finding out what's being published. The text version is available free online so there is no need to purchase the print copy to maintain current awareness in the comic world.

The Comic Book Database <http://www.cbdb.com/> covers over 20,000 comics. It is free to use with a simple interface to enable users to find exactly the comics your collection needs. Users can search by title, publisher, cover artist, date, issue number, story title, writer, 'pencilled', 'inker' and characters. It is easy to use to locate missing bibliographic details.

The Comic Book Legal Defence Fund Website <http://www.cbldf.org> provides interesting information on the comic world. The CBLDF protects the rights of people involved with the production of comics. Comics have been known to cause controversy due to the usual suspects of sex, violence or the depiction of women so if there is controversy in the comic world breaking this is the place where it will be covered.

Comics and Libraries

Comics can be used for outreach, to draw in reluctant readers, to visually stimulate minds, to widen the range of our collections, or to present ideas or stories and issues in new & original ways. For our users they enhance text with pictures to create visual delights but only if we as librarians see their merits and include them in our collections.

THE SANDMAN #19: 1991 was the first comic book to win the World Fantasy Award for Best Short Story. Every other year a book has won. They are not just for younger readers; they are for the alternatively seeking reader which I think we all have among our customer base.

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

On the 26th and 27th March head off to Birmingham for the 'Total Library Solutions' show at the NEC. Available is a FREE education programme specially designed for librarians from the school, public, academic and special library sectors <http://www.freepint.com/go/e179>.

In Suffolk on 31st March is 'Competitive Intelligence: keeping ahead of the game' for all information professionals looking to further their knowledge of competitive intelligence <http://www.freepint.com/go/e181>.

The Library + Information Show will be happening in London on the 30th April to 1st May. Catch up on the latest technology, exchange ideas and opinions and debate current issues <http://www.freepint.com/go/e162>.

Submit details of your event today for free promotion. Simply complete the form at <http://www.freepint.com/events>.

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