FreePint®

CONTENTS

HTML Version
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/080104.htm>

Fully Formatted Acrobat Version
<http://www.freepint.com/issues/080104.pdf>

ABOUT FREE PINT

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

EDITORIAL

Who's your Internet hero or villain?

That is the question asked by the Internet Service Providers Association for the UK Internet Industry Awards (the ISPAs). Published this week, the ISPA 2004 shortlist includes a range of individual politicians, businesses and government departments all nominated for heroes or villains. Take a look at these and all the other category nominations at <http://www.ispaawards.org.uk/>.

The winners of the ISPAs are announced at a ceremony in February and are published in Internet Magazine. In our article today, "Choosing and Changing your Web Host", Anne Ku recommends taking a look at Internet Magazine for its section introducing Web site hosting <http://www.internet-magazine.com/hosting>. The magazine also ranks the transfer speed of top hosting companies every month and includes questions and answers on Web hosting.

Anne Ku has changed Web host six times in five years and her practical and useful article includes a wealth of international links and tips. Most of us know there is no such thing as a free lunch, or even a FreePint! (We never make it a secret that FreePint relies on advertising.) Anne explains how free Web hosts make their money, suggesting that although they may be fine for personal pages, in her opinion, they are not the way to go for mission-critical professional Web sites.

Maybe you've had a bad (or great) Internet experience or would like to nominate a Company or individual for next year's Internet villain or hero? You could also share your experiences at the FreePint Bar <http://www.freepint.com/bar>.

Today we also have an article that will be of interest to those working in the environmental field, in particular forestry, with a summary of important research resources in forestry from expert Roger Mills, who has been involved with forestry information work for over twenty years.

We are privileged to have our very own information industry expert, Pam Foster, as editor of VIP and VIP Eye. The first issue of VIP Eye was published this week and you can look at it free. It is a twice-monthly analysis of news in the UK and European business information industry and is available by paid annual subscription from issue two. Further information about this and the accompanying monthly publication VIP can be found at <http://www.vivaVIP.com/>.

That's all for this issue. It only remains for me to say that I hope, at least for most of the time, you consider the team at FreePint to be Internet heroes not villains. I guess you must, or you wouldn't keep on reading and recommending us to others!

Annabel Colley Editor
FreePint <annabel.colley@freepint.com>

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

The FreePint Jobs Update is now being circulated widely every two weeks. This free newsletter now has 1,100 direct subscribers and is posted at the Bar and in the Bar Digest (circulation 11,000).

To see the Jobs Update No.65 visit <http://www.freepint.com/go/b27199> and to subscribe, modify your account at <http://web.freepint.com>.

Here are some of the latest featured jobs:

Information Analyst (Research Department)
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j2939>
Excellent opportunity for a LIS qualified professional.
Recruiter: Cushman & Wakefield Healey & Baker

Information Services Resources Coordinator
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j2943>
Assist in the development and delivery of a quality information service to meet the needs of an expanding legal practice.
Recruiter: Burges Salmon Solicitors

Researcher / Deals Coordinator
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j2945>
New position for senior level person who is familiar with M & A league tables, has some legal background and has excellent research skills.
Recruiter: Glen Recruitment

Information Researcher
<http://www.freepint.com/go/j2947>
Calling all SDC experts; long term contract, organise services as well as deliver, good pay. Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment

"Data Protection for Websites and Intranets"
ISBN 1-904769-02-0

This report provides an introduction to data protection issues as they relate to websites, intranets and the online world. It draws attention to areas of particular concern to website & intranet managers such as: the use of cookies; entries in online directories; monitoring employees' email and internet access; use of email for direct marketing.

<http://www.freepint.com/shop/report/>

Business Information Product Reviews and News Analysis

VIP and VIP Eye are two new publications which take an in-depth look at the business information industry.

Edited by Pam Foster, free previews of the first issues are available on the VIP site at <http://www.vivaVIP.com/>.

MY FAVOURITE TIPPLES
by Alison Turner

Alison Turner is Library Partnership Co-ordinator with the National electronic Library for Health <http://www.nelh.nhs.uk>.

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk> - for fun stuff (work out your life expectancy, Book of the Future) but also for news, weather and stuff like learning languages.

- <http://www.libdex.com/weblogs.html> - I'm a recent convert to blogging and this listing is a good way to see what others are doing.

- <http://www.infosourcespub.com/book4.cfm> - free sign up for The Informed Librarian newsletter, handy for keeping up with a lot of the key library publications.

- <http://www.goneboarding.co.uk/Index.asp> - for UK snowboarders, this has reviews of resorts, slopes and the latest gear; an events diary; and a board length calculator.

- <http://www.googlism.com> - perfect for that Friday afternoon feeling, type in your name for a bit of fun.

EVENTS

"Gartner Business Intelligence Summit 2004" <http://www.freepint.com/go/e273> 2nd - 3rd February.

"eLearnInternational World Summit 2004" <http://www.freepint.com/go/e241> 18th - 19th February.

"Building and sustaining a Collaborative Working Environment" <http://www.freepint.com/go/e274> 4th - 5th March.

"Gartner Symposium/ITxpo Barcelona 2004" <http://www.freepint.com/go/e270> 14th - 17th March.

"Re-designing Your Intranet 2004" <http://www.freepint.com/go/e282> 16th - 19th March.

"Medical Device 2004" <http://www.freepint.com/go/e286> 21st - 25th March.

"Identifying and Managing Unstructured Information" <http://www.freepint.com/go/e281> 23rd - 25th March.

Penny <penny@freepint.com>

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

We occasionally invite respected information professionals to post an issue of their own newsletter to the Bar when it might be of particular interest to FreePinters. Mary Ellen Bates of Bates Information Services <http://www.batesinfo.com/> is one of our favourites, and we welcomed the hints on hidden features of Google in her latest 'Tip of the Month' <http://www.freepint.com/go/b27170>.

We always try to bear in mind that FreePint is a very international community, and this has been underlined with the range of country-specific postings recently at the Bar. There have been questions about researching consumers in the Czech republic <http://www.freepint.com/go/b27205> and more generally on household incomes in Europe <http://www.freepint.com/go/b27268>. Enquiries about reliable suppliers of information on companies in North/South America and Asia <http://www.freepint.com/go/b27255> through to New York property <http://www.freepint.com/go/b27250>. People are even looking for geological sources for South American sites <http://www.freepint.com/go/b27144>, whilst the thread researching wireless infrastructure in rural Africa has become a lengthy and interesting one <http://www.freepint.com/go/b26912>.

Finally, analysis of news in the international business information industry is now also available through VIP Eye, the first edition of which can be accessed for free at <http://www.freepint.com/go/b27244>.

Please post your feedback about today's FreePint at <http://www.freepint.com/go/b27277>.

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

The FreePint Bar is where you can get help with your tricky research questions, for free! <www.freepint.com/bar>

Help with study for information-related courses is available at the FreePint Student Bar <www.freepint.com/student>.

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

TIPS ARTICLE

"Choosing and Changing Your Web Host" By Anne Ku

Web hosting has become a sticky and competitive business. It is sticky for the customer because moving your Web site from one host to another can be time-consuming, tedious and even risky. The migration process can result in a loss of e-mails and reduction in site traffic while getting used to a new hosting environment can take time. It is competitive for the Web host because there are so many individuals and companies that provide Web hosting services, not just those that do it for a living.

A Web site consists of files that reside on a computer connected to the Internet all the time. The entity that looks after this server is the Web host. If you don't own and operate such a computer, you will need to outsource the hosting of your Web site --- that is, find a Web host. To understand the jargon of Web hosting, consult the two glossaries at the end of the introduction to Web hosting article at <http://www.hostcompare.com/introtowebhosting.htm>.

Choosing your first Web host and deciding to switch to another are not trivial undertakings. Before visiting the various message boards suggested below, it is worth reading self-help articles to acquaint yourself with the jargon and issues. Otherwise, you might become overwhelmed and confused by the many options available.

Guides to Web hosting: articles, search engines, forums

The monthly UK publication Internet Magazine has a section introducing Web site hosting at <http://www.internet-magazine.com/hosting>. Every month they test the transfer speed of top hosting companies as an indicator of performance excellence. Along with the monthly rankings are also selected questions and answers on Web hosting.

A brief guide to Web hosting and a search engine for Web hosts can be found at <http://www.isp-guide.com>. It is quite common to see a combination of articles, search engines, rankings, and discussion forums on sites devoted to Web hosting and Web development issues. The Site Wizard at <http://www.thesitewizard.com> is a good example of this. Other collections can be found at < http://www.epinions.com/inet-Web_Hosting_Topics-Selection_Criteria>, a three-part article at <http://www.outfront.net/tutorials_02/getting_started/hosting3.htm>, and Web Host Industry Review at <http://thewhir.com/>.

Most articles advise that you understand your hosting requirements before you start looking for a Web host. Unless you know exactly what you want, you may be tempted to opt for the cheapest offers advertised by the biggest and most well-known companies as that may seem to be the quickest and easiest way forward. However, Web hosting is not a generic service that can be described by price and features alone. In the absence of intermediaries such as

Anne Ku writes from personal experience of having to change Web hosts six times in five years. Her hosting needs have grown from 10 MB to several Web sites with the largest being 200 MB with almost 3 GB of monthly traffic at <http://www.analyticalQ.com>, a content site for self-expression, music, and world travel. She thanks Yvan Bamping of <http://www.time-twins.com>, a free site for people looking for their time twin, for assistance with this article.

> ### DigBig :: Shorter URLs mean accurate URLs
>
> Do you have to communicate long Web addresses?
>
> Use the free DigBig service to create short URLs.
>
> <http://www.DigBig.com/>

brokers and advisors to help you find the right Web host, participating in discussion forums such as <http://www.Webhostingtalk.com> allows you to learn from experts and other users.

Free or paid Web hosting

Many people are tempted by so-called free hosting for their first Web sites. In general, free hosting is suitable for personal sites, small sites, or those that are not mission-critical. Most free Web hosts require that you have a banner ad on every Web page which can be annoying and intrusive. Very often you cannot have your own unique domain name, so accessing your Web site can require typing a long and not-easily recognisable or recallable name. However, this can be overcome by using a domain name and mail redirection service such as <http://www.freeparking.co.uk>.

Given all these drawbacks, "is free hosting really free?" asks the article at <http://www.comparehosts.com/Article.asp?ArtId=3>. The search engine and message board at <http://www.freeWebspace.net> can help you with free Web hosts. <http://www.freeWebspace.net> ranks free Web hosts based on user reviews in terms of support, speed, and overall features.

When you pay for your Web hosting, however, you enter a contract obliging your Web host to provide certain services. The cost of paid hosting is largely determined by whether it is dedicated or shared, managed or not, and other factors such as monthly bandwidth (site traffic), e-commerce facilities, and support. Managed hosting is by far the most expensive, for the customer pays for a dedicated server and someone else to manage it. Dedicated hosting refers to having your Web site hosted on one computer and not shared with others. Shared hosting is the cheaper and more common option. Resellers are like retailers who purchase a lot of Web space and partition it to rent to customers. Other categories of Web hosting can be found at < http://www.compareWebhosts.com>.

Distinguishing features and critical user requirements

As Web hosting packages become more standardised, choosing the right package from the right Web host should become easier. The larger companies will have automated procedures that get your site up and running in no time. But too much automation has its drawbacks, especially if you require personal attention. While smaller companies may not

have the economy of scale to offer the lower prices, they may be more willing to work with you to develop bespoke solutions or grow with you.

One article advises that you look for 99.9% up-time guarantee, 14-day money-back guarantee (although some hosts now offer 60 days), and 24- hour phone support at the very least. Check that the money-back guarantee does not preclude a pro-rata refund after that initial period. Because of the sticky nature of Web hosting, make sure you know what you are getting into, particularly with regards to exit procedures, refund policy, and notice periods should you decide to change Web hosts. To this end, you can start a dialogue with your candidate host before you even commit to a hosting package to avoid future inconveniences.

The questions listed at <http://www.internet-magazine.com/hosting/questions2.asp> and at <http://www.netmechanic.com/news/vol2/hosting_no5.htm> can help you narrow down your choices. Besides asking what is not mentioned in the offering, find out how they would deal with your specific needs. A slow response may indicate that they are too busy or that they don't know. Do you feel that you're being treated as a person or an account? Will they help you set up databases and guide you through other set-up processes? The more you interact through dialogue, the more you're able to gauge their level of professionalism, integrity, maturity, and consistency.

Web hosts will try to differentiate themselves by price, ranking, special offers, or a long list of features: see <http://www.javascriptkit.com/howto/hostselect.shtml>. Don't be blinded by these offerings, for you should only pay for what you need and want. One way to narrow down your search is to identify those 'critical user requirements' (features that you cannot do without).

If you expect to grow rapidly, then you will need a Web host that can allow you to grow -- in size, traffic, and functionality. If you need to manage your site remotely when you travel, check that your host can provide you with an easy-to-use control panel for remote site management.

For some businesses, Web hosting is not an end in itself. Hosting services can be a part of several Web-related offerings. Some Internet service providers (ISP) include free Web space in their packages for Internet access.

Changing your Web host

Some Web hosts require that you register or transfer/renew your domain with them before they will host you. Not all Web hosts provide domain name registration and renewal services. The advantage of registering and renewing your domain name with a provider (registrar) other than your Web host is that it decouples the decision to change Web host and change domain name registrars, making it easier to change either service provider whenever you want to.

The domain registrar will have your domain name server (DNS) information, i.e. the names of the computers of your Web host that your Web site resides on. When you transfer your domain name to a different registrar, your DNS information should not change unless you change Web hosts. When you change to a different Web host, you just need to change the DNS details kept by your registrar.

Several articles at <http://www.compareWebhosts.com/Articles.asp> and <http://kirkhamgate.net/Webknowledge/1changeWebhost.html> explain what is involved in changing your Web host, so take heed. Pay particular attention to contact forms, scripts, databases such as automated guestbooks, site search engines, Web statistics, password-protected directories, and counters on the new server. After you have decided to transfer to a new Web host be sure to: 1- allow plenty of time; 2- transfer all your files to the new host before you cancel with the old one, and 3- test thoroughly.

For more information, visit the discussion thread started by the author at the FreePint Bar <http://www.freepint.com/go/b26020>. Updates to this article will be added to the author's Web advice page at <http://www.anneku.com/web/>.

FREE PINT BOOKSHELF
<http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf>

**"Essential Law for Information
Professionals"
Written by Paul Pedley
Reviewed by Veronica Bezear**

Veronica Bezear is an
Information Officer
working for Surrey
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Adults and Community
Care service. She
writes here in a
personal capacity.

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- "Essential Law for Information Professionals" ISBN 1856044408, published by Facet Publishing.
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To propose an
information-related
book for review, send
details to
<bookshelf@freepint.com>.

Could you name the eight data protection principles? How well do you really know your copyright responsibilities in the new electronic age? Do you know all your rights under Freedom of Information legislation? Are you aware of the complete range of law which may apply to you if you operate an information service or website from within the UK?

If you answered "no" to any of these questions, you may find this book very useful indeed, both as an introduction to the legal system and as an ongoing reference. Its stated aims are to "stimulate interest and raise levels of legal awareness in the profession particularly with regard to key ethical and policy issues". It does, however, contain a disclaimer that the book does not constitute legal advice and should not be relied upon in that way.

This book deals with information legislation, and legal systems relevant to the UK. Within the UK boundaries it has separate sections dedicated to Scottish law where this differs from the law in other parts of Britain.

The author Paul Pedley is, of course, well known to the FreePint community on a number of related subjects. In addition to this book he also maintains an information law weblog, KeepingLegal <http://www.keepinglegal.com>, accompanied by a free fortnightly newsletter which fits in very well as an ongoing awareness-raiser in such a constantly changing subject area.

The book starts with an introduction to the British legal system, necessary but a little indigestible in my opinion. It continues with chapters covering what the author regards as the most relevant law for information professionals. The longest chapters are on copyright, data protection and freedom of information. Other chapters include: the role of the information commissioner; defamation; breach of confidence and privacy; professional liability; contracts & licensing agreements;

internet & electronic commerce law; computer misuse; disability discrimination. The Human Rights act is also mentioned but does not get a chapter in its own right. Within the scope of 215 pages, coverage of each subject is comprehensive and most chapters contain links to further information.

Features of the book I particularly liked were: the summary at the end of each chapter; discussion of the principles underlying the law at the beginning of each chapter; and figures and tables to make reference information stand out, e.g. the inclusion in the chapter on data protection of a table giving an employment compliance checklist.

Overall, the real question is: in our increasingly legalistic and litigious society, if you doubt your knowledge on any area of the law, can you afford not to read this book? I promised to lend my copy to a colleague when I had finished with it, but after reading it, I told her she would need to get her own copy as I was pretty sure I would be referring back to it very regularly. What better recommendation can I give than that?

FreePint Forthcoming Articles

- Marketing for the Info-entrepreneur
- Freedom of Information
- Business Information in the Ukraine
- Health and Safety
- Electronic Surveillance and Personal Data
- Occupational Safety and Health Information
- Visual Representation of Information
- Implications of new law on Copyright

If you have a suggestion for an article topic or would like to write for Free Pint then please contact <penny@freepint.com> or sign up for the Author Update at <http://www.freepint.com/author.htm>.

FREE PINT

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FEATURE ARTICLE
"Global Resources for Forest Information"
By Roger Mills

The study of 'classic' forestry, i.e. the management of trees for production purposes, has declined world-wide in recent decades, with many institutions closing or merging. At the same time, interest in trees as organisms and their effect on ecosystems has greatly increased, and the role of sustainable forestry in maintaining global environmental stability has taken centre stage. Demand for forest products, especially for timber, fuelwood and pulp for paper, also continues to rise with the population.

A changing landscape

Consequently, the demand for forest-related information has greatly increased. Today's much wider audience includes disciplines ranging from forest and plant sciences, environmental change, geography, ecology, earth sciences, biochemistry and medicine. It also includes development studies, economics, social sciences and law. More broadly, it encompasses users from all sections of society, from intergovernmental agencies through governments, commerce and education to local field workers. This huge range of 'stakeholders' is reflected in a much more complex structure of information resource types, including much geo-spatial, statistical and image data as well as 'traditional' bibliographic sources. Although much is now available electronically, the half-life of forest information is very long and printed sources remain extremely important. Trees grow slowly, with lifespans often exceeding our own, so field experiments take decades to complete and studies in environmental change may extend over centuries.

Global recognition

The need for major improvements in access to forest information was recognized at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the Rio 'Earth Summit' back in 1992), which called for strengthening of "mechanisms of information processing and exchange, and of related technical assistance, ... to ensure effective and equitable availability of information generated at the local, provincial, national and international levels ... ". This led to the formation of the Global Forest Information Service (GFIS) <http://www.gfis.net>, developed by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) <http://www.iufro.org>. The GFIS service, led by a consortium of major information providers, is very young, was prototyped in 2002 and launched as a pre-production service at the World Forestry Congress in Sept 2003. However, it already has over 40 organizations contributing metadata and has established many new collaborative contacts. With a focus on world-wide accessibility in developing as well as developed countries, and emphasizing two-way information flow between the first and third worlds, GFIS promises to be of major importance in the future.

Basic information tools

Meanwhile, the researcher is well-served by a variety of long-established and more recent services including CAB International's 'Forestry Abstracts' (1939-), available electronically as TREECD (Ovid) and on the web as 'ForestScience' <http://www.forestscience.info>. Web resources are covered by the UK-based BIOME's AgriFor gateway <http://www.agrifor.ac.uk>, AgNIC <http://www.agnic.org> in the USA and other regional gateways including AgriGate <http://www.agrigate.edu.au/> in Australia. In Europe some are available via Renardus <http://www.renardus.org/>. The University of Minnesota <http://forestry.lib.umn.edu/agnic/> maintains the forestry section of AgNIC and itself provides several specialists databases in social sciences, trail planning, urban forestry and tropical forest conservation and development, all accessible through AgNIC.

International organizations

International organizations are a major source of primary data, most of which is freely available on the web. FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) has a highly developed forestry information system <http://www.fao.org/forestry> containing a wealth of aggregated data and analysis, including the biennial 'State of the World's Forests' (SOFO), an authoritative printed report also available online, and the free monthly journal 'Unasylva', particularly useful for the non-specialist seeking an overview of major world issues. The heart of the FAO Forestry website is a database searchable by country, giving up-to-date information on resources, forest cover, management, protected areas, legislation, products and trade, including maps and statistics. As the country pages are created dynamically it is not possible to link directly to a particular page, only to the index on <http://digbig.com/3ksn>, but this has the advantage of ensuring that the latest

Roger Mills is Plant Sciences Librarian and Oxford Forest Information Service Manager for Oxford University Library Services. Involved in forestry information work for over twenty years, he is active in the Global Forest Information Service and in IUFRO, and in consultancy work for the British Council and World Bank. His particular interests are in information networks, user education and digital libraries.

Plant Sciences Library, Oxford University Library Services, South Parks Road, Oxford OX1 2RB, UK <http://www.plantlib.ox.ac.uk>.

information is always displayed. The site is currently available in English, French and Spanish, and forms part of FAO's WAICENT (World Agricultural Information Center) programme.

The United Nations Forum on Forests <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/> (UNFF) is an intergovernmental policy forum to promote management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests 'and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end'. The documents presented to its sessions are available online but can make somewhat depressing reading, as the movement towards a hoped-for Convention on Forests makes slow progress. Nevertheless they are a useful source of summarized information. UNFF is supported by an inter-agency partnership 'Collaborative Partnership on Forests' <http://digbig.com/3ksp> - its website is hosted but not managed by FAO - which brings together currently fourteen major international bodies with interests in forests in a series of joint initiatives. This site is a useful jumping-off point to see who is doing what.

Associations

The traditional forestry world is relatively small and tight-knit, betraying in many parts its colonial heritage - the major colonial powers all had centralized forest services run on civil-service lines. Associations of forest officers were therefore strong and well-supported, and their records form an invaluable resource for historians. In the UK, the Commonwealth Forestry Association <http://www.cfa-international.org> dates back to 1921 and publishes an important journal, 'International Forestry Review', available online, and a 'Handbook' with useful contact information, in print and on their web site. Membership is no longer limited to the Commonwealth.

There is a host of NGOs covering every conceivable aspect of forest-related activity, many of which publish newsletters and other documents which can be difficult to keep track of. Many were included in the very useful but ageing 'Directory of selected tropical forestry journals and newsletters 1997' now seeking a home on the web (see <http://members.aol.com/chaugen976/press.htm>). More substantial items are collected by the Oxford Forest Information Service at Oxford University (online catalogue at <http://library.ox.ac.uk>) and abstracted in CABI's ForestScience database mentioned above.

Perhaps the most venerable and important forestry association is the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) <http://www.iufro.org>, an international scientific body founded in 1892. Its worldwide membership encompasses almost every organization involved in forest research. Structured in a series of thematic groups, it arranges dozens of scientific meetings every year and a quinquennial Congress, next in Brisbane in 2005. Other important conferences are the Commonwealth Forestry Conference, next in Sri Lanka also in 2005, and the World Forestry Congress, last held in 2003 in Quebec <http://www.wfc2003.org/>.

Reference sources

Online availability of established printed books and journals so far tends to lag behind some other subject areas, as the market is relatively small. However the forthcoming 'Encyclopedia of Forest Sciences' due for print publication by Elsevier in 2004, will also be available online and looks set to become a standard work for basic information on forestry and analysis of major issues. Although there are other 'big books' most are not yet available electronically. CAB International has a useful 'Forestry Compendium' <http://www.cabi.org/compendia/fc/> which contains data sheets on a growing number of tree species worldwide and a selection module to identify species appropriate for various purposes, along with a library of PDF documents and other features.

The use of timber certified as from well-managed sources is a major political and economic issue. The Forest Certification Resource Center <http://www.certifiedwood.org/> describes the various certification processes with useful world-wide links. In the UK, the Forest Stewardship Council UK has its own site on <http://www.fsc-uk.info/>, while the Forestry Commission on <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/> focuses on information for the general public as well as giving access to many of its own publications.

Data visualization projects

With the increasingly ready availability of satellite and statistical data covering forested areas all over the world, the need for easy-to-use tools to extract and combine them at will to meet particular information needs has become acute. The European Forest Information System (EFIS) project is one of several developing such tools as an online service. A demonstrator is available from the European Forest Institute on <http://www.efi.fi/efidas/efis/>. Canada's National Forest Information Service (NFIS) <http://www.nfis.org> is developing along somewhat similar lines, driven by the need for reliable, openly- available data to meet legislation on environmental protection etc.

Libraries

As it is a long-established science, there are many specialist library collections in forestry around the world, often holding materials unavailable elsewhere. A new online 'International Directory of Forest Information Services' <http://iufro.andornot.com/> is being developed by IUFRO and gives contact and collection details. This is particularly useful as many collections have been merged into broader subject areas, losing 'forestry' from the name in the process. Although many of the information packages described above have developed in scientific rather than bibliographic arenas, their long-term management is increasingly falling to librarians and information officers whose skills in keeping things available (on a shoe-string budget), helping end users to find them and helping them understand what it is they've found are increasingly recognized. Seems the golden (or bronze) handshake is still a way off yet!