FreePint®

Plus ...

Jobs,
Discussion,
Tips, Reviews
and Events

Contents

ONLINE FORMATTED HTML VERSION
http://www.freepint.com/issues/220307.htm

Fully-Formatted Acrobat Version
http://www.freepint.com/issues/220307.pdf

About FreePint

FreePint is a global network of people who find, use, manage and share work-related information. Members receive this free twice-monthly newsletter, which is packed with tips, features and resources.

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

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

Editorial

'Don't be evil' is one of those slogans that's bound to come back and bite you. It's right up there with insisting that the iceberg isn't anywhere near the boat. Google is feeling the pinch now that it's grown too big for such a rosy little-guy-that-could attitude.

That partly started when it started indexing such enormous swaths of the Web that many found it unwieldy. The response is alternative search engines. Vertical search is the way of the future, says Tim Houghton, who talks about targeted tools in his feature.

And with ambitious projects such as digitising all the books in several major libraries, Google is rubbing some people up exactly the wrong way. One is certainly Jean-Noël Jeanneney, the president of France's Bibliotheque nationale and author of "Google and the Myth of Universal Knowledge: A View from Europe". His main concern is that Google could be obliterating cultural heritage. Matt Chapuran reviews.

Europeans, at least French ones who run national libraries, may be angry, but FreePint toasts them this month as the European Union turns 50. Super researcher Adrian Janes knows that age doesn't necessarily beget clarity. He knows finding information on the EU can be complicated, so he contributes a handy guide.

If you're interested in deeper research into Europe and consumer spending habits, dip into FreePint's sister publication VIP <http://www.vivaVIP.com/>, which this month looks at products with a European or global range.

Keep reading FreePint for more information on the English-speaking world and beyond. We've got some excellent articles planned for this spring.

Sincerely,

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

FreePint is a Registered Trademark of Free Pint Limited (R) 1997-2007

www.securities.com
Electronic Business Information Products
for the World's Emerging Markets

Two-thirds of the globe is covered by water.
The rest is covered by ISI Emerging Markets.

Emerging … Around the World

ISI Emerging Markets' flagship product, **EMIS**, with news, company and financial information direct from over 80 markets. Our **CEIC** time series data product has expanded to include Latin America, Eastern Europe and more Asian data. And **IntelliNews** offers English news and reports on key markets.

- Award winning online resource for hard-to-get emerging market business intelligence
- Company and industry news, information, statistics and analysis, updated daily
- Over 12,000 local and international sources
- Comprehensive company database – tens of thousands of public/private company profiles including financial statements, research reports, news and corporate actions

Insight … On Your Desktop

CEIC's new Excel plug-in enables users to access our data directly through a spreadsheet for easier, more flexible analysis.

Assistance … In Any Time Zone

- 29 offices in Asia, the Americas, Eastern Europe and the Middle East/Africa
- 24-hour market-savvy customer support

TEST DRIVE
Visit www.securities.com/.
Click on Test Drive. Enter contact info
and get login for a free 7-day trial.

Or contact your account manager and ask for a tour of the latest features. ISI has made your premier data resource even better.

"One of the best sites belongs to Internet Securities, a Euromoney Institutional Investor Company…. and its website is one of the most comprehensive."
—*The Financial Times*

Anne Jordan <anne.jordan@virgin.net> is a freelance business information professional, researcher and writer, mainly within financial services and management consultancy, and has an interest in the Victorian period.

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

My Favourite Tipples

by Anne Jordan

As a freelance researcher I've found the first two sites below to be great starting points when looking for details of the UK and US financial services sectors. The other sites are more oriented to personal interests, but have all been used quirkily within a professional context.

- International Financial Services, London <http://www.ifsl.org.uk/> provides analysis and statistics on UK financial services. Free reports on sectors such as private equity, commodities trading, securitisation etc.

- The Financial Services Fact Book <http://www.financialservicesfacts.org/financial2/> is a great for statistics and rankings on the US financial services sector. Annuities, cards, mortgages, savings - and much more.

- Lee Jackson's Victorian London <http://www.victorianlondon.org/> is useful for historical researchers and fascinating for anyone who knows or loves London.

- RhymeZone <http://www.rhymezone.com/> helps me find words that rhyme to write bad poetry for friends' birthdays. It once helped add humour to a consultant's speech!

- There are several 'today-in-history' sites, useful for historical research and unusual consultant requests. The BBC, Library of Congress and History Channel are good, but Scope Systems <http://www.scopesys.com/anyday/> has proved most useful.

www.lishow.co.uk/conference

Library 2.0 Forum – Engaging Users and Delivering Innovative Library Services
Wednesday 18 April 2007

Li SHOW 2007

Library + *i*nformation Show
18th + 19th April 2007
NEC, Birmingham

Join us for this new 1 day Library 2.0 Forum running alongside this year's Library + *i*nformation Show.

Designed to cut through the hype and bring you up to speed, the Library 2.0 Forum will provide you with a much deeper understanding of the web environment and how your library can position itself so that it steps up to the mark and remains a must-have information centre, serving its users today and in the future.

Topics under discussion include:

- How library services will change in the future and why libraries need to act now
- Implementing Library 2.0 on a shoestring
- Getting buy in from senior management and from library staff

- De-mystifying the technologies available and which to choose
- Understanding the benefits of Library 2.0
- The future for libraries – what services will be available and who will be the libraries' customers?

The Forum will be chaired by **John Dolan OBE**, MLA, plus expert speakers include **Richard Wallis**, Talis; **Linda Berube**, Co-East Libraries and Information Service; **Marieke Guy**, University of Bath; **Karen Blakeman**, RBA Information Services; **Phil Bradley**, Independent Consultant; **Mark Baxter**, Q2 Ltd and **a case study** from The University of Huddersfield.

Forum Sponsor:

talis®

Places are strictly limited so book now at:

www.lishow.co.uk/conference

vnu exhibitions europe www.vnuexhibitions.co.uk

Jinfo :: Jobs in information

www.jinfo.com

The Jinfo service enables you to search and advertise information-related job vacancies.

The Jinfo Newsletter now features a CV Makeover, in which a job seeker's CV is critiqued and revised by specialists in the field as well as career tips for all experience levels. Read the latest edition and subscribe free at <http://www.jinfo.com/newsletter/>.

Subscribe free at <http://www.jinfo.com/newsletter/>.

Jinfo -- the best place for information-related job vacancies.

- **JOB SEARCHING?** -- Free search and sign up to the Jinfo Newsletter.
- **RECRUITING?** -- Complete the form and advertise a vacancy for just GBP195 <http://www.jinfo.com/recruit/>.

50% discount for registered charities.
10% discount for agencies.

Find out more today at http://www.jinfo.com/

Supporting your career, your organisation, your industry.

5 Posts available now. Researchers and Corporate Specialists.
Recruiter: Intelligent Resources Ltd
<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j6586>

Assistant Records Manager

Developing Records Management Service across a geographically spread and diverse educational and membership organisation.
Recruiter: TFPL Ltd.
Country: United Kingdom
<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j6575>

Jinfo :: Jobs in information
www.jinfo.com

Senior Client Services Executive

Experienced customer services person with a passion for delivering exceptional service. Join us in our elite Client Services team.
Recruiter: Prenax UK Ltd
Country: United Kingdom
<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j6585>

Junior Analyst

Provide focussed desktop research and analysis of public record information to support corporate finance professionals.
Recruiter: Instant Library Recruitment (Tribal Group Plc)
Country: United Kingdom
<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j6592>

Documentation Assistant

Create brief catalogue records and other textual material relating to our 10,000 Theatre Collections' images.
Recruiter: V&A Museum
Country: United Kingdom
<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j6591>

Investment Banking Senior Researchers (2)

Permanent vacancies to work for prestigious Investment Banks in the City and Canary Wharf.
Recruiter: Glen Recruitment
Country: United Kingdom
<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j6593>

Global Web Strategy Coordinator

Use your strong project management and website development skills to manage global web presence for this major charity.
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited
Country: United Kingdom
<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j6600>

NB: These are just a selection of information-related jobs in the Jinfo database <http://www.jinfo.com/>. Receive the latest job listings weekly with the free Jinfo Update. Free to subscribe at <http://www.jinfo.com/>

FreePint Bar

In Association with Factiva
a Dow Jones & Reuters Company

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

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

Finding answers to tricky research questions is ordinarily a challenge - just try finding a directory of German national standards translatedinto English on your own. But the job is made easier with the FreePint Bar <http://www.freepint.com/bar>. Highlights from current conversations below.

- A martini in New York might be the barfly equivalent of a negroni in Rome, but that doesn't mean it's the same out-of-pocket expense. When one Bar member asked about how international prices stack up against cost of living <http://www.freepint.com/go/b112734>, several people chipped in with useful yardsticks, ranging from mixed drinks to Big Macs.

- Sainsbury's is so ubiquitous it's hard to remember it's a family-owned business. You can find one of those on any high street, but how do you locate smaller family-run companies with a few employees? Dun and Bradstreet is no help, because it only catalogues those with 77+ employees. A tricky question, but the Bar has some creative ideas. Lend your own <http://www.freepint.com/go/b112209>.

For more help on learning about customers and businesses, check with the March issue of VIP <http://www.vivaVIP.com/> for product reviews and ResourceShelf <http://digbig.com/4rtdc> for full-text free resources.

- Aside from retired pirates, people rarely express nostalgia for the skull and crossbones. The exception being one Barfly who is searching for those little stickers used to label horror novels. If you have ideas on where to locate these relics, please share <http://www.freepint.com/go/b110509>.

- Finding a reliable virtual data room provider can be challenging, one Bar member is discovering. The discussion is open for those with experience in this area <http://www.freepint.com/go/b107679>.

We know you love FreePint. Keep the warm feelings flowing by telling your friends to subscribe - it's free! <http://www.freepint.com/subs/>

{ the universal truth }

LESS
CAN BE
MORE.

Put information overload in its place with Factiva.

More isn't always good – especially when you need to find useful business news or information quickly.

You can achieve more, with less frustration, with Factiva because its unique text-mining and visualization technologies make it easier to find essential business information.

To learn how technology-enhanced content can give your organization a competitive advantage, download the IDC white paper, "Redefining Business Search - A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words," at www.factiva.com/less

factiva®
From DOWJONES

Better decisions. Faster.®

"Finding Facts: The European Union after 50 Years"

By Adrian Janes

Adrian Janes is an Information librarian with the London Borough of Havering, where his responsibilities include the library's EPIC collection. His influences include Albert Camus, Jaki Liebezeit and Nikos Kazantzakis..

Introduction

The European Union (EU) marks its 50th anniversary in March 2007 <http://europa.eu/50/index_en.htm>. In this time it has grown from six to 27 Member States, gradually expanded the range of its activities and become a highly complex organisation. This article attempts to sketch some of the background to the EU's development, point out the functions of some of the key institutions and above all indicate useful sources of information.

As an English speaker, I have usually given Web addresses for English versions of official EU sites. The EU in fact has 23 official languages, but this does not mean that every online document or website is available in them. It is hard to see what the rationale is for the varying range of translations, but as a minimum, English, French and German versions usually exist. It may be worth applying to the EU Bookshop (see below) or the national representation of the European Commission in your country for a hard copy version of a document if it is not downloadable in your preferred language.

History

The present European Union dates its birth from The Treaty of Rome , which founded the European Economic Community (EEC) on 25 March 1957. The original members were Belgium, France, Germany, Luxemburg, the Netherlands and Italy. Subsequent to this, there have been several other major treaties <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/index.htm>,

these being the Single European Act (1986); the Treaty on European Union, also known as Maastricht (1992); the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997); and the Treaty of Nice (2001). These have served both to increase the organisation's legal powers and the fields in which it tries to exert influence, notably foreign policy. Other agreements, called accession treaties, have produced several enlargements to the membership. (The 50th anniversary site has an animation vividly illustrating its gradual expansion.)

However, the degree to which the EU should be a political actor rather than an economic one remains controversial, as this has profound implications for national sovereignty. (An analogy might be made with the US, with the inherent tension between the federal government's powers and the rights of the individual states.) Proponents of the economic view hold that the EEC was intended essentially as a free trade area, or Common Market, as it was once known. On the other hand there are those who say that its evolution into a more political organisation was implicit from the beginning, and that it is a logical working out of the process of removing barriers to the movement of capital, goods, labour and citizens. The change of name to European Union and the expansion of functions as a result of the Treaty of Maastricht reflect this evolution.

The most recent expression of the controversy has been the attempt to create an EU constitution <http://digbig.com/4rtdt>. Supporters of the constitution argue that the EU's institutions and decision-making

procedures need to be overhauled to cope with its now far greater size. They also see it as an opportunity to confirm the rights of all citizens (the concept of European citizenship was introduced by Maastricht).

However, many of those citizens remain unconvinced. France and the Netherlands held referenda in 2005 that rejected the proposed constitution (although a number of other member states have accepted it). As it had to achieve unanimous acceptance, this led to the process being put on hold while a 'period of reflection' was undertaken. Germany began a 6-month term as EU President in January 2007, and the German leader Angela Merkel announced that this period was now at an end <http://digbig.com/4rtdx>, signalling the intention to press ahead towards some form of constitution.

Organisation of the European Union

There are four key elements to the organisation and coordination of the European Union:

- European Parliament
- European Commission
- European Council
- Council of the European Union

The interrelation of these bodies is somewhat confusing, but an important element has been the growing power of Parliament. Each major treaty since 1986 has recognised and confirmed further areas of competence.

Nowadays its approval is necessary for most legislation proposed by the Commission (Parliament does not put forward legislation itself), as well as for the EU's budget. Usually this approval must also be given by the Council of the European Union, in what is known as a 'co-decision' procedure. If they are

not in agreement on a piece of legislation a 'conciliation committee', made up of both Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and Council members, will try to achieve a compromise, but Parliament can still veto the resulting text even if the Council has approved it.

MEPs have only been directly elected since 1979, an example of how the EU has evolved into a more clearly political and democratic body from its early years. They serve for 5-year terms: the current Parliament will be in office until 2009. The numbers elected from each member state are based on population: for example, the UK has 78 MEPs, Spain 54 and Latvia 9.

Two main sites lead to information on Parliament and MEPs: Europarl.org <http://www.europarl.org/> links to national offices of the Parliament, and is

the better route to learn about the activities, committee membership and contact details of individual countries' MEPs; The European Parliament <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/> site has debates (including video coverage), documents, reports and news for Parliament as a whole.

The European Commission <http://ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm> is made up of nominated members from each of the Member States. It drafts the legislative proposals that are debated and agreed to or rejected by Parliament and the Council. It is expected to take decisions in the overall interests of the EU, rather than be subject to the national pressures felt by MEPs.

The areas of the Commission's activity are each supported by a Directorate-General, or DG. Thus, there is a DG Agriculture and Rural Development, DG Information Society and Media, DG Regional Development, etc. All of these have informative webpages for their area of expertise. The simplest way to get to these (and also information on many specific topics) is to use the Commission's A-Z Index <http://ec.europa.eu/atoz_en.htm>.

The European Council <http://europa.eu/european_council> consists of meetings of state or governmental heads plus the President of the European Commission. It is the main source of policy-making, which the Commission then turns into legislative proposals. It is also the key body for the EU's relations with the rest of the world.

The Council of the European Union (previously known as the Council of Ministers) <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/> consists of meetings of ministers who

have responsibility in their own countries for particular briefs, such as Environment or Economic and Financial Affairs, in order to discuss these areas on a European or even wider basis. It also partners the Parliament in the legislative process.

To find contacts in a specific part of the EU's organisation, the EU Whoiswho <http://europa.eu/whoiswho/index.htm> is very comprehensive, and it can be searched by individual name, by entity (e.g. the Council) or by hierarchy (e.g. the audit groups which answer to the Court of Auditors).

Finally, it is important to note that EU enlargement is not yet complete. The European Commission Enlargement website <http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/> provides information about the candidate countries, which at the moment are largely members of what was Yugoslavia, along with Turkey.

General Sources of Information

The quantity of information obtainable from and about the EU matches its geographic vastness. There has been a conscious movement in recent years to place much more online, as well as developing information networks to deal with enquiries from citizens and businesses. For pamphlets and books, including online versions, the EU Bookshop <http://digbig.com/4rtdy> and the EU Publications Office <http://publications.europa.eu/> are the best places to start. The Publications Office homepage also serves as an immediate gateway to important publications like the Official Journal and EU Whoiswho.

Europa <http://europa.eu/> is the pre-eminent official gateway. All the main areas of activity are covered, from agriculture to transport, with links rapidly leading from the broad to the very specific.

If you bookmark nothing else, bookmark the European Union Delegation of the European Commission to the USA <http://eurunion.org/infores/euindex.htm>. This wonderfully thorough site provides links to the majority of EU sites you are likely to need, organised as Essential EU Sites, Essential Sites in Business, Education and Law, and sites for EU institutions and agencies. Since the workings of the EU are probably as mysterious to many Europeans as they are to Americans, it's also worth knowing about the PDF of "The European Union: a guide for Americans" (included under Publications), which is a good introduction.

Euroguide <http://www.euroguide.org/euroguide/subject-listing/> is a collection of sites under a broader set of headings than Europa, many with brief descriptions. It is aimed at the general public and includes many non-EU sources, even including an Anti-European Union category.

Europe Direct <http://ec.europa.eu/europedirect/index_en.htm> has a clickable map to indicate centres for EU information in each of the member states. They are intended to be able to answer enquiries on all aspects of the EU, whether it is a question of policy or the practical exercise of rights.

In Britain, the European Information Network <http://www.europe.org.uk/info/> not only provides links to Europe Direct centres, but also includes networks aimed at specific audiences: European Documentation Centres (academic), European Information Centres (business), and European Public Information Centres (based in public libraries).

Law

As noted, the EU's areas of activity have greatly expanded over the past five decades, and a body of law has grown up that reflects this. The treaties, also known as the 'primary' legislation, are the foundation for all other 'secondary' legislation, such as directives (which apply to all member states and must be incorporated into national law) and decisions (which are more limited, applying to a particular state or an entity such as a company).

A gateway site that can give access to the texts of all of this legal material is Eur-Lex <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/>. Bear in mind that a 'new' law (ie, one that has come into effect in a member state) will often have been agreed at the EU level years before, so this will affect a search limited by date. The Directory of Community Legislation in Force <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/repert/index.htm> is a key feature of the site. However it is liable to produce a large number of results from a keyword search, so it is preferable to start with a precise reference such as the number of a directive, for example 93/104/EC (the Working Time Directive), where '93' indicates 1993, the year in which that measure was agreed.

The Court of Justice of the European Communities <http://digbig.com/4rtea>, contrary to what some think, is concerned not with the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (which was adopted in 1950 by the Council of Europe), but with the application of EU law. Cases related to the Convention are heard by the European Court of Human Rights, which, like the Council of Europe, is a non-EU body.

To keep up to date with legal measures that have been passed or are under discussion the key source is the Official Journal Series L < http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOIndex.do?ihmlang=en >. This is archived from 1998 in 11 official languages, and additionally from 2004 in the languages of the countries which joined in that year. It can be supplemented by the websites of Parliament and the Commission.

For non-specialists, Your Europe <http://ec.europa.eu/youreurope/> offers information both for citizens and businesses on their legal rights in more straightforward language. It is complemented by Solvit <http://europa.int/solvit/>, a network of advisors backed by the European Commission. This tries to settle actual problems that have arisen from EU law in practice without having to go through legal proceedings.

Business and Economy

Economically, the EU is currently working to a 10-year strategy agreed in Lisbon in 2000, aiming to become 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world'. From a business point of view, the EU has opened up new opportunities. Indeed, one of the selling points to counteract fears about enlargement has been the added millions of potential consumers and workers.

The area in which businesses can tender for public works contracts has also increased. By law, all such contracts above a certain threshold must be offered across the EU. These can be monitored via TED (Tenders Electronic Daily) <http://ted.europa.eu/>, also known as Official Journal S. The site can be searched by location or business sector. The latter are classified by the Common Procurement Vocabulary (CPV). To check the appropriate CPV a keyword search can be used. Alternatively, SIMAP http://simap.europa.eu/index_en.html, a gateway site for public procurement, has a PDF of the current numerical codes <http://digbig.com/4rsmt>.

One of the most contentious developments of recent years has been the introduction of the Euro. For some, a national currency is a potent symbol of control of national affairs, so giving it up obviously implies lack of control. This remains a live issue in the UK, one of the countries that so far have not joined the Eurozone (member states that have adopted the Euro). The official UK site for the Euro is run by the Treasury http://www.euro.gov.uk/home.asp?f=1

On a more pragmatic level, while it permits much more direct cost comparisons for business and consumers, some argue that it has lead to higher prices. To keep up to date with the exchange rate for the Euro, the European Central Bank <http://www.ecb.eu/home/html/index.en.html> is a good source, as well as for Eurozone interest rates and general economic news. EU Business <http://www.eubusiness.com/> is a more general entry point for business news, with a clear structure that leads easily to a currency converter, a large collection of useful guides to countries and specific business-related issues (e.g. the Copyright Directive), and links to official pages.

Statistics

The EU's statistical agency is Eurostat <http://digbig.com/4mens>. All of its publications are downloadable, and cover themes for every facet of the EU: economic, population and social conditions, trade, etc.

A more specialist statistical source is the European Employment Observatory <http://www.eu-employment-observatory.net/>. A notable feature is its "Sourcebook of key data sources on employment and labour market issues", <http://digbig.com/4rspe>, which highlights many websites and journals, firstly across the EU and then by country.

Conclusion

The European Union has been an ongoing project which, if anything, has only grown more ambitious over the past 50 years. But just as its geographical extent is likely to grow, so too is its economic and political influence. Hopefully this article has shown that information professionals and the public have resources that can help them find out what they need to know, either directly or through referral to specialists.

FreePint FUMSI Report -- Risk Management

Risk Management Report

ISBN 978-1-904769-11-X

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

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

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

View a sample from this report, including table of contents, introduction and one tool kit activity:
web.freepint.com/shop/report/

Purchase

Single site ☐ £39 (~EUR63, US$78)

Multi site ☐ £110 (~EUR176, US$220)
(up to 5 locations)

Enterprise ☐ £215 (~EUR344, US$430)
(unlimited locations

[Prices exclude VAT for UK customers]

☐ Invoice, order number: _____
… or …
☐ Credit card: ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard
☐ Amex ☐ Maestro

Card Number: _____
Expiry: _____ / _____
Issue (if applicable): _____ / _____

Cardholder Name: _____

Cardholder Signature: _____

Name (Capitals please)

_____

Organisation

_____

Address

_____

_____

Country

_____

Email

_____

Telephone

_____

How did you hear about the report?

Signature [   ]

Date [   ]

Fax the form to 01784 420033 (int: +44 1784 420033) or post to:
Free Pint Limited, 4-6 Station Approach, Ashford, Middlesex TW15 2QN, UK.

"Google and the Myth of Universal Knowledge: A View from Europe"

Written by Jean-Noel Jeanneney
Reviewed by Matt Chapuran

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

- To propose an information-related book or resource for review, send details to Monique Cuvelier, Editor of FreePint <editor@freepint.com>.

In 2004, California-based Google announced plans to digitise and make available as many as 30 million books as part of the so-called Google Library Project <http://books.google.com/>. In the slim volume 'Google and the Myth of Universal Knowledge', Jean-Noel Jeanneney - himself the president of the Bibliotheque nationale de France - frames a cogent, if oftentimes overtly and overly political, argument that entrusting the literary treasures of the world to an American for- profit corporation has a number of pitfalls and could be considered a dereliction of duty by the world's libraries charged with the preservation of books.

Jeanneney explores Google's famously opaque algorithms designed to bring the web pages with the most overall hits to the top of a search result, 'a system in which success breeds success, at the expense of newcomers, minorities, marginals'. (p.45) The financing of the Google Library would only exacerbate these inherent imbalances. 'Books will necessarily be hierarchised in favour of those best suited to satisfy the demands of advertisers,' Jeanneney frets. 'Chosen according to the principle of the highest bidder.' (p. 31)

Just as disconcerting to Jeanneney is the prospect that allowing an American company to take - or maintain - the lead in digitising a World Library would naturally skew literary resources in an Anglocentric direction. Jeanneney cites the lack of availability on the Google site of the works of Victor Hugo or Cervantes in their native languages as well as justifiable concern that American perspectives on American and world history would be far too limiting a lens.

Of course, someone has to choose the hierarchies of a library collection or literary canon, and to some, Google and its advertisers may seem no more of an arbitrary arbiter than the college faculties who have dictated curricula for centuries. Google may also seem no more arbitrary than state-controlled institutions. Intriguingly, the solution that Jeanneney proposes is the formation of a government- sponsored European library that would rival - if not displace - Google's supremacy. Jeanneney tours a number of digital library projects undertaken by different nations, including France's own Gallica <http://gallica.bnf.fr/> and imagines a confederation that would provide a more multinational and thoughtful version of a Digital World Library. Although Jeanneney mentions similar projects being undertaken by India or China, they do not seem to be an aspect of his envisioned Google-rival. It's almost as if a centuries-old struggle for world supremacy is being shifted on to a literary and digital stage. (The

Related FreePint links:

- Find out more about this book online at the FreePint Bookshelf <http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf/myth.htm>

- "Beyond Music: Integrating Podcasting into Your Business" By Matt Chapuran <http://www.freepint.com/issues/150207.htm#tips>

- "Do you Google?" By Richard Eskins <http://www.freepint.com/issues/210601.htm#tips>

- "An Insider's View of Google Answers" By David Sarokin <http://www.freepint.com/issues/300605.htm#tips>

Related links:

* Read customer comments and buy this book at Amazon.co.uk <http://www.amazon.co.uk/exec/obidos/ASIN/0226395774/freepint0C>

* or Amazon.com <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0226395774/freepint00>

original title of the book for its French publication was "When Google Challenges Europe: A Wake Up Call".)

While it's tempting to dismiss Jeanneney for his own very obvious French bias (he is apparently still smarting from Bob Hope's jokes about the counter-revolution, p.41), he adroitly argues that the growing dependence upon a centralised corporate repository of information could have significant negative long-term consequences. Jeanneney cites a Pew Internet and American Life Project study which concluded in 2005 that, '92 percent of users of search engines have full confidence in the results of their search.' (p.32).

For Jeanneney, it explains why he's comfortable dismissing Wikipedia and the wiki-influenced Project Gutenberg http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main Page> as incapable of protecting the Internet consumer due to its lack of central oversight and central standards. However, as studies like this make clear, the true wake-up call should be directed not at Europe but to all of us. As scanning technology becomes more affordable, perhaps the best World Library should reside not in the hands of governments or corporations but in the hands of the Internet community that they claim to serve.

On the Ticker: Use DocuTicker for Full-Text Resources

Find free full-text reports put out by government agencies, NGOs, charities and other public interest organisations. Recent additions:

- Ebbing Hope in a Landscape of Loss Marks a National Survey of Iraq
- The Ideal Deal: How Local Governments Can Get More for Their Economic Development Dollar

Subscribe to the weekly ResourceShelf Newsletter for highlights, capture the RSS feed, or visit daily <http://www.docuticker.com/>.

Researcha :: Immediate pay-as-you-go company data

Access hard-to-find data on UK company directors, original company filing images and company data for Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland.

Researcha is free to search and view basic details, with immediate online report delivery :

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

"Moving Up: Vertical Search Proliferates"
By Tim Houghton

Tim Houghton is the founder and MD of New Media Intelligence, a Web clipping firm. New Media Intelligence monitors thousands of Websites for news, allowing clients to keep up with the latest media developments online. The firm prides itself on its tailored approach and develops bespoke solutions for clients including their own branded portals. Read more at: <http://www.NewMediaIntelligence.com/> ..

Vertical Search is one of the 'hot' areas of the last couple of years. Not that it has dominated Google's overall most popular queries. Britney and Paris see to that. But quietly amongst thoughtful commentators like Om Malik <http://www.gigaom.com/>, Danny Sullivan of Search Engine Watch and the financiers of Silicon Valley, the area has attracted expert attention.

But what exactly constitutes vertical search, and how has it been executed on a consumer and professional level? Below are a few thoughts on what is driving the growth of vertical search and whether it is with this rather than general search that the future lies, especially as far as those who use the Web for work are concerned. These are primarily sources that utilise online content and present this via websites. There are obviously many other potential types of vertical search.

Defining vertical

You'll be relieved to know that defining vertical search is considerably more straightforward than defining other hot topics of the moment such as Web 2.0. As Wikipedia puts it, 'Myriad specialized search engines are emerging to address the particular information needs of niche audiences and professions.' Om Malik defines it slightly differently: 'It is a specialized search engine that mines data for one narrow niche of the market place.'

Another aid to understanding vertical search is to understand what it is not. Google's stated mission 'is to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful'. And clearly rivals like Yahoo!, MSN, Google

and maybe even open-source competitors like Nutch have the same universalist aim. Clearly no search engine gets even close to achieving this objective today; they don't even index the entire Web, and, as Google discovered when it started scanning books still within copyright, there are formidable legal as well as technical obstacles to doing so.

So a vertical search engine is trying to solve a different, more specific problem than a generalist one, focusing on the needs of a specific market segment, user group or alternatively a highly specific dataset. Is this a viable strategy or will these minnows be crushed by the larger players? Is search tending to atomise, to become complex and fragmented, or is it set to be dominated by a few giants?

Consumer offerings

To help understand this, here are a few examples from the consumer space, before examining the professional sphere. Technorati < http://www.technorati.com/> is now almost too big to be considered a 'vertical' search engine at all. But it certainly started as a niche offering; it went from being a somewhat clunky blog search engine to a highly polished offering that specialises in the indexing of user- generated content. In the process it showed that even in quite a broad content area Google can be challenged.

Technorati is 'vertical' in the sense of being focused on one data type - blogs - but its target audience is broad. Likewise job search engines like Indeed and SimplyHired focus on a smaller,

though still vast dataset, job postings. But their audience is also restricted, though not by demographic or geography, but by intent. Try a search in either of these engines versus, say, Yahoo!, and it is hard to argue that they're not yielding a higher quality set of results. And one can drill down further. If you're looking for a job in the information industry then one can argue that Jinfo is a high-quality vertical search engine. This also raises the issue of where a focused portal ends and a vertical search engine begins.

Take a quick glance at other successful consumer vertical search engines and a clear pattern starts to emerge. Areas like travel (Kayak and Farechase, now owned by Yahoo!) and property (FindaProperty, PropertyFinder) are well-established players, and automotive looks like the next area for growth. In the US one of the leading online car sales sites recently announced plans to open an automotive search site, MyRide.com.

Clearly, in the consumer vertical search area, searches that involve complex informational requirements, high levels of engagement and large amounts of data work well for vertical search providers. It is worthwhile for the consumer to go to the trouble to seek out such a service. And notice too that these sectors are among the most buoyant for online advertising and not coincidentally are characterised by high levels of classified advertising in the traditional print world. Site creators realise they can deliver a more focused and hence higher-value audience to advertisers than general search engines.

Professional use

But what about the professionals? As 'super searcher' Mary Ellen Bates has long argued, it is well worth looking beyond Google. In the professional sphere one hopes and expects that those using the Web for work will be willing to invest the time both in identifying and learning how to use more specialised services.

Of course vertical search for professionals did not arrive in the mid 1990s with the Internet. Databases of carefully filtered, validated and trusted content have been around for far longer - LexisNexis and Factiva being just two obvious examples. But vertical search that specifically utilises Web-based data is a newer concept.

SearchMedica, a newly launched search service focused on the general practitioner sector, illustrates the demand for sector specific information for professionals. It's interesting to note that the service is not built from scratch using its own technology but instead combines an indexing partner, Convera, with domain specific experience. And there are many others, eg High Beam for market research or Alacra, a meta-searcher to over 100 structured databases.

One of the most intriguing new services if you're a buyer of information for investment professionals is Monitor110. Its aim is to be a complement to a Reuters or Bloomberg terminal for traders. How? By providing actionable investment insights from user-generated content. Roger Ehrenburg explains on his blog Information Arbitrage that by focusing

on one sector and using experts in that sector you can predict with a high degree of certainty what users are looking for and how they would like information presented.

But take that one step further. Why stop at a sector when you can focus a search on an individual business? That's what David Seuss at Northern Light has done over the last few years as the firm has moved from providing a fairly general search engine to focusing on providing what I would call 'enterprise specific vertical search'. When I spoke to him he enthusiastically explained how the firm provides a bespoke research portal to clients, covering both internal and external sources with user-level access permissions and so forth. As he puts it, 'The future is bright for complexity.'

Upward growth

In some ways the growth of vertical search alongside horizontal or generalist search is utterly unsurprising. As the number of Web users grows to 1 billion plus, their experience and sophistication grows, as does the amount of time they spend online. It is hardly surprising that tools proliferate. As Clay Shirky points out in a recent Wired News article <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/14.11/meganiche.html> a 0.1% market share of Web users is 1 million unique users. And if these are high-value professionals, that is potentially a highly profitable market.

In general I think any analysis that boils down to a simple 'either/or' dialectic is likely to be wrong. In the case of vertical search I think this is

undoubtedly the case. As the vast scale and complexity of Web information grows the big players like Google, Yahoo!, MSN and Ask will continue to have tremendous scale economies when it comes to indexing and serving general queries from the Web. But for exactly the same reason I think those demanding intelligence rather than simple information will use other tools.

So will the major search engines be reduced to mere fact checkers? Not at all. I think they will develop vertical offerings in the larger consumer niches, as indeed they are already doing. But skills like the ability to support complex structured searching, taxonomies, access to databases and complex data visualisation tools all have a healthy future for those services targeted at information professionals. Interesting that Silicon Valley is backing ideas that information professionals have argued in favour of for years.

Events

Premium listings

These events are hosted by our partner organisations and/or advertisers:

- "SIIA Content Forum" - Gain the tools, tactics, and best practices necessary to build, enable and sell content at the 4th annual Software & Information Industry Summit (SIIA) Content Forum & Codie Awards Gala in San Francisco on 15 - 17 April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e847>

- "Library + information Show" - LiS is the only national event designed specifically for the library community. Taking place at the NEC in Birmingham on the 18 - 19 April. <http://www.freepint.com/go/e848>

- "PI Conference 2007 - Staying Relevant in a Constantly Evolving Environment - What's Next for the Information Professional? Organised by Perfect Information. Taking place at the MacDonald Bath Spa Hotel, Bath on 1 - 3 May <http://www.freepint.com/go/e786>

Free listings

Australia and Territories:

- "Data Quality: Capturing and Maintaining Accurate Information"
2-4 April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e801>

Spain:

- "7th ONLINE EDUCA MADRID" 7 - 9 May <http://www.freepint.com/go/e812>

Sweden:

- "The 13th Nordic Conference on Information and Documentation 2007" 18 - 19 June <http://www.freepint.com/go/e703/>

United Kingdom:

- "STN Patent Forum" 28 March <http://www.freepint.com/go/e799/>

- "Property Information managers Society Conference" 3 April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e839>

- "The Flag and Bell Pub Crawl for Techies" 3 April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e850>

- "Legal Briefing" 4 April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e820>

- "UKSG Conference 2007 and Exhibition" 16 - 18 April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e794>

United States:

- "AIIP 21st Annual conference" 18 - 22 April <http://www.freepint.com/go/e841>

NB: This is just a selection of information-related event listings in the FreePint Events database <http://www.freepint.com/events/>.

Gold

- FreePint No.202 16th March 2006. "Save yourself! Free resources for organising, maintaining and sharing the fruits of your web searches" and "Characterising the dragon - undertaking research in China"
http://www.freepint.com/issues/160306.htm

- FreePint No.179 24th March 2005. "New Librarians and Open Positions: Bringing the Two Together" and "Key issues in complying with Freedom of Information legislation"
http://www.freepint.com/issues/240305.htm

- FreePint No.156 18th March 2004. "Information Sources For Childcare On The Web" and "Curious about Clio? History and Historians on the Web"
http://www.freepint.com/issues/180304.htm

- FreePint No.133 20th March 2003. "Military History on the Internet" and "Librarians & Comics"
http://www.freepint.com/issues/200303.htm

- 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

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

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

- 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

- FreePint No.10, 19th March 1998. "Working the Net" and "Business and Accounting Resources on the Web"
http://www.freepint.com/issues/190398.htm

FreePint Forthcoming Articles

[Provisional]

- Web writing
- Trexy
- RAST Web V & D software

If you have a suggestion for an article topic, or would like to write for FreePint, then please contact <monique.cuvelier@freepint.com> or read the notes for authors at
http://www.onopoly.com/author/

Contact

Web: www.freepint.com
Email: support@freepint.com
Subscriptions: support@freepint.com
Authors: http://www.onopoly.com/author/
Advertisers: www.onopoly.com
ISSN: 1460-7239

Free Pint Limited
4-6 Station Approach
Ashford, Middlesex
TW15 2QN, United Kingdom
Tel (UK): 0870 141 7474
Tel (Int): +44 870 141 7474

Technology by Willco
<http://www.willco.com/>

Contributors to this issue

Monique Cuvelier (Editor, FreePint), Anne Jordan, Adrian Janes, Matt Chapuran, Tim Houghton, Robin Neidorf (General Manager, FreePint), Pam Foster (Editor, VIP), Shirl Kennedy (Senior Editor, ResourceShelf and DocuTicker), William Hann (Managing Editor, FreePint), Penny Hann (Production Editor, FreePint), Douglas Brown (Proofreader).

Advertisers/Sponsors of this issue

ISI, VNU, SIIA, Prenax UK Ltd., Intelligent Resources Ltd., V&A Museum, TFPL, Instant Library Recruitment, Glen Recruitment, Sue Hill Recruitment, Factiva, VIP, ResourceShelf, Researcha, DocuTicker, DigBig, Jinfo.

© Free Pint Limited 1997-2007

FreePint®