FreePint®

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No. 208

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18 Technology and Industrial Innovation Resources

Plus ...

Jobs
Discussion
Tips
Reviews
Events

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HTML Version
http://www.freepint.com/issues/220606.htm

Fully-Formatted Acrobat Version
http://www.freepint.com/issues/220606.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

When are you inspired? When do you have your 'eureka' moments? Mine are always when I'm doing a non-work activity (like taking a shower, riding to work, or playing the piano). But, you can't have eureka moments if you haven't fed something in to generate the connection and create the inspiration. New ideas don't come from nowhere. They come from facts and experience, news and research, observation and interaction.

Resources to spark inspiration can be found all over the Web, and Shirl Kennedy today tells DocuTicker's story, where she oversees the sorting and sharing of high-value information resources. DocuTicker <http://www.docuticker.com/> and sister site ResourceShelf <http://www.resourceshelf.com/> have also just moved to new technology, where they are sporting fancy new logos.

Of course, you can look into researching innovative new ideas yourself, rather than waiting for an editor to point them out to you. Steve Lee's article below tells you where to research your idea, or find out more about a particular area of interest.

Talking to people is also an un-missable opportunity to learn about new things and make creative connections. If you went to the SLA conference in Baltimore then please share your impressions and ideas with other FreePinters by completing our anonymous survey <http://digbig.com/4jdjb>. We're keen to build connections, not just with other organisations, but between their members and FreePinters.

FreePint itself is already benefiting from 'degrees of separation' after welcoming Robin Neidorf as General Manager; and we are delighted to have been introduced to Monique Cuvelier who has been working with us on developing the content for FreePint. The quality and value of Monique's input has already been commented on by members, and Monique will introduce herself properly in the next issue of FreePint.

As you can see, we're working hard behind the scenes to make sure that FreePint is resourced properly, and that we're improving the connections between FreePint assets. As we do a better job of connecting our own knowledge, we are better positioned to come up with great ideas and innovate ourselves, and feed the benefits to our members.

William Hann
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Martin Tomuscheit was born in Germany and attended Munster University in Nordrhein-Westphalen. He is now living in London and is a senior web and graphic designer at <http://www.Lebara.com/>.

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

My Favourite Tipples

by Martin Tomuscheit

As a senior graphic and web designer who is an active web user and search enthusiast, I find the tipples below handy in my quest to be a better searcher and find topic-specific databases.

- Toool.de <http://toool.de/>, a German site which clearly groups search engines into categories, making it easy to find one that will give you the best results for your query.
- Trexy <http://trexy.com/> is a new research tool that remembers your searches on more than 3,000 search engines, including Google and Yahoo. It also allows users to follow in the footsteps of other searchers.
- Universiteitsbibliotheek <http://www.leidenuniv.nl/ub/biv/specials.htm> is a collection of search engine links, specially designed to assist students in research on the Internet. The search engines listed are mostly subject- and discipline-specific.
- Metacrawler <http://www.metacrawler.com/> allows you to query the top search engines at once. Results are shown on the same page, making it easy to find exactly what you're looking for.
- Complete Planet <http://aip.completeplanet.com> is a listing of dynamic searchable databases. It allows you to search deeper than the surface to find web pages and documents that cannot be crawled or indexed.

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VIP

Detailed review of Silobreaker in June VIP

Silobreaker claims to make sense of unstructured news flows to provide contextual intelligence. Does the product match the hype? VIP provides an in-depth review. Plus, comment from Greg Simidian, MD, Perfect Information.

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

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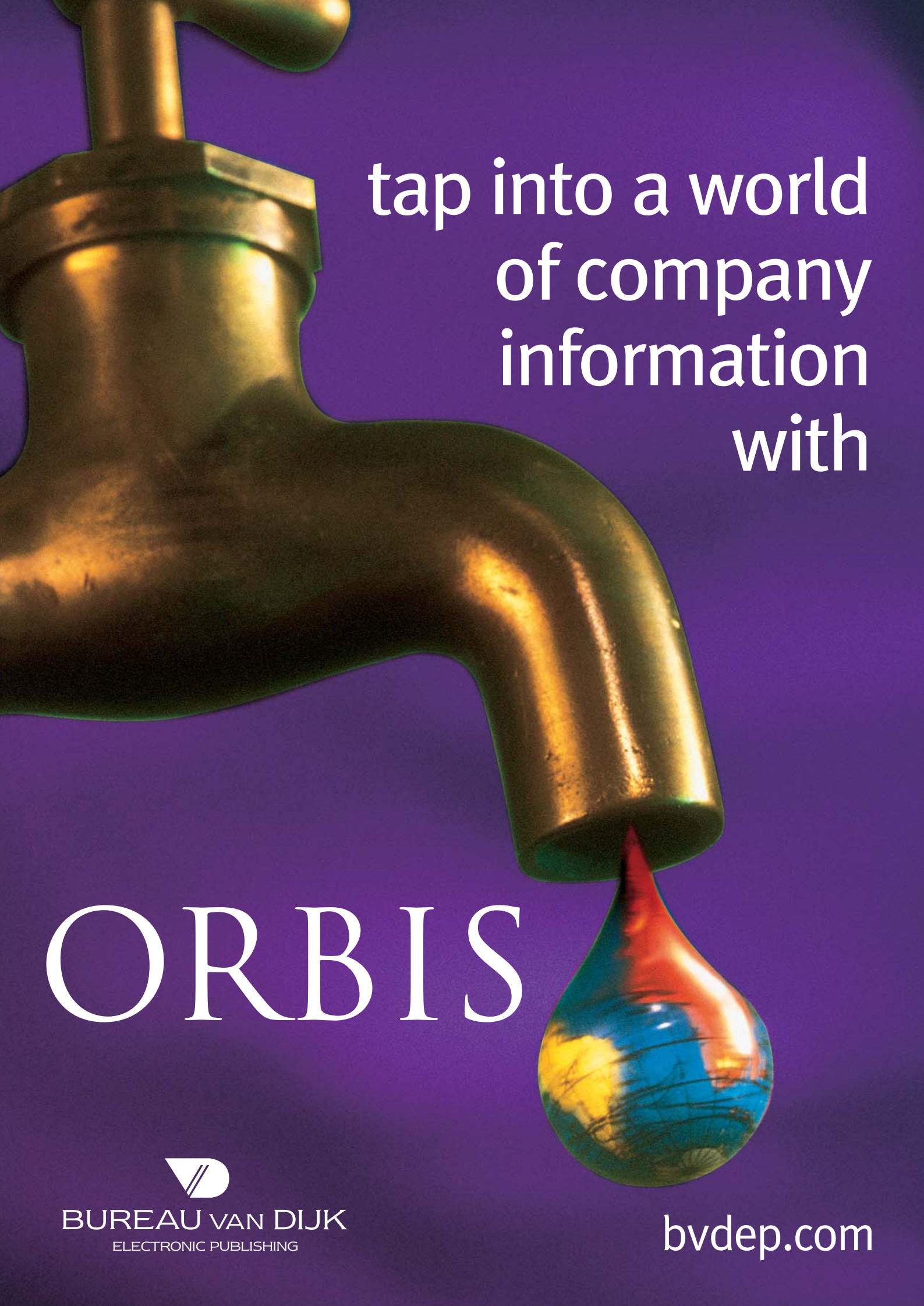
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The Jinfo service enables you to search and advertise information-related job vacancies.

The Jinfo Newsletter is published free every two weeks, and contains a list of the latest vacancies along with job-seeking advice. The latest article is entitled "Down-time career development". Read it online and subscribe free at <http://www.jinfo.com/newsletter/>.

These are just a selection of the jobs in the current edition of the Jinfo Newsletter <http://www.jinfo.com/newsletter/> and over 170 in the Jinfo database

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Recruiter: Age Concern Sheffield
<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5371>

Knowledge Manager

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Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment
<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5374>

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Recruiter: Visiongain
<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5395>

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<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5407>

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Recruiter: Instant Library Recruitment
<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j5408>

{the ugly truth}

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FreePint Bar

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Monique Cuvelier serves as editor of the FreePint Newsletter. She has contributed to dozens of publications in the UK and US, including her time working for The Western Mail, Wales' national newspaper. She can be reached at <monique.cuvelier@freepint.com>.

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

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

FreePint Bar members have been sorting through old newspapers lately. Some are talking about the people who wrote articles, and others are trying to find where an article originated. They've also been discussing their favourite information providers and the best online auctions. Keep reading for more highlights, or find the full story at the Bar <http://www.freepint.com/bar/>.

- It started 34 years ago with President Nixon's breakthrough visit to China and an article called 'This Is China.' It was enough to spark a lifelong passion in one FreePint poster, who's trying to contact the journalists who compiled that article. Help him locate them at <http://www.freepint.com/go/b41829>.

- Another FreePint Bar member is scouring through old newspapers trying to locate an article that may date to 1934. Weigh in <http://www.freepint.com/go/b42894> if you have experience finding back issues, or if you would like to pick up research tips. For more general searching tools read Martin Tomuscheit's Favourite Tipples above.

- Voice your preferences on information providers, such as LexisNexis and OneSource, in this informal survey <http://www.freepint.com/go/b42432>. You can learn more about the industry at-large by subscribing to VIP <http://www.vivaVIP.com/>.

- Cooks and anyone who knows where to find auction deals for kitchen and catering equipment can help one poster who's conducting research for a client <http://www.freepint.com/go/b40750>.

- Once you have all those new deep fryers and refrigerators, how do you keep track of the inventory? Barcodes, that's how. Tune in to this discussion <http://www.freepint.com/go/b42896> to find out how to download barcode labels or generate your own.

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FreePint Forthcoming Articles

[Provisional]

- Observatory project - web accessibility
- Linking real-world local communities with online communities
- Content enrichment
- Writing for the Web

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

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"The Rise of DocuTicker: So Many Reports, So Little Time"

By Shirl Kennedy

Shirl Kennedy has worked in academic, corporate and public libraries, and was Web Guide Manager for Time, Inc.'s business 2.0 magazine. Currently the reference librarian at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, FL, she writes the Internet Waves column for Information Today. Her newest book, The Savvy Guide to Motorcycles, was published last November. A former newspaper reporter, Shirl received her masters degree in library science from the University of South Florida. She lives in St. Petersburg, FL, with two cats, a motorcycle, a pick-up truck, and her younger son -- and she takes baseball very, very seriously.

Government agencies, think tanks, commercial and non-profit organisations, and trade associations provide an incredibly rich and diverse collection of free reports and research. The trouble is there are so many available resources, it's difficult for any information professional to know what's out there, never mind categorise them in a useful way.

As editor of DocuTicker, I spend my days combing through the masses of data out there. What goes onto DocuTicker are links to only free, full-text reports. Here's a glimpse into the careful selection process I use to populate the site with new resources every day:

- I make every effort to include important documents many people are looking for, i.e. those mentioned in the news or that are issued on a regular basis. I also try to include interesting items our readers are unlikely to stumble across on their own.

- Everything I post includes a link to a freely available full-text report. DocuTicker doesn't include documents from subscription journals (unless offered as free samples) or reports that must be purchased.

- I try to include a good mix of subject matter, with an emphasis on high interest topics, such as education, health care, social and cultural issues. In the new iteration of DocuTicker, recently unveiled, you'll find these categories, and in the future you'll also see topical RSS feeds. In other words, if you're interested only in reports on health and health care, you will be able to subscribe to a feed that shows postings in that category.

- In each post, I try to include an abstract taken directly from the document or from a press release issued by the agency responsible for the document. I don't provide commentary/reviews/value judgments -- either about a document or the organisation that produced it. Many of these groups have some sort of ideological axe to grind, which doesn't mean the reports they generate are useless, but we assume our readers are savvy enough to educate themselves by trolling the organisation's website.

- Although DocuTicker is aimed at a predominately American audience, I make an effort to include international materials useful to our global readership. I depend on help from non-U.S. readers to increase our coverage. If you're aware of any good fishing holes for full-text reports, or can alert us to especially important or time-critical documents, please get in touch.

I also depend on feedback from readers to let me know what they like and what they don't like. If you encounter something you think I should post or a site I should monitor for content, I want to hear from you.

Below is a selection of recent DocuTicker postings. You can read these and more by going to <http://www.docuticker.com>:

Different Cultures, Similar Perceptions: Stereotyping of Western European Business Leaders Source: Catalyst

'Different Cultures, Similar Perceptions: Stereotyping of Western European Business Leaders is the third report in a series of studies Catalyst is undertaking to examine barriers to women's advancement in the workplace. It exposes some significant differences in the nature and prevalence of stereotypic perceptions across cultural clusters in Western Europe'.

Direct link to this DocuTicker post: <http://www.docuticker.com/?p=5589>

Related FreePint links:

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

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

Read this article online, with activated hyperlinks <http://www.freepint.com/issues/220606.htm#tips>

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

World Cup Special: Football, Sports, and Development Source: World Bank

'For two months every four years, the world stops for the World Cup. It is estimated that 1.3 billion people watched the final of the 2002 World Cup in Japan, a number which is sure to rise this year in Berlin. So, earlier this year, research teams from some of the world's leading investment banks shifted their eyes from stocks and bonds to predicting the winners of this summer's matches in Germany. The reason - studies suggest that success or failure in football (or soccer) may affect a country's economy'. Links to many full-text papers on economics and the World Cup (PDFs).

Direct link to this DocuTicker post: <http://www.docuticker.com/?p=5571>

Who's Afraid of Labour Market Flexibility Source: The Work Foundation (UK)

From press release: 'The widespread conviction that low levels of employment regulation and weak trade unions are the cause of Britain's good record at creating jobs and keeping unemployment down is today exposed as a myth in a new study by The Work Foundation. The study also takes aim at the assumption that "being more like America" is essential if high levels of unemployment in some continental European countries are to be reduced'.

Direct link to this DocuTicker post: <http://www.docuticker.com/?p=5568>

The Other Search: Making the Most of Site Search to Optimize the Total Customer Experience Source: Web Side Story

'Effective site search can take you from high abandonment to full carts, one-hit visits to long eyeballs, or from a contact center deluge of nasty-grams to loyal customers. Internet search – the activity on Google and Yahoo! - delivers visitors to your door. Site search - that search box that should be a navigation choice you offer on every Web page - drives the customer's experience and triggers the delivery of your marketing messages for the duration of the visit. Customer activity that begins on an Internet search engine doesn't end at the entry point to your site. You should sustain attention to visitors until they have either completed their objectives or abandoned them. Site search and the information it offers can help you determine how to surpass customer expectations and also reduce the number of frustrated visitors. The site search box itself is a tremendous gift to you from your customers: they are telling you exactly what they want, in their own words. They are inviting you to make your best offer. But in order to hear them, you need a plan for monitoring and managing seeker experience. Our 5-step plan provides the fundamentals for getting the most out of customer visits. We also provide KPIs and key metrics for your site and your seeker experience'.

Direct link to this DocuTicker post: <http://www.docuticker.com/?p=5508>

The Framing Effect of Price Format Source: Harvard Business School Working Papers

'Existing evidence suggests that preferences are affected by whether a price is presented as one all-inclusive expense or partitioned into a series of charges. To explain this phenomenon, we propose a simple psychological mechanism whereby price format determines how many product attributes are actively processed at the time of valuation. Three studies support the hypothesis that price partitioning acts as an incentive to process multiple product dimensions. This process sometimes leads to the paradoxical overweighting of minor (but easy to evaluate) attributes that would be overlooked under an all-inclusive price format. The effect of price partitioning on demand can be detrimental or beneficial, consistent with existing conflicting findings in the literature and with variance in practice. Beyond its predictive and prescriptive implications, this theory contributes to the general notion that pricing might affect as much as capture perceived value'.

Direct link to this DocuTicker post: <http://www.docuticker.com/?p=5490>

Middle East and North African-Investment Policies Source: The World Bank Governance and private investment in the Middle East and North Africa

'This paper addresses the issue of the low level of private investment in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, with special emphasis on the role of governance. Based on the existing literature, the authors categorize what types of governance institutions are more detrimental to entrepreneurial investments. They then estimate a simultaneous model of private investment and governance quality where economic policies concurrently explain both variables. The empirical results show that governance plays a significant role in private investment decisions. This result is particularly true in the case of administrative quality" in the form of control of corruption, bureaucratic quality, investment-friendly profile of administration, and law and order, as well as for "political stability." Evidence in favor of "public accountability" seems, however, less robust. The estimations also stress that structural reforms-such as financial development and trade openness-and human development affect private investment decisions directly, and/or through their positive impact on governance. These findings bring new empirical evidence on the subject of private investment in the developing world and in MENA countries in particular'.

Direct link to this DocuTicker post: <http://www.docuticker.com/?p=5479>

Wireless Security Source: Infosec Writers

'As more and more home and business users adapt wireless technologies because of their ease of use and affordability, these devices are coming under attack by the malicious who are after your data and by the casual user looking for free bandwidth. In this paper, I will explain how wireless attacks are done on Wired Equivalency Privacy (WEP) networks, other common network attacks and then present several options to defend wireless networks'.

Direct link to this DocuTicker post: <http://www.docuticker.com/?p=5545>

The State of IPTV 2006: The Advent of Personalized Programming (PDF; 1.03 MB) Source: New Millennium Research Council

'Internet Protocol Television is an all-encompassing term that covers many different forms of video programming and services. Because the underlying technologies are Internet-based, IPTV can be transmitted over broadband networks and accessed by customers through a number of different devices. In general, IPTV allows consumers not only to customise their video programming experience. IPTV also empowers organizations of all types to directly and more inexpensively access new and/or targeted global audiences often otherwise unavailable to them via traditional television'.

Direct link to this DocuTicker post: <http://www.docuticker.com/?p=5536>

Life Sciences-Security Programs Source: Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Life Sciences Focusing On Security Issues

'Major global life sciences organizations plan to enhance their security programs, hiring chief security officers and investing in technological advancements to protect their products, customers, and brand, according to a new survey conducted by the Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu (DTT) Security & Privacy Services industry group, made up of Deloitte member firm Security & Privacy Services practices. The study, one of the first to focus on security and privacy issues in the life sciences and health care industry, canvassed more than 90 percent of the major pharmaceuticals, as well as the leading biotechnology and medical device companies globally.' Free registration required to access report.

Direct link to this DocuTicker post: <http://www.docuticker.com/?p=5496>

Biometrics Source: Infosec Writers Two Papers (full documents in PDF)

+ Biometrics - The Wave of the Future? (Daniels): 'Will biometrics be a factor in our future? Of course it will, at least to the extent that it has been in our past history. We as citizens must decide upon the best methods to use and the best way to utilize this technology. Biometrics can be defined in several ways such as the study of measurable biological characteristics. In reference to Information Security it specifically applies to the automated use of physiological or behavioural characteristics to determine or verify identity'.

+ Biometrics: 21st Century Security (Smith): 'Biometrics is a process used to identify or authenticate an individual's identity using any of a series of physical or behavioural characteristics. These characteristics can include but are not limited to fingerprints, hand or palm geometry, retina and iris scans, facial mapping, signature or writing style, and more recently, DNA maps. While relatively new, biometrics is rapidly advancing and growing in acceptance and use. The importance of this emerging technology does not necessarily lie in learning the intricacies of how biometric science works, but in exploring the management of the exposures biometrics present to individuals, businesses, and governments. This process begins with identifying the cyber risk exposures that biometrics makes possible'.

Direct link to this DocuTicker post: <http://www.docuticker.com/?p=5459>

By presenting a hand-picked selection of full-text resources from specific kinds of organisations, DocuTicker does something that no other site/weblog/mailing list does. We've found that it appeals not only to librarians but also to others looking for timely information and research material. For example, we have a significant readership among journalists, who can do everything from gather background to find inspiration for their next in-depth feature. Living, breathing professional librarians review materials from a wide range of sources, on a wide range of topics, to provide a unique - and free - service.

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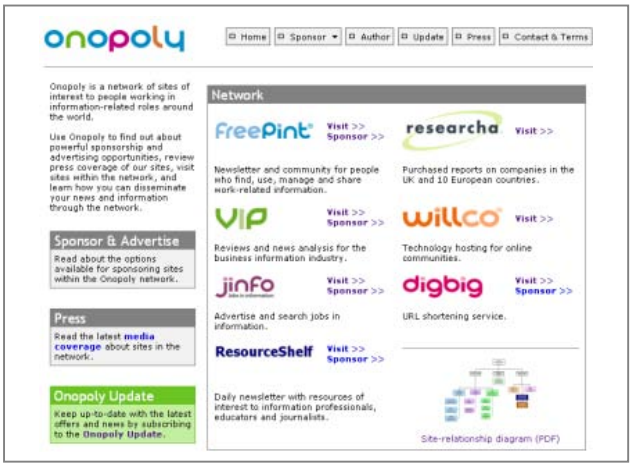

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Jill Fenton is the founder of Fenton Research Ltd, a London-based research company providing high-quality, tailored research and advice to help clients achieve their business information and research goals. Jill has over 10 years of professional business research experience, working within professional services firms in research management and analyst positions. Jill is a member of the City Information Group, the Association of Independent Information Professionals and Special Libraries Association. She can be reached at <jill@fentonresearch.co.uk> or via her website <http://www.fentonresearch.co.uk/>.

Related links:

- "Business Information Systems" ISBN 0273688146, published by FT Prentice Hall
- Search for and purchase any book from Amazon via the FreePint Bookshelf at <http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf/>

"Business Information Systems: Technology, Development and Management for the E-business"

Written by Simon Hickie, et al
Reviewed by Jill Fenton

The daunting title and size of this book may initially deter some readers, but the colour-coded chapter layout and clear language should immediately alleviate their concerns. This user-friendly format is well-designed for the book's key target audience of business systems students, but it's also useful for information systems managers who could use a refresher.

The introduction explains that the book is to be used as a guide "to provide a source of knowledge that will explain how the right systems can be chosen by a business, then developed appropriately and managed effectively". It is designed as a one-stop-shop for students, assuming no prior knowledge and covering topics such as:

- IT
- Information management
- Systems analysis and design
- Strategy development
- IS software and hardware technologies
- Acquiring and building new IS
- Effective IS management strategies
- Key IT business implementation skills.

In addition to addressing the basic practical skills involved with managing and designing business information systems, whether they be computer-based, managerial or operational, the book discusses the importance of an effective IS business strategy to ensure maximum return on investment and competitive advantage. E-business strategies are given particular focus. In this respect, it has relevance not only for students but also for relatively new IS or IT managers.

Because this book is aimed at covering so much, the authors run the risk of abbreviating some topics. Huge subjects such as knowledge management and competitive intelligence could fill a whole chapter of their own. The list of recommended reading links for these additional subjects goes some way towards alerting the reader that there is more available for further study.

Keeping up with the speed of change of all technology-related material is a constant battle; "Business Information Systems" is no exception. Updates regarding developments, for example new search engines and blogs, would be an added bonus. Perhaps these could be added to the already extensive learning website <http://www.pearsoned.co.uk/bis>. But the case studies are notably current, interesting and relevant, and they appeal to the target audience, including "Inadequate IT contributed to 11 September intelligence failure" and "Guinness uses SMS to reach a younger audience".

Theoretical information management studies in the past have omitted direct business alignment references, so I was happy to see them in this book. The non-technical language made the book easy to understand, especially the section on the Internet and how it works, which was surprisingly interesting. The chapter regarding BIS strategy was particularly useful and covered such diverse topics as project management techniques, outsourcing and key performance indicators.

Because of its layout and format, this book makes learning about BIS easy. Each chapter is set up like a lesson, with introductions, learning outcomes, links to other chapters and study aids within each chapter. The material is supported with definitions, web links, case studies, activities and chapter summaries. Students will find this book a useful study aid, but IS managers can also use it as a development guide or reminder tool.

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"Technology and Industrial Innovation Resources on the Web"

By Steve Lee

Steve Lee is Information Manager for the Technological Innovation Group of the Office of Science & Innovation (OSI). Based in the Department of Trade and Industry, OSI's role in Government is to make Britain one of the best places in the world for science, research and innovation. He writes here in a personal capacity.

Innovation -- the commercial exploitation of new or novel ideas -- occupies the ground somewhere between the scientific community and the business world. Examples of existing, or future, innovative products include vehicles powered by fuel cells rather than petrol engines, modelling and simulation technologies that reduce lengthy and expensive product development cycles for businesses, or the application of photonics technology to improve medical diagnosis.

Much relevant information is published on the web, and this article aims to give a flavour of what's available, whether you have a particular idea in mind or a general interest in the area. Its focus is on technology and industrial innovation in the UK, and on government and official sources, but I've also included a limited number of relevant international resources as starting points for further research.

UK government sites

Information on the UK government's Technology Strategy is available via my own department's website <http://digbig.com/4jhcc>. This sets out the focus of support in key areas, and provides information on assistance available via the Technology Programme from other departments and the Research Councils.

The DTIs Global Watch service <http://www.globalwatchservice.com/> helps UK businesses access innovative technologies and working practices from overseas. The site offers information on science and technology around the world (look in the Information section). The Missions area includes a searchable library of reports on topics ranging from Wireless Sensor Networks in the USA to Healthcare Technologies in China. To view the full range of information, you'll need to register (this is free).

DTI also sponsors a number of Knowledge Transfer Networks (KTNs) to promote collaboration, best practice and knowledge sharing between industry and academia in particular areas, including health technologies, grid computing or food processing. Most KTNs have a website (visit <http://digbig.com/4jhce> for the list). Register, for free, to access the content.

The Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) scheme works to transfer knowledge into businesses. Each partnership is partly funded by the government, with the balance of the costs coming from a corporate partner, and employs one or more recently qualified associate for a project lasting one to three years. The KTP website <http://www.ktponline.co.uk/> offers searchable databases of current, recently approved and completed projects, and details of how businesses, individuals and the academic and research sectors can participate in the scheme.

The Foresight programme <http://www.foresight.gov.uk/> identifies potential opportunities for the economy or society from new science and technologies, and considers how they could address key challenges for society. At any given time, Foresight (part of the Office of Science and Innovation) is investigating three or four areas, such as Tackling Obesity, Intelligent Infrastructure Systems and Detection and Identification of Infectious Diseases. Reports on these and past projects are available from the site.

Interested in selling your idea overseas, or finding out what's going on in your area abroad? The UK Trade & Investment site <http://www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk/> provides a wide range of information including country and sector profiles, and a substantial database of business information websites; a quick search will reveal much information with a technology or innovation focus. You'll need to register to see everything, but again this is free.

Related FreePint links:

'Intellectual Property' articles in the FreePint Portal http://www.freepint.com/go/p145

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

Read this article online, with activated hyperlinks http://www.freepint.com/issues/220606.htm#feature

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

The Foreign & Commonwealth Offices Science and Innovation Network <http://digbig.com/4jhcg> operates in over 20 countries, with the objectives of spreading the word about the high standards of the UK science base, assisting UK companies in accessing overseas science and innovation, facilitating high-tech trade and attracting foreign investment. In support of this mission, the network's site acts as a portal to a range of local and international science, technology and innovation information.

Many other government departments and agencies also publish relevant information on their websites and/or support research into topics of interest. Look for sections with headings like Science, Research and Development, Innovation and Statistics. Specific information varies, but often includes details of departmental priorities, reports, statistics and details of support for research.

UK Parliament

The Parliamentary Office of Science & Technology (POST) <http://digbig.com/4jhck>, the UK Parliament's analysis of science and technology public policy issues, publishes short briefing notes called POSTnotes, and longer reports on current science and technology issues. The Science and Technology Select Committees of the House of Commons <http://digbig.com/4jhch> and the Lords <http://digbig.com/4jhcj> also produce reports and take evidence on technologies and related topics.

England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales

In each of the English regions and in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, government agencies or bodies supported by the devolved administrations exist to promote economic development. These bodies work to improve the relative economic performance of their areas, and have strong interests in encouraging and supporting innovation amongst businesses. Their sites give details of strategies and the support available, and link to related local and national websites. In England this role is performed by the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs); bodies with similar roles also exist in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Englands RDAs <http://www.englandsrdas.com/home.aspx>

Invest NI -- Research and Development <http://digbig.com/4jhcm>

Scottish Enterprise -- Ideas and Innovation <http://digbig.com/4ejnh>

Welsh Assembly Government Department of Enterprise, Innovation and Networks <http://digbig.com/4jhcn>

Research councils

The UK's Research Councils are major public investors in fundamental research, with interests ranging from biomedicine and particle physics to the environment, engineering and economic research. Published information varies, but it can be worth checking the site of the relevant body for details of their work and information on grants. Details of all the Research Councils and links to individual sites are available from Research Councils UK <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/>.

Learned societies and professional bodies

Learned societies and professional bodies are associated with many areas of science and technology in the UK, and often have interests in promoting the exploitation of new ideas from the scientific community.

Details are available via the British Council's Guide to the Organisation of Science, Engineering and Technology <http://www.britishcouncil.org/gost/learned.htm> (which also includes a good general introduction to science and technology in the UK), or via the HERO (Higher Education and Research Opportunities in the United Kingdom) site <http://digbig.com/4jhcp>.

Academia

Innovation is, of course, also high on the agenda of universities across the UK -- both in terms of the commercialisation of their own research and of services they can offer business. Individual university sites contain details of the innovation office or centre, as does UNICO (the University Companies Association) <http://www.unico.org.uk/>. This has a list of relevant contacts in, and links to, universities and other bodies.

Technology enablers

Enablers are responsible for the intellectual property, standards, measurement and accreditation that help business innovate. They assist innovation throughout the value chain. For example, the protection of a new idea through a patent or the characterisation of the effects of the product through measurement. They also may help the delivery of products to market in compliance with regulations or reassure customers, and simplified compliance, through accreditation. In the UK, these include the following organisations:

The Patent Office <http://www.patent.gov.uk/> is responsible for intellectual property (IP) rights (patents, designs, trade marks and copyright) in the UK. The site includes information on all these areas and searchable databases of designs, patents and trademarks. In addition to its main site, the Patent Office also maintains the Intellectual Property site <http://www.intellectual-property.gov.uk/>, a user-friendly guide to basic information about IP. The site signposts creators and users of IP so that they can protect their rights or obtain licences for particular uses.

The British Standards Institution (BSI) <http://www.bsi-global.com/index.xalter> is the UK's national standards body, and works with government, business and consumers to represent UK interests and facilitate the production of British, European and international standards.

Custodian of the kilogram, home of the metre and the source of time for the UK, the National Physical Laboratory (NPL) <http://www.npl.co.uk/> maintains world-class metrology facilities and offers calibration services with the highest available accuracy.

The National Weights and Measures Laboratory (NWML) <http://www.nwml.gov.uk/Default.aspx> is responsible for ensuring that all trade measurements are accurate, legal and fair to buyer and seller, and helps companies comply with the requirements of European directives.

Formerly the Laboratory of the Government Chemist, the now privatized LGC Ltd., <http://www.lgc.co.uk/index.asp> retains its statutory role as Government Chemist, acting as the referee in cases where there is a dispute over analytical results or their interpretation.

The United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) <http://www.ukas.com/> ensures that the contributions made by other enablers, for example the accuracy of measurements and the implementation of standards, are independently assessed to provide a foundation on which businesses can innovate.

Many of these bodies also have their international equivalents: the European Patent Office, the US Patent and Trademark Office and the International Standards Organisation. Follow the links from the UK sites.

International sources

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) <http://digbig.com/4fapr> publishes an extensive range of information and statistics on diverse subjects, including science, technology and innovation, much of which is freely available. The site holds a great deal of information on a wide range of topics.

The EU publishes a gateway to news and information about scientific research and technological development in the European Union at <http://digbig.com/4jhcq>. The site links to information on current and past research activities and to information on EU funding for research.

CORDIS <http://www.cordis.lu/en/home.html> is the European Commission's information service on European research and innovation activities. The site includes details of projects, funding, contacts (EU and national), links, etc. You might find it useful to view the Guidance <http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=WN_HOME_EN&ACTION=R> to get a taste of what's available here. CORDIS also provides the Articles on Innovation site <http://aoi.cordis.lu/home.cfm>, which includes articles on many aspects of innovation and technology.

Eureka! <http://www.eureka.be/home.do> is a pan-European network for market-oriented, industrial R&D. Founded in 1985, it offers access to knowledge, skills and expertise across Europe, and facilitates access to national public and private funding schemes. The site includes details of projects, plus opportunities for project partners, publications, awards and more.

In the United States, the Technology Administration <http://www.technology.gov/Index.html> is the government agency that promotes technology and industrial innovation. The site also links to the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), responsible for the standards and measures needed in the conduct of business; the National Technical Information Service (NTIS), which collects and disseminates science and technical information, and the Office of Technology Policy.

The US Office of Science and Technology Policy <http://www.ostp.gov/> serves as a source of scientific and technological analysis and judgment for the US president with respect to major policies, plans and programs of the federal government. The OSTP site provides reports on technologies and their applications, and links to key federal science and technology departments, agencies and commissions.

Innovation is all about the exploitation of new ideas, by definition, a wide-ranging and rapidly developing area. Given the range of information available, this article gives only a very brief taste of the huge range of information published by international bodies, overseas governments and other organisations with an interest in innovation, but I hope it will give a sense of what's available.

Events

France and Territories:

- "The European Conference on IT Management, Leadership and Governance" 12th - 13th July <http://www.freepint.com/go/e562>

United Kingdom:

- "Maximising Your Quantitative Research Skills and Results" 22nd June - 23rd November <http://www.freepint.com/go/e671>
- "Managing your career - a Career Development Group event" 28th June <http://www.freepint.com/go/e700>
- "Online Communities and Social Marketing - Changing the Rules of Marketing" 29th June <http://www.freepint.com/go/e695>
- "An Instructional Design Masterclass" 4th July <http://www.freepint.com/go/e666>
- "STN User Update 2006" 5th - 6th July <http://www.freepint.com/go/e706>
- "Market Research on the Web" 6th September <http://www.freepint.com/go/e643>
- "AUKML 2006 - The 21st Century Information Professional" 22nd - 24th September <http://www.freepint.com/go/e688>
- "Report Writing: easing the process of written communication in the organisation" 27th September <http://www.freepint.com/go/e642>

Gold

A look back at what FreePint covered at this time in previous years:

- FreePint No.185 30th June 2005. "An Insider's View of Google Answers" and "Promoting Information and Search Skills" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/300605.htm>
- FreePint No.162 1st July 2004. "Trends in Business Information Provision and Use" and "GIS Enabling the Internet" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/010704.htm>
- FreePint No.139 26th June 2003. "Taxation Law Resources Online - Tax Doesn't Have to be Taxing" and "Searching Free Trade Mark Databases on the Web" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/260603.htm>
- FreePint No.115, 11th July 2002. "Content Management" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/110702.htm>
- FreePint No.90, 21st June 2001. "Do you Google?" and "Electronic Health Information : A boon and a curse!" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/210601.htm>
- FreePint No.65, 22nd June 2000. "Internet Intelligence - analysing web-sites for competitive intelligence" and "WAP Technology and Services" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/220600.htm>
- FreePint No.41, 24th June 1999. "Answering back" and "Finding Links to the Past: archaeological resources on the Web" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/240699.htm>
- FreePint No.17, 25th June 1998. "Finding information products and services via the Net" and "Bioscience Information on the Internet" <http://www.freepint.com/issues/250698.htm>

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